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Presentation Transcript
Jesus and the Day of Atonement
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The title is *Jesus and the Day of Atonement* - part of a series on *Jesus and the Holy Days*.

Hello everybody. Welcome to the Day of Atonement in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here in the desert, we just had three days of rain. The air is clear. The Balloon Fiesta is in full swing. And we had snow on the mountains last night – pretty good for October 7th. We’re hoping for more moisture. We’ve had a drought here for awhile, so it’s been good.

Jesus and the Day of Atonement. We’re in a series on *Jesus and the Holy Days*. The concept of this whole series is to show how the biblical festivals connect to Jesus Christ, the New Testament church and God’s salvation plan.

I’d like to begin looking at some scriptures in the Old Testament about the Day of Atonement. So we’re going to turn first to Leviticus 23:26. Leviticus 23 is the chapter where the Sabbath and the holy days are all bound up together – every one of them is mentioned and how they observed them – at least, some about how they observed them – in Israel. It says in verse 26:

Leviticus 23:26 – *The LORD spoke to Moses saying, “Now on the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of atonement.”* What day was that? The tenth day. What month? The seventh month. What happened on the first day of the month? Trumpets, right? And what happens on the fifteenth? Feast of Tabernacles begins. So this is kind of in-between Trumpets and Tabernacles. We’re all getting ready to leave for the Feast of Tabernacles in just a few days. *“It shall be for you a time of holy convocation”* – so we’re here having a holy convocation. *“And you shall afflict yourselves”* – we’re doing that – we’re fasting – *“and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”* Well, we’re not doing that, because it strictly says, in the New Testament, that those things are set aside until Christ returns. *“And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a day of atonement – to make atonement – for you before the LORD your God. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people.”* So, pretty serious business. *“And you shall not do any work. It’s a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest and you shall afflict yourselves. On the*

ninth day of the month, beginning at evening – from evening to evening – shall you keep your Sabbath.” So, just like it says here, yesterday – which would have been the ninth day – at sundown, we stopped eating, and we’re not going to eat until sundown tonight. And we are going to have a nice party this evening.

Let’s go now to Leviticus 16, and verse 2.

Leviticus 16:2 – *The LORD said to Moses – this is on the Day of Atonement – it doesn’t say that specifically here, but you discern that from the context – “Tell Aaron, your brother, not to come at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.”* So Aaron was only allowed – even as the high priest – to only go into the holy of holies once a year. And, if he went in at other times, he was going to die! He says, *“...for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. But in this way Aaron shall come into the holy place – with a bull from the herd for sin offering and a ram for burnt offering. And he shall put on the holy linen coat, and shall have a linen undergarment on his body.”* I always thought linen was kind of scratchy. Maybe that’s just what they had back then. Anyway.... *“He shall tie the linen sash around his waist and wear the linen turban. These are the holy garments.”* So there was a big ceremony that was taking place here. *“And he shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. And he shall take, from the congregation of the people of Israel, two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.”* So two male goats for a sin offering – that’s a little different than usual. We’re going to study some more about that. And then skipping down to verse 8:

V-8 – *“And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats – one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel.”* What’s that? Well, let’s read a little more. *“And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell and use it as a sin offering.”* So that was offered as a sin offering. And we believe that that goat represents Christ. *“The goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.”* (That’s the way it’s translated in the ESV. And there’s a note in the ESV that says that this could refer to a place or a demon. I don’t know how they arrived at that, but the other commentaries say that the meaning of that word is unclear.) So one goat for God and one goat to be cast out after the sins of the people were laid on him. Now that’s a symbol for something. We have always believed that, if one goat was for God, then the other goat was for the devil and he was cast out, just like it says that he’s going to be.

Now, Leviticus 25:8. The subheading here in the ESV is *The Year of Jubilee*.

Leviticus 25:8 – *You shall count weeks of years. Seven times seven is forty-nine, right? So the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years and then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the day of atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. You see, in those days, people who got into debt sometimes would sell their inheritance property or sell themselves into servitude to pay the debts that they incurred. And every*

fifty years, on this jubilee year, which began on the tenth day of the seventh month – this day – the Day of Atonement – all property went back to the original owners and all people, who were in servitude, were released – all the bondslaves were freed.

