Issue # 6 ◆ Aug./Sept. 2014

"Watchman, what of the night ?"

" The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" *Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)*

▶ **THIS ISSUE'S READING**

THE SANCTUARY TRUTH

Part 4: The Atonement - # 2

(This is a continuance of the installment of Elder Grotheer's study on The Eternal Verities. Comments of the present Editor are italicized within brackets).

In the Old Testament references describing the services of the sanctuary, the word, "atonement" is used to describe the work done solely by the officiating priest. In Leviticus 4, outlining the sin offerings, the emphasis is that after the offering of the sacrifice brought by the confessor, "the priest shall make an atonement for him" (Leviticus 4: 26). Again, in the outline of the services on the Day of Atonement, the statement is made - "For on that day shall the [high] priest make an atonement for you" (Ibid. 16: 30). Further, it is emphasized that "there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when {the high priest} goeth in to make an atonement in the {most} holy" (Ibid.16: 17). The high priest alone accomplished the final atonement. In both instances it was accomplished for a people under the covenant which God made with Moses and with Israel. Keep in mind that Jesus was to *save His people* from *their sins*. Perhaps at this point of study, we should recapitulate the salient factors revealed in the typical services of atonement:

1) The Old Testament sanctuary services prefigured two atonements; one that occurred daily at the Altar in the court, and one yearly that involved the whole of the sanctuary and court, starting in the Most Holy place, and concluded at the Altar in the court (Leviticus 4 & 16).

2) The plural form is used to describe the yearly atonement. Twice in Leviticus 23: 27 -28, the plural form, *kiphurim*, is used - "it is a day of atonements." However, the LXX uses the singular, *exilasomos*, to translate the Hebrew plural, indicating that in the judgment of the translators, they perceived the Hebrew use of the plural to indicate the majestic plural. In others words, the yearly day of atonement was primary in importance, the objective to which the daily atonements focused.

[Scripture points to the return of Jesus as the climax of history and the end of this present sin-filled era: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9: 28). Since the Day of Atonement was "the objective to which the daily atonements {representing the once for all death of Christ} focused", should not our understanding of His sacrificial offering center now in the "primary ... importance" of His soon appearance "without sin unto salvation?" Is this not the larger, present view of the central truth of God's Word?]

3) Salvation history in the New Testament was not the time of the Atonement of Atonements; thus in the New Testament, the words used in the LXX referring to the Day of Atonement, as well as the daily service, were avoided.

[In conjunction with this, the anti-typical references to all the Autumn festal observances and services - unlike all the Spring festivals - are also avoided in the New Testament. Their anti-typical fulfillment in salvation history awaits the closing of the Gospel age, not its beginning.]

4) The Gospel message was the gathering of a New Israel into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ, the Surety and Mediator of such a covenant.

While the daily sacrifices in the court at the Brazen Altar prefigured the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, yet Christ was offered without the gate as the Saviour of all who would accept Him. The inscription placed on the Cross was written in three languages; the language of the professed people of God, and in the two world languages of the day, Greek and Latin (John 19: 20). It is at the Cross that two objectives meet: 1) the atonement of forgiveness; and 2) the ministry of reconciliation. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, speaks of the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 18-20), while John is speaking to those who have been reconciled that they sin not, but "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). This latter factor - the continual (daily) atonement - is too often overlooked in the study of the typical sin offerings. All - the high priest, the whole congregation, the ruler, and the common people, the four categories covered in Leviticus 4 - were in covenant relationship with God via the mediator, Moses (Exodus 34: 27). When in that covenant relationship, they became con-

scious of a separating sin, they came with the offering prescribed; confessed, and the officiating priest made atonement for them, and it was forgiven them. Christ, as the Surety of a better covenant, "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7: 22, 25), who have been reconciled to God, when we stumble and fall.

The gospel message of the New Testament seeks to bring all to the foot of the cross, to the brazen altar of the court. The New Testament message is: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5: 20), and "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2: 1). The New Testament does not go far beyond this point. Only hints of the coming Atonement of Atonements are given.

[This is understandable considering the time frame and the fact that the unrolling of the 'prophetic scroll' - particularly the unsealing of the prophecies in the book of Daniel that pertain to "the time of the end" (Daniel 12: 4-10) - would progressively reveal more concerning the final atonement as the consummation of salvation history drew nearer. In fact, the context of New Testament passages such as Hebrews 9: 18-28, in consideration of the light now shining toward the close of salvation history, shows that a dual atonement is actually being outlined. The blood of Christ's one sacrifice not only atones for the pardon and forgiveness of sin, it also atones for cleansing from sin. The New Testament focuses primarily on the former aspect (forgiveness / reconciliation) and generally views the latter aspect (cleansing / consummation) as "here" but "not yet." At the climax of His earthly ministry in A.D. 31, Jesus had indeed "made purification {cleansing} for sins" and then ascended into heaven and "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1: 3, RSV). [3] ***Like the Levitical high priest toward the conclusion of the typical yearly cycle - "Who serve{d} unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" - (Ibid. 8: 5), so Christ our great high priest, toward the conclusion of the "end of the age", will perform a final cleansing for His people and the heavenly sanctuary just prior to His return "without sin unto salvation" (see again Ibid. 9: 22-28). In our day ("the time of the end"), the "not yet" of New Testament times is now "here!"]***

