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Transcript
A New Heart – Day of Atonement
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We've said that every holy day in the Bible either looks back on or looks forward to a step in God's salvation plan. Every holy day, from Passover to the Eighth Day is about Jesus Christ and what He is doing to save every person who has ever lived and every person who will ever live.

But there's one of these days that has an exclamation point on it. And that day is the Day of Atonement. That's the holy day – the *only* holy day – on which we are to fast. And that indicates Atonement is a special holy day – one marked by our personal involvement in the intense practice of fasting. So, that's adds weight to it that the others don't have. Now, I'm not saying that they're not important or that this is the most important. I'm just saying that this special in that it has that exclamation point of fasting.

So, Atonement is about the door being opened to all humanity for the very first time since Adam and Eve for every single person on earth to know who God is, to have a relationship with Him, and to get on the same page with Him spiritually, and to have Him and Christ come and dwell in them. While in times past, God has called a few, rather than the many, Atonement is a day that looks forward to a time when *everybody* will be invited by God to know Him, and to become at one with Him, and all restrictions will be removed.

So, since we know that that's what God wants – that it's His plan for all of us to be a part of His family – Atonement is a big day for God and a big day for all His children. And today we're going to think a little bit about why.

Let's start in Revelation 20 and verse 1 – John said in vision:

Revelation 20:1 – *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to 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 finished.*

So, no devil! There are two elements to that “no devil” that I would like to mention today. One – we can start in Romans 7. Paul makes an amazing statement in this chapter. He talks about his desire to follow God and a contrariness that is present at the same time. Let’s read it in Romans 7:18.

Romans 7:18-19 – *For I know that nothing good dwells in me* – and then he makes an adjustment – *that is, in my flesh*. And he’s not talking about his body. That’s a different word. He continues: *For I have desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.*

And then he exclaims down in verse 24:

V-24-25 – *O wretched man that I am! In other words, frustrated and unhappy. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

So, this war that’s going on within Paul and all of us is caused by what Paul calls the *flesh*. And, as I mentioned, that’s not our bodies, but it’s a part of our minds that contains no good thing, as he said. Now, you know your body is not a bad thing. God created that. But, in this element of a human, he says there’s something in which no good thing dwells.

Now, since when God created Adam and Eve, He said, “It is good!” and they were all in harmony with Him, then that part wasn’t there when they were first created. But, after the devil talked to them, that all changed for them – and for all of us ever since. Some people believe that the devil has the ability to change what God made – to alter the creation intrinsically. But I don’t believe that. He has *not* inserted a new element into the psyche. But, if we look at what happened there in the Garden, we’ll see what God says occurred. He just talked to them. The devil reasoned with them. And, by telling them a number of lies, he led them to begin thinking differently about God and about themselves. I believe the same way continues to this day.

You know I’m a therapist and I talk with people about their innermost feelings quite often. And I believe it all goes back to our first parents, Adam and Eve. And that gets transmitted not through the air and not through some kind of magical inserted part in the psyche, but just the way people think. People’s thinking *changed* there in the Garden. What happens there is, we become predisposed to disbelieve God. That’s one thing that happened to them.

Here’s another thing to think about – the second thing I mentioned. Jesus told us that the devil is a liar and that he lies to keep us enslaved to sin. And He tells us that he is presently the god of this world – that is, people, without knowing it, worship him instead of God. That happens anytime we believe his lies. That’s how it works in the world.

Jesus told His followers a parable about a sower who threw seed indiscriminately on the ground in the field, like sowers do. It's in Luke 8:9:

Luke 8:9 – *And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant, He said this:*

V-11 – *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard, then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. So, how does he do that?*

Well, one of the things he does is, he distracts us. He fills our lives with activities that are not going to lead toward God – not necessarily bad things, but just lots of things. He leads us to major in the minors, in other words, so that we never have a chance to recognize what has happened to us. Some people never get the invitation to the party, in other words, because he took it out of the mailbox before we got to read it.

So, this whole world is designed to keep the truth out of our minds and to put his attitude and his approach into our minds instead. So, let's look at the reason why he lies to us. It's in the same passage we were in there, in John 8:44.

John 8:44 – *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

So, he's just intrinsically a liar and he invented it. He hates us and wants to murder us to keep us from attaining eternal life. But we learn that after Christ returns, the devil is going to be restrained. And what does that leave for us? Well, with the deceiver gone, there's only one God left. The way, then, is going to be open – just like it was in the Garden of Eden before the devil entered in. People will be free for the first time in 6,000 years – plus, actually – to interact with God in an undeceived way. What do you think they will learn?