So this is just a Jewish holy day, right? Wrong! Let's read some in the New Testament and see what it says. Acts 27:9 – I'm reading in the ESV.

Acts 27:9 – *Since much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them...and he was telling them what to do about it on a trip. The thing I wanted to focus on here was the word *Fast*, with a capital F. That's translated, I think in the NIV, as the Day of Atonement, because that's obviously what they're talking about. And you'll notice that this is at the end of the book of Acts, not at the beginning. So this is thirty to forty years after Christ died. And you might say, "Well, that doesn't mean that they kept it." Well, why would they still be thinking about that forty years after Christ died?*

I also want to read to you, out of the book of Hebrews, something that Paul said. See if you can understand what this means. What is happening here when this man is writing this?

Hebrews 9:7 - *...but into the second only the high priest goes, but he goes once a year.... We read about that earlier, right? And it happened on the Day of Atonement. That was the only time in the year he could go in. So Paul is talking here about what happened on the Day of Atonement. ...and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. All these people that believe in cheap grace...it's unintentional sin. Anybody that *intends* to do something wrong is out from under the bubble of protection. *By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy place is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing.* So that was all a picture for something. And he's using the symbols of the Day of Atonement to explain Christ's sacrifice.*

Let's jump down to Hebrews 9:11, for those of you who are lost in your scriptures. We were reading in Hebrews 9:7. Now we're in verse 11.

Hebrews 9:11 – *But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent – not made with hands – that is, not of this creation.... So that tabernacle building – that tent building – was just a symbol for something to come after it. ...He entered once for all into the holy place, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by the means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself, without blemish, to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God?*

There it is! He's talking about grace and salvation and all the things that are common in Christianity. And he's using the symbols of the Day of Atonement to explain how it all works. Shouldn't all ministers do the same? The Day of Atonement is about Jesus Christ

and His sacrifice. The Jubilee is a picture of the time when everybody is going to be set free.

Let's think about Atonement in the book of Revelation now. We mentioned that it's sandwiched tightly between Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles. God's holy days are not shot-gunned out there, like the holidays in the world. They all are placed on the calendar in a specific location for a specific reason. And the distance between them means something. It means there is a connection between them. So, in the spring, they were celebrating a festival of the first – you know, the winter harvest – the smaller one. It's about Christ's sacrifice and then living sin free. So those are right together. And then comes the harvest itself in May. And then there's a long period, while more fruit and grain ripens for another harvest. Then, a bunch of things happen all at once. The Feast of Trumpets comes – and that pictures Christ's return – then the Day of Atonement, then the Feast of Tabernacles, and then the Eighth Day. Those things are all very much connected. So they're together. So where Atonement fits – between Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles – is important. And it helps us understand the meaning of the day.

Let's read about the return of Christ. Let's not read there. Let's just talk about it, because we read about that during Trumpets. But, if you'll recall, at the end of Revelation 19, after Christ returns – after the seventh trumpet sounds, He fights the battle of Armageddon and subdues those who would destroy the earth. And then, in the beginning of chapter 20, we read this. The subhead here – for the ESV – is *The Thousand Years*. It says:

Revelation 20:1 – *Then I saw – in verse 1 – an angel, coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon – that ancient serpent – who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.*

So what will happen when the devil is bound? Well, what happened when the devil approached Adam and Eve in the very beginning? Well, they were alienated from God by his deceptive comments, right? So this is about the removal of that deception. It's about the restoration of a relationship that was lost in the Garden of Eden. We've all been trying to find our way back to that all of our lives. And so has all of humanity. The most bizarre things have occurred in people's attempts to try to find their way back to God. It's quite amazing.

You know, back in the 1600s, a man named John Milton wrote a poem called *Paradise Lost*. Well, this day is about paradise regained. That's what this day is about. I heard someone say once that Adam and Eve were kidnapped by the devil. That language is not in the scripture, but it does say that they, and all of us, were ransomed by Jesus Christ. We were deceived. And we were fooled into going away from God. And all humanity has been in that state ever since. But this day is about when Jesus Christ finally comes back and claims what He has earned, which is our lives through His sacrifice. We are bought back. We are saved. And this is our jubilee – the year of release.