To the believer is given the "earnest (*arrabwna*) of the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 1: 22; 5: 5), in other words, the pledge of what is to come. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Galatians 5: 5). {Is it not of significance, that the message of 1888 has come during the time of the final atonement?} Although "as many as are led by the Spirit of God ... are the sons of God" (Romans 8: 14), yet "the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (Ibid. 8: 19, NKJV). [4] **To those of New Testament times this expectation was perceived as "the day approaching" (Hebrews 10: 25). (For significance of "the day," see M. L. Andreasen, The Sanctuary Service, p. 170).**

The concept of a final atonement is based in the typology of the sanctuary services associated with the tenth day of the seventh month - Yom Kippur. In the Old Testament this day is noted as the Day of Atonements, plural. Leviticus 23: 27 reads - "on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement[s]." Actually, only one atonement was made on this day, an atonement for cleansing (Ibid. 16: 30).

The Septuagint in translating Leviticus 23: 27 uses the singular, *exilasomos,* for the Hebrew plural, which adds support to the position that the majestic plural was used to designate the typical Day of Atonement. This being the case, then the atonement of the tenth day of the seventh month was considered of greater significance than the atonement ministered by the common priests in the daily sin offerings brought to the sanctuary.

[This is still true today, centuries later: "Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the year for the Jewish people." ("Yom Kippur," From Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia - an Internet based resource). In the typical sanctuary services, the daily sin offerings had both their ending and beginning, "every year" with the day of atonement ceremony - see Hebrews 9: 6-7.]

This background also helps one to understand why our pioneers in their writings placed the emphasis as they did on the antitypical Day of Atonement, even denying that an atonement was ever made on Calvary. (See 0. R. L. Crosier, *The Sanctuary,* Day Star Extra, 1846; *Reproduced in Facsimiles of the Two Earliest S.D.A. Periodicals)*. With the change of emphasis today in mainline Adventism, placing the atonement of the Cross as the one atonement, and the down-play of the final atonement, even to the point of denial, there needs to be a rebalancing of the study of the atonement which reflects the whole of Scripture. If it requires a learning process, or an unlearning process, so let it be. (See TM, pg. 30). [5] A thoughtful rereading of Leviticus 16 would so indicate such a process.

[Sadly, mainline Adventism is no closer now - sixteen years later from the writing of this counsel by Elder Grotheer - to this rebalanced study than it was then. If anything, an understanding of the atonement which reflects the whole of Scripture is even more stagnant or confused today! Overall, there has not been a thoughtful rereading of Leviticus 16 or any learning / unlearning process of genuine consequence. Therefore, the observations and points made by Elder Grotheer quoted hereafter, are more pertinent than ever!]

Traditionally, we have perceived that the High Priest went only once into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. A careful study of Leviticus 16 indicates that he entered three times on that day. First the High Priest took in a censer "full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense" (verse 12). Next, he was instruct-

ed to take "the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat" (verse 14). Finally, he was to "kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail" (verse 15).

[This begins a series of four points detailing various facets of the typical Day of Atonement service. Elder Grotheer demonstrates how our "traditional" view of these things, which is not completely in harmony with the biblical revelation, distorts our perception of the sanctuary truth. The first example shows a three-movement ritual that was performed by the Levitical high priest in the most holy place (second apartment) of the earthly sanctuary. This involved a successive ministration of: 1) incense; 2) the blood of the bullock; and 3) the blood of the goat.]

Traditionally, we have pictured the ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place as a High Priest standing before the Ark of the Covenant, robed in the pontifical attire like that worn by the typical high priest. The clothing worn by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement in the typical services are described as "the holy linen coat" with "linen breeches upon his flesh," and "girded with a linen girdle," and wearing "the linen mitre." These are declared to be the "holy garments" (Leviticus 16: 4). Conforming to the traditional concept, we have lost much in our perception of the vision of Ezekiel 9. Three times in the vision given to Ezekiel, the One with the "writer's inkhorn by his side" is described as "clothed with linen" (verses 2, 3, 11). This links the sealing as associated with the work of Heaven in connection with the antitypical Day of Atonement.