Well, one thing that's been impressed on my mind lately is that they're going to learn that God is not a monster. They're going to slowly start to realize that He's not the uncaring God that just lets all this evil happen. We took a hard look at that on Trumpets. The devil projects his own hatred for us onto God and makes us think that God doesn't tell us the truth, He's a liar, He doesn't care about us – all of that. When God is going to be healing the planet and comforting the people who have seen unimaginable trouble and suffering, that's going to contradict what they've always thought about God, and they're going to realize that God is all for them. At that time, a strong awareness will begin to creep over all humanity. Once the devil is gone, they're going to start to think more openly about what's going on really. They're going to realize God didn't cause the trouble. And they're going to see, as that river flows out from His throne to heal the planet, He's the One who's stopping it.

So, with that awareness in mind, let's recall something Jesus said. When people start to see that there's going to be a whole lot of repenting going on, and fasting, and sorrow, and regret for a lot of wrongdoing – if we understand that it's not just about getting rid of the devil, it's about the damage he's done and the suffering he's caused – when people begin to regret, they're only one step away from a changed heart. And that is what God and Christ have always been after. When that happens, it's game over! They've won! There's still more to do, but as people's hearts start to change toward God, the battle has been fought and won. They're on the downhill side of it.

Now, in the church, we talk about the mystery of Godliness all the time. But how is God going to give everyone a new heart? That's been a mystery for the longest time – even in heaven among angels, if you can believe it. Let's read 1 Peter 1:10.

1 Peter 1:10-12 – *Concerning this salvation – Paul says – the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you – who is he talking to? Well, he's talking to the church – an entity that did not yet exist when the prophets were prophesying. And they were trying to understand how God was going to give everybody a new heart and how He was going to save everybody from their sins. So, it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

So, Paul called this a mystery. He told the people of Colossae that God had called him to reveal to them a mystery. Read about it in Colossians 1:26.

Colossians 1:26-27 – *...the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery....* What exactly is the mystery? Can you put it into a phrase or words? Well, he says: *...the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory – a new heart, which is Christ's heart in you.*

Even the angels could not figure out how God was going to change us. But *now* we know – God the Father and Jesus Christ in us – will live in us – by the Holy Spirit. That's going to be the trick that does it. He's going to give us all a heart transplant and He is going to be the donor.

There is a lot of talk about this in the Bible. Jesus said in John 12 that His crucifixion would eventually draw all people to Himself. When Jesus died and was resurrected, the way was paved for all humanity to become one with God. But it didn't start right then, because the devil was still the acting God of this world. Not everyone felt that drawing power of Christ. Some people's mailboxes were empty before they had a chance to read the invitation. So, just a relative few have been called, and those people are people that comprise the church – the body of Christ – the

saints. That's what Passover and Unleavened Bread pictures. The church – between Christ's resurrection and His return – Christ dying for them and then them living in an unleavened state – leaven being sin – being free from sin because of Christ's sacrifice for them.

The Day of Atonement, however, is about *everybody* receiving God's Spirit and having a new heart. That's going to happen after Christ returns and the devil is put back. There's no deception, no false god – only Christ.

Look with me in Micah 4:1 and 2.

Micah 4:1-2 – *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD – the government – a mountain is a picture of a government – shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob – not Buddha and not Shinto and not Mohammed, but God – the God of Jacob – that identifies Him – that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."* So, that's coming – a total change of mind. *For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

So, in the entire history of the world – once past Eden – this has never happened. Humankind has always wanted self-rule. I heard a term recently that's strangely applicable. It's called the Great Reset. When I heard it, it was talking about a hope the globalist have, as they are now working behind scenes for a one-world government – one government for the whole world – trying to maneuver the nations – the people – into position for that reset. According to Bible prophecy, there is a reset coming – and it's not going to be a good one. But then, we're told, there's a second reset hard on the heels of the first. And it won't be the kind the globalists want. This reset is going to reset everybody toward God and not toward them. So, it's going to be the best thing ever – that's ever happened in the world.