Now, those of us, who have been converted and have received the Holy Spirit of God, and have lived our lives trying to obey God, we've been in that process for some time. But there are going to be a lot of people who haven't had that opportunity. And when Christ returns, it's all going to start for them – the process of salvation. So this *is* a great day. It is a day to celebrate.

Let's talk about the significance of the plan – a little bit about what it means to become close to God again. In Hebrews – I think it is – Paul said that when God makes His new covenant with the people of the earth after Christ returns, that there won't be any need for people to say, "Know God." There won't be any need for any evangelism, because everybody will already know God. We will have a chance to become close to God again – after Adam and Eve lost it and then passed on Satan's way of thinking and being in the world – to them, and then, from them to us. Jesus Christ is the one who is going to restore of all of that.

So this day is a day that looks forward to God's end goal – the goal of all of God's efforts. I know that process is going to go on for a thousand years, and then there's going to be another resurrection. It does talk about more than one. All the people that never had a chance are going to have a chance then. But it really starts to pop here when this happens – He is recovering us from the devil and drawing us into relationship with Him and with God again.

I want to read you John 12:31. I read this scripture a lot – at least, verse 32 a lot. But I want you to read verses 31 and 32.

John 12:31-32 – *Now – Jesus said this early on – is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. See, that's talking about this day. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.* That's what God is doing.

Do you know how the devil influenced Adam and Eve? He didn't actually touch them. He didn't make them do anything. He didn't put them in a straight jacket and force them to do anything. He just talked to them and convinced them to make some choices that caused them to lose their relationship with God. Well, God doesn't touch us either so much. But He does *draw* us to Him by the things that He does. And Christ's sacrifice is one of the main things that is going to pull people in. When they realize what He did for them, they will be softened.

You know, I was thinking about how God made us. A baby is born with some hard wiring. It's kind of like the bios on a computer. You turn on the computer and there is this little hard-wired chip in there – I guess it's on the mother board now – and it's just smart enough to go get everything else started. And then that takes over. Well, babies come with a bios. And their bios lets them breathe, let's them cry when their hungry. They have pain. They have emotion. They have some vision. They have a central nervous system. They've got a set of glands that produce hormones and different secretions that cause all these things to happen. But when it comes to social stuff, they have only two things. They have a biological inclination to love and be loved by their father and to love and be loved by their

mother. Now, if that doesn't happen, they can attach to other caregivers, but that's what they come with. From that, all other relational desires and happenings grow – out of that – even a desire to love and be loved by God. It all starts right there. So God built that into us so that He could have a relationship with us. He didn't build robots. He built creatures that could become connected to Him. And that's what He's hoping for.

Let's read something about that. Psalm 22, and verse 9. Some people might not actually believe that the human desire to connect to parents eventually goes to God, but here is a prophecy of the things that Christ thought when He was – I think, perhaps – on the cross. If not, at least in His life. It's a prophecy about things that Christ thought. It says, in verse 9 of Psalm 22:

Psalm 22:9 – *Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.* Mary was chosen for a very good reason – very carefully – because she knew how to take care of a baby in such a way that it would trust. And that trust in her eventually gets transferred to God. And we can see that in the life of Jesus as He trusted God. So there it is. “You made Me trust you at My mother's breasts.”

They think that trust starts to get built when mother and father come and pick that baby up in the morning and talk to it in that sing-songy baby talk, and look into its eyes in little bursts, and take care of it. They take care of everything that it needs. It gets clothed. If it's hungry, it gets full. If it's lonely, it gets attended to. So the baby begins to believe, “Oh, these people get me. They know what I need. They're going to take care of me. Everything is good. It's all good.” Because babies don't really need a lot for it to be all good. So that's where it starts. And it starts with our relationship with our parents. Then, if our parents are good parents and they take care of us, when we encounter God – as our brain develops enough to understand abstract things like God – abstract because we can't see, hear, or feel, or sense Him – it's easier to believe that God is a good God, based on what's happened to us early. If I had a nickel for every time a woman has told me that “I have trouble trusting in a loving father, because of the way my father treated me,” I would be a rich man. So it goes the other way, too. That's what the devil wanted to do. He wanted to get us so involved with our own stuff that we don't take care of our kids right. And then they have problems.