[While it may appear to be a minor caveat, most of the artistic renditions of Jesus as High Priest do portray Him in this erroneous manner. To a degree, this has at least dulled our insight into the connection between the "man clothed with linen", the sealing work, and the antitypical Day of Atonement as illustrated. The same could be said of the "man clothed in linen" in the vision of Daniel (compare Dan. 10: 5-9; 12: 5-9; with Revelation 1: 12-16; 10: 1-7).]

Traditionally, we have literalized the offering of the bullock as an atonement made by the High Priest for his immediate family, failing to consider that the High Priest typified the coming great High Priest in all aspects of the services on the typical day. In fact, the introduction in the book of Hebrews to the sanctuary typology is based on this concept of the house of Moses, of which Aaron was High Priest, and the house of Christ, of which He Himself is the High Priest (see Hebrews 3: 1-6).

The contrast of the two houses is prefaced with the admonition - "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (verse 1). As the bullock was provided by the High Priest, so Christ offered Himself, as well as being the 'Lord's goat' taken from the congregation (Deuteronomy 18: 15, 18), as the offering of God. For the bullock no confession was

made, and its blood was taken first into the most holy place following the pouring of the incense upon the coals of fire. While in the Old Testament, the ministry of the sanctuary was limited to the tribe of Levi, and the priesthood to the house of Aaron, the New Testament pictures the ones who believe in Jesus "as lively stones" being "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" even "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2: 5, 9). In its entirety, the new Israel was to be a kingdom of priests. This is the "house" of Christ, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3: 6).

[Generally, our understanding of the cleansing work accomplished by the typical high priest during the Day of Atonement ceremony is limited to a single phase. The blood of the goat "upon which the Lord's lot fell" is brought into the most holy place and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat to finalize the atonement. The high priest then exits the sanctuary, comes out to the courtyard, confesses the sins of Israel over the head of "the scapegoat" (Azazel), bathes, and re-clothes himself in his regular priestly attire. Since this incomplete view fails to consider "all aspects of the services on the typical day," our conception of Christ's high priestly ministry continues to be deficient. How can we develop a more progressive understanding of the sanctuary message if the typology it's based on is only partial? Will not the anti-type follow suit?]

Traditionally, we have limited the ministry of Jesus as High Priest on the antitypical Day of Atonement and restricted it to the Most Holy Place. The type does not warrant such a conclusion. In the services as outlined in Leviticus 16, there is a progression beginning in the Most Holy (called "the holy"), and passing to the Holy Place (called "the tabernacle"), and then to the Altar of the Court, noted as "the altar before the Lord." {There is also implied movement in the vision of Ezekiel 9, from "the cherub, where upon He was" to the "threshold of the house" to give commands to those standing "beside the brasen altar," among whom was "the man clothed with linen"}.

[For a people that often emphasize to others the dangers of clinging to unbiblical teachings based upon tradition, Seventh-day Adventists certainly foster a good share of their own! How can we possibly hope to finish our God-given mission if we stubbornly refuse to bring our understanding of "present truth" into conformity with the Word of God? False belief, practice, and worship is usually rooted in "laying aside the commandment of God, [to] hold the tradition of men" (see Mark 7: 7-8). In this last example that Elder Grotheer expounds upon we see, not a single phase cleansing of the sanctuary, but a three phase cleansing. Our "tradition" has basically attributed antitypical significance, in the application of blood during the typical Day of Atonement service, only to the ministration of the goat's blood in the most holy place alone. The ministration of the

bullock's blood in the most holy place, the goat's blood in the holy place (first apartment), and the mingled blood of both the bullock and the goat on the brazen altar out in the court, is given no antitypical significance at all! Considering the observations noted by Elder Grotheer in this portion of his study, what valid reasons can we make to justify such major omissions? Has not this 'cafeteria mentality' (ie.,"we accept all this," "maybe some of that," "none of this", etc.) proven itself detrimental already? Are we not finding it harder to both promote and defend the sanctuary doctrine? Will not our troubles continue to increase if we keep handling God's Word in such a careless manner?]

In the outline of the typical service of the Day of Atonement, it is stated that the atonement was necessary for two reasons: 1) "the uncleanness of the children of Israel" and 2) "because of their transgressions in all their sins" (Leviticus 16: 16). These reasons could be summarized as the record of sin, and the cause for the record of the sins - "their uncleanness." The record is kept in "books" (Daniel 7: 10); the confession of those sins were recorded typically on the altars of the sanctuary (Leviticus 4). In the services of the typical Day of Atonements, the uncleanness is not noted as cleansed until the third phase, the cleansing at the brazen altar (Ibid. 16: 19). For that phase, the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat were mingled (verse 18). This gives some suggestion of how Heaven views the final atonement, and the magnitude of what God purposes to accomplish through the "Surety" of the better covenant.

» *To be Continued.*

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