If we look at the holy days of Passover and Unleavened Bread, the message there in the church is that that has actually already begun in a few. And it's going to sweep over the whole world once Christ returns. The festival of Unleavened Bread, which means *without sin*, as Paul explains it, pictures the people, who are the church, who have the Holy Spirit – who have the heart of God. Paul says something in Hebrews 8. He's explaining this to the Hebrews – the Jewish members of the church. He says:

Hebrews 8:8-12 – *"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them," declares the Lord. The contract was broken, so they didn't want to follow God. So, He had to back off. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the*

Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall willingly be my people” – willingly added. ‘And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.’ Notice the *for* there in verse 12 – “*For I will be merciful....*” That’s the reason why they’re going to know Him. Because He’s going to draw them by the sacrifice of Christ and by the healing of the planet. He’s going to *merciful* toward their iniquities and their sins He will remember no more.

Many people see this scripture as describing what will happen in the church before Christ’s return. And it does happen, but it doesn’t happen on a global scale. So, let me ask those who think that it’s just about now: Does everyone know God yet? Well, of course not. So, this is about the time pictured by the Day of Atonement, when everyone will know. Israel is no longer a nation, but the Israel of God, which includes people from all nations. So, clearly, the greatest fulfillment of this promise is *after* Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth, removes the deceiver and heals the planet. Those are the things that are going to reset everything.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said:

Matthew 6:33 – *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.*

That’s what those of us in the church try to do. But the people in the world, they don’t even know about God’s Kingdom, so they’re not seeking it first. But gradually, in the Kingdom of God – after Christ returns and the devil is restrained – people will begin to change focus from self-rule to God-rule, because it’s worth it for them. They’re going to realize there is a God that loves them and He’s healing their planet. For these people, God’s ways will become more and more important than their own for the first time. Like with us now, we’re the forerunners of that change. Everybody’s going to start thinking God’s way. And that is the road that leads straight to the heart of God – to becoming at one with Him. Our sins separate us from God, so when we let go of them and start following God, and let God forgive our sins, then this becomes an all encompassing phenomena all over the globe.

Why is all this so important? I mean, it’s important. We can see that – hugely important. It’s the greatest thing that’s ever happened, but there’s an element there that explains something else. We just read what Paul said about a new heart. If we look down the page, we see him explaining how that new heart is going to come. And amazingly – *amazingly!* – he uses this holy day – the Day of Atonement – to explain it. He reminds them that in the tabernacle and temple of old, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies – the very most holy part of the temple – and he only did that once a year on the Day of Atonement. Why? To make atonement for the sins of all the people. And that was only a shadow of something better to come. Think of it. The picture of Christ and His sacrifice has been in the Bible for everyone to read for well over a thousand years. And every

year – year after year – they acted it out in ancient Israel, and yet, they didn't even understand why Jesus was coming.

Now, after Paul explains this new heart thing, he says in Hebrews 8:1:

Hebrews 8:1-2 – *Now the point in what we are saying is this – so, here we're getting to it – we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.* And then he continues in verse 6:

V-6 – *But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.* And then he goes on to explain how Christ's ministry is how God is going to put a new heart in us.

So, Jesus Christ has been there all along, waiting in the wings to begin His saving work – first with the church and then, pictured by Atonement, with the whole of humanity. And what does that mean to God? Well, He has a bigger picture than we have. In Acts 3:21, He said that – Peter is saying this in his sermon – that Christ:

Acts 3:21 – *...whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago.*

So, we see it as a new thing, but He sees it as the beginning of a restoration of something that's been on the earth a long time ago – the restoration of God's government, which was lost in the Garden of Eden to the devil, and in the soon coming future regained by Jesus Christ. And at that time all people will have an unimpeded chance to be at one with God.

But that's not all even. It's not only just about becoming ideologically at one with God. Paul said this change of heart happens with the Father and the Son come to live in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. And Paul also said that the fruit of this Spirit causes a new way of acting and thinking – a new way of treating people He said that the fruit of the Spirit causes people to be kinder, more patient, more gentle, more loving, way less stressed. In what we call the Love Chapter in 1 Corinthians 13, he said that God's love will make us positive and more outward in our consideration of others, hoping the best for others, instead of wanting to accumulate everything to ourselves. And when we think of everyone having the Holy Spirit and only one church that everyone attends, with no disagreements about this or that – no splits – and all the children having so many opportunities for safe friendships going forward in the world, when we think of this kind of world to live in, the idea of a new heart for everybody sounds pretty good, doesn't it? And it's going to be that way, because it's supposed to be. It's always supposed to have been that way.

Now, by human reckoning, God has waited for this restoration for a long time – lots of

anticipation on His part. And it's been needed for a long time – the time when *all* will repent of their sins, accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master, and begin moving toward eternal life in God's family. That's what They've wanted – and at last, a world at peace, unified in Christ, when everyone will be at one with God because they have a new heart.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.