

2012 Day of Atonement

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September 26, 2012

This is a day of fasting, a day that focuses on our being atoned to God, of being reconciled to God, of the process of becoming at one with God and His Son, the process of *how* this is accomplished.

I'm always moved by all the Holy Days, but I think this year even more so by all the Holy Days starting with Pentecost on here, obviously, because of where we are in time, of what we know now that we haven't known before, but even more so because of what God just continues to give to us – more and more and more. We just keep building. He blesses us to build upon what we've had, because each year we continue to build upon that which God has given to us, and just like Atonement here, we are able to year by year at least, we go back and we review some very basic things about Atonement because there are those Holy Days, this being one of them in that respect, that there isn't a lot specifically mentioned about for that particular day. Certainly Atonement being toward the top of that list in that area, yet there is a lot here in one respect in the scriptures we have covered year by year. But every year – and especially this year even more so – God has been blessing us to build more upon what we've had in the past.

I've been very inspired by going through and preparing some of the things for this particular sermon this year, very moved by what God is giving to us because it's so inspiring to know where we are – because we're at a time, we're getting so close now, to the time of God's government being established, to Jesus Christ returning, and of all the things that are going to be given to the world now even above and beyond what we have had leading us up to this time. We have been so blessed with all the truths that God has given to us, but the building that's going to be done now... it's just like, if we can go back and think about the time when Jesus Christ came to this earth; 4,000 years had passed and He came along then to begin to teach and to show things in a manner, in a way so far above and beyond what had previously been given. The spirit of the law. Understanding things of the spirit. Understanding truths and principles and those things that are a matter of that which is deeper in the mind to grasp and comprehend, to grasp and comprehend things on a spiritual plane, and talking about the law and giving things about the law, showing the purpose of those things that are on a spiritual plane, not just a matter of a physical way of life of living, of do's and don'ts and so forth when you think of the law, but the intent that goes into the deepest recesses of the mind, of what motivates us and why we do what we do.

So again, all the things that Jesus Christ taught, so profound, so powerful, and such a jump, if you will, in what was being revealed compared to the previous 4,000 years, and we're at another stage of time, after nearly 2,000 years for the Church, where there is *so much* that's going to be given with Jesus Christ being here on this earth and 144,000 and all the teaching that's going to be done. It really is inspiring! And we're going to find that, hopefully we'll find that, as we go through this sermon today on Atonement, about Atonement, because there are those things that God continues to reveal.

It might not have as big an impact on some as some of the specific areas I'm going to mention as we go through here, but the longer you've been in the Church, the longer you've gone through the meaning of some of these things, the more you're able to add to it, the more exciting it becomes, the more inspiring it becomes. It's not just a repetition of things every year without building, without growing, without more being added with more insight and being able to grasp more of the spirit and the purpose of what God is revealing. And so hopefully and prayerfully it'll be that kind of a blessing to everyone today even

though you're not eating – no food, no water, no liquid. I probably shouldn't remind you of those things right now at this stage because so often as soon as we begin to fast and know that you can't have any more water it seems like we're thirsty very shortly afterward. At least that's what the mind thinks even though we're really not that thirsty, but there is something in the mind when you begin this process – and so many lessons to be learned from the process of fasting.

Let's continue on now today in the context of this sermon for Atonement. So often on High Days, on annual Holy Days, like this Day of Atonement, we turn to Leviticus 23 to review the command that is given for *all* the commanded assemblies of God, but today we're going to do something a little different. We'll go there later in the sermon. So now that a lot of you have already turned over there quickly we'll get there later.

But today we're going to reverse this process a little bit because generally I speak of those things toward the beginning of a sermon when I give a particular sermon about a Holy Day. First we're going to take a quick overview of Leviticus 16, because on so many of the times we've gone through the Day of Atonement I've gone through Leviticus 16 year by year – not every year – but as a whole some review of Leviticus 16 at least. This year here we're going to go through it perhaps a bit more rapidly than at other times and certainly you can go back and listen to some of those things and review those if you want at some point in time here where we go into it a little bit more. But even this year I feel that God has given - well, I know He has - given more understanding of some of these things in Leviticus 16 just to add a little bit more to it, a little more flavour, a little more building, a little more depth in what we grasp and what we can see.