So we were created for a relationship with God. And this day is a celebration of the fact that God is going to draw us all to Himself and restore a relationship that was lost in the Garden of Eden. And Jesus Christ is smack in the middle of all of that. This is His day as much as anybody's. He was the God who gave those statutes and laws about how to keep the Day of Atonement. He was the God that invented jubilee.

There is an interesting thing here in the scripture. There's a promise from God associated with jubilee. In Luke 4, we can read that Jesus returned home to Nazareth while He was in His ministry and He went into the synagogue to read. And as it was customary, He stood up and took the scroll, and He opened it to the book of Isaiah, and He read the scripture in Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2. It's called the year of the Lord's favor. Do you know what that is? Well, that's jubilee, isn't it?

Isaiah 61:1-2 – *The spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prisons to those who are bound – to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor....* According to what we read in Luke 4, He stopped short of reading the last part of that verse. ...*and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.*

So there is, in Isaiah, a connection between the day of jubilee and the coming of God. So this is a scripture about jubilee and it's also about the end time – the day of God's vengeance, because the day of jubilee is about that.

So what happens on that day? Well, Jesus Christ returns. And after He got finished reading, He made an amazing, shocking, astounding statement. He said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears. I am He who is to come. I am here." Wow! So, out of His own mouth, in the gospels, in the New Testament, Jesus shows us what that day is about.

The first day of the jubilee year is what day? It's the Day of Atonement. That's when it starts. So it's about Jesus Christ and His return to the earth and also about His binding of the devil so that the way is paved for a relationship with God to be established. And it is a day to be observed – just like the New Testament church observed Passover and Unleavened Bread and Pentecost and all the rest.

So that's a bit about Jesus and Atonement. And those of you who know me probably think that I'm breaking precedent here, because I always talk about something very specific on this day, and I haven't yet. So let's look at a couple of scriptures here. I think we read this before, but I want to read it again. Maybe I didn't.

Psalm 42:1 – *As the deer pants – we had a song about it before the sermon – for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God – for the Living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

So David likens his longing for God to a thirst. We know about that don't we? Those of us, who are veteran fasters, we know how to minimize the effects of it. So I'm really not that thirsty right now, but I probably will be before sundown.

Another one:

Psalm 17:15 – *As for me – David said – I shall behold Your face in righteousness. When I awake I shall be satisfied with your likeness.* Satisfied with your likeness. We talk about a satisfying meal. And he's talking about thirst here.

So it wouldn't be good to leave out an important part of the Day of Atonement – why we fast. So we're longing for God, like the hunger we feel when we fast. And the world has been on a starvation diet for connection with God. And we do some of the craziest things to try to satisfy that longing – everything except for the right thing. But, in the future, on the Day of Atonement, that starvation diet is going to be ended. People are going to be able to imbibe of God. And tonight, at sundown, all of us we're going to go to Zink, the new

hotspot. Although I found out it's been around for quite a few years. I just didn't know about it, so new hotspot to me. When we get there, we will be regaled with thick juicy steaks, cooked just like we like them. And if we don't like steak, there'll be really tender, juicy chicken or creamy pastas – whatever we like. And we'll be given tall glasses of icy cold water – all we want of it – rivulets running down the sides of the glass through the condensation caused by the delicious coldness of it all. And we mustn't forget the beer – flagons of our favorite brew – icy cold. And then those football-sized baked potatoes, steaming hot and drenched with melted butter, sour cream, chives and grated cheese. Yum! What would you like for dessert? New York cheesecake? Mud pie with coffee ice cream and caramel? And crème brûlée? The sky is the limit. I saw on the menu for Zink a double brownie sundae with chocolate blah, blah, blah. Mmmm. So we're supposed to feel hungry today and I'm obligated, as your pastor, to enhance that as I can. But we're to remember that that is a hunger for God. And I'm sorry that I have to do my part to make that real for you.

The point of this is that, at the end of the day, our hunger is going to be assuaged. This day – the Day of Atonement – is a celebration of that day when our hunger for God is going to be satisfied and all God's children will be restored to Him.