In this area of scripture in Leviticus 16 the duties outlined that are given for the High Priest, it's important that we know that what he does in those duties foreshadows the work of Jesus Christ and those things that are fulfilled through Him in God's great plan of reconciling or atoning mankind to Himself. And so that's what's reflected in so many of the duties given to the High Priest; it is a matter of that which pictures indeed, foreshadows, what Jesus Christ was going to fulfill, is currently fulfilling, and will fulfill in the future. So really, the Day of Atonement captures a lot of the plan of God, even so much of the previous portions of the plan of God and brings them up to a point in time here that is just where it is in the scheme of things, just before the Feast of Tabernacles, just before the Millennium is established. And so much of that then covers that and goes into that period of time as well and what is given in the meaning here of this particular day.

So, let's turn over there, **Leviticus 16:6 – And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.** So right here in the very beginning, to understand this isn't talking about some physical routine of what the high priest did year by year in the sense of things he was doing in atoning for him and his house, his family, his lineage and so forth, it has far more meaning than that. It is about Jesus Christ. It foreshadows what Jesus Christ was going to do. So right here in the beginning it begins to picture something, something that reveals, in that respect, of what we understand that starts with Passover and leads on into then God's plan. Everything begins with Passover, and so the Day of Atonement captures a part of the meaning of Passover and then carries this on through the past 2,000 years and to the present time we're approaching and into the Millennium as well, and beyond, candidly, in some of the things that are given here.

But when we see the word 'Atonement' being used there are people who have translated this through time in various ways with various translations, interpretations, because they don't really understand God's plan. There is some confusion because, again, they don't *grasp* the full purpose of how God is

reconciling mankind to Himself. They don't understand it all. There are pieces here and there that they grab hold of but they don't grasp and understand the completeness of God's plan. We have been so blessed to be able to grasp and comprehend a greater picture that God has given to the Church, and it's awesome, it truly is, when we begin to see it in a fuller light, and the world just doesn't have any comprehension of those things. Sometimes we don't know how blessed we are to see what we see, and after a while if we're not careful we can begin to take that for granted.

Every time we go through a Holy Day, every time we look at these things... You know, God has us do this year by year by year, to think about and focus upon the meaning of the High Days, what is contained in His plan and purpose, because we need to have that at the forefront of our being, our mind, our focus that drives us and moves us and motivates us, and it should become more exciting to us as we grow. It shouldn't become something that is dull and maybe we're tired of listening, or maybe we're tired of listening or we get a little sleepy or something. I understand sometimes that happens in life and different ages in life too people may have some of those battles, but sometimes we just don't have the excitement that we should have for what God gives to us. And candidly, a lot of that has to do then with our relationship, where we are, what we're crying out to God for, as far as food, even on this day – we're being blessed with something in a sense that is very festive, in the sense of that which God is giving to us on a spiritual plane though we're not eating on a physical plane, because of what that pictures and what we're to learn from that lesson as well.

And so again here, it's good to note then that this word for 'Atonement' – that the world hasn't understood it because they don't understand the process, and so they come up with their own definition of words and what they mean because of their interpretation of what they believe God is doing. We are so blessed to know so much more. This word that is unique in itself carries with it the thought, and candidly, the revelatory thought, because that's how we're able to understand the right interpretation, because God gives us of His spirit so that we can have revealed to us the thought that's in the mind of God, in His mind. That's the only way we can understand His word, His truth, because He conveys to us through the power of His spirit, His thought, His mind, His plan, His purpose, His *Word*, and on and on it goes... so that we can understand this process of how He works with us, of how He works with our mind, *with* the mind.

This word carries with it the thought, or if you will, the revelatory thought of *getting rid of sin*. So much of what atonement is about here is about how to get rid of sin, because everyone has sin, the world has sin. There has only been *one* person, one human being of all mankind who has never sinned, and that's Jesus Christ. Everyone else has sinned and has to be forgiven of sin because as long as there is sin in someone's life that is not repented of – or better yet not forgiven – if there is sin that is not forgiven then the person has the death penalty over them; death for eternity, never to be resurrected from. It's a judgment that God gives to human beings unless sin can be dealt with, gotten rid of. How do you get rid of sin?

And that's so much of the story of this Day of Atonement – how, in essence, to get rid of sin – and this day reveals this in a very powerful way, of how God deals with it, and it begins with the High Priest as it says here, offering up an offering for himself to make an atonement for himself and for his house, to get rid of sin, so that he would never have sin for himself to do what he was going to do, so that those that be of his house would never have sin accounted to them when it's all said and done.

Atonement reveals how such a thing is accomplished – the getting rid of sin. It's about the process of getting rid of sin. Sometimes we refer to the expression of being 'at-one' or becoming at one with God.

What does that mean? ...to become of the same mind, to become of that one mind, to become in unity and harmony with that mind, to all believe the same thing. That's why so often over the past few years we have in a very strong way emphasized more and more and more the need to all speak the same thing, to be of the same mind, and if someone isn't of the same mind then why are they here? What is their purpose? Sometimes that is another story, obviously. Sometimes that is there for a purpose and for other things to be learned.

And so this day reveals that process of how God is getting rid of sin.

Let's continue on here; let's read it again. **Verse 6 – And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself,** a getting rid of sin, it starts with him, it starts with our Passover, the process of getting rid of sin. The way God writes, the way He reveals His Word... people get excited about things they read sometimes, or speak of great authors, or speak of great works, books that have been written by people. I think of the stories, the things that supposedly one individual, Shakespeare, has written, the plays, the stories that he's written and how people applaud that and are so into that, if you will, into various kinds of authors, Emerson, poets, and so forth, things that people have done and written, and they dedicate their lives sometimes to even specific authors or specific works or many kinds of works, and it's moving to them. And I think, "That is so shallow!" It's fine if people do that, but I mean it's shallow in the sense of what God does. I don't think that they're shallow – don't misinterpret that - because there are all kinds of people in this world that make up this world and there are those things to learn from and to carry on. There are some things that are profitable then in life and we don't all do the same thing, or have all the same interest and the same desires.

And so the point being here is that those things are so shallow, so minor, so unprofessional, if you will, so *uninspired* in life when you compare to what God has given. Because what God gives is so awesomely inspired nothing can begin to match it. That's why I'm so moved sometimes and I think especially in this last year where God has opened the door to help me to grasp and comprehend and be moved more by that truth in itself, of how He is a master author in ways that nothing else even compares, because He has told the story, He determines what the story is going to be, He writes about it, He foretells it for mankind, and then He brings it to pass, and then He blesses us to see what He has done and what He is doing and to see that great power that has brought all together and continues on, to bring about His Family. It is so moving and so inspiring, truly. The more you grow, the stronger you become in spirit, the more *inspiring*, the more *moving* these things become in life, the more *meaningful* they become in life – they truly do.

Verse 7 – And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Eternal at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And so here it is, two goats, to present them before the tabernacle, or the door if you will, the entryway into the tabernacle of the congregation. Even how this is written is awesome, it's inspiring for what it's giving here. When you understand what the tabernacle is all about... before you can enter it, before you can become a part of it... When we understand the structure that God is building, when we understand that we are the Kingdom of God in embryo, we're not even yet *of* that structure fully, but we're being moulded and fashioned to fit into it – Mt. Zion, the Temple, the Tabernacle where God will dwell, where we will all dwell together into life everlasting, into everlasting life, it's inspiring! Awesome! Because here it shows that both of these goats now are presented before the Eternal, before God Almighty at the door of the Tabernacle, before anything else is done, before anyone can go in, before *anything* is done this has to take place.

And it says here, **And Aaron shall cast lots upon the goats;** this is so revealing, it truly is. And so the casting of lots, somewhat like dice and you cast them and it reveals then what is being shown. In this case here, God is showing; it's not a matter of chance and people playing games, which are fine to do – some people think that because something like this was given that people shouldn't have dice, shouldn't roll dice, shouldn't play such games. It's a game! Get a life! Don't try to make something religious out of it...unless someone's making a religion out of it like spinning wheels and counting beads, and if they're using dice as a religion then obviously it's wrong...but if it's for a game, it's a game. But here it was a matter of revelation, it was a matter of looking to God and God revealing which goat was which. The point being is that only God knew, only God could reveal it. There is so much to learn from this as well.

So for mankind, before we can begin this process or before we can ever go through, when you understand what the goats represent... and so it says here; **one lot is for the Eternal, and the other lot for the azazel.** So one lot is for the Eternal – it's the Eternal's – one goat is the Eternal's, it's for Him...and candidly, it's *His* sacrifice for mankind, it's *His* Passover, His Son. And so the one represents what His Son is going to go through – it's His, it's God Almighty's, if you will. **...the other lot, for the azazel,** the one that is to be separated, to be separated in time, to be fully separated from the presence of God, from the presence of mankind, from the presence of the God Family. The point being is for those who are called, that before any process can begin, even for us we have to come to a point in time where God has to show to us, just as He revealed to them, which goat was which. God has to show it to us, which is which. The world definitely doesn't know!

As a matter of fact, what the world automatically believes is not the right one! *That* Jesus Christ that the world believes is the azazel, it's the one who is going to be separated. That's his church, that's his religion, it's what he created, it's what he brought about and began to bring about *long before* Jesus Christ ever came along – a woman and a child that were being worshipped *long before* – because he has copied those things. He has known certain things that are going to come to pass, that God has given knowledge of what He's going to do within the angelic realm, to mankind, beforehand, and then the angelic realm has known and seen some of these things. And so Satan has always had his plan to deceive and lead man astray and to try to fight against God's purpose and God's plan and try to keep people deceived and in deception and worshipping him in a distorted, perverted manner because it's his idea, it's his way. And so people worship his ideas and his ways, in essence, in a sense worshipping him and not God. They're kept away from God through him, through his deceptions.

But God has to reveal which is which, which goat is which; and for us then when we start a process here God begins to open our mind and He shows us, He reveals to us the true Christ, that He wasn't one who had long hair and was effeminate and spoke in pious ways with hands folded and walking lightly and all these disgusting, perverted, distorted things that are given, that are the *exact opposite* of what He is really like...strong and powerful, authoritative but filled with great compassion and love and mercy. All the things that reflect qualities and attributes that are God, all powerful and all mighty, yet filled with tender mercies and kindnesses and patience. And so not something distorted, not something that is what I like to classify as protestant in thinking, pious in thinking. And so again here, God has to reveal to us, before we can ever go through the door, before we can ever enter into a process where we can begin to dwell with God and God dwell with us...this is the first step.

Verse 9 – And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Eternal's lot fell and offer him for a sin offering; how to take care of sin, how to get rid of sin – atonement – this is what this is all about. **...and**

offer him for a sin offering; this is where it begins – again, representing what Christ would fulfill *as our Passover*.

Verse 10 – But the goat on which the lot fell to be the azazel, in the King James it says ‘the scapegoat’... even that, what a deception! What a *deception* Satan has done! He feels like he’s the scapegoat, woe is me, everything is blamed on me...but he still thinks his way is right. That’s what he has always thought from the very beginning, that doesn’t change, that *doesn’t change*. He has no desire... that’s who *he is!* And so his desire then is to picture himself then as a ‘scapegoat’, the one who is mistreated, the one who is misjudged. Incredible!

But the goat on which the lot fell to be the azazel shall be presented alive before the Eternal, to make an atonement with him; so God’s had a plan, has a plan that’s going to continue on, something that this particular goat, in that respect, represents – Satan – of what’s going to happen to him. That he is still very much alive and something that is going to happen to him as a part of God’s plan and how He is going to get rid of sin. It says here, again, **to make an atonement with him,** about how to get rid of sin, **and to let him go for an azazel into the wilderness,** a spiritual wilderness. There is a lot of meaning to that, what’s going to happen in time as well, but in the beginning here what it shows then is that there is this process where God is going to complete it, of something that is going to be accomplished, of something that is going to be done, and some of these things that are going to happen even in this ceremony here that reflect things in time as well.

So, let’s continue on...so **the goat upon which the lot fell to be the azazel shall be presented alive before the Eternal;** he’s going to continue doing the things that he does, not like the other goat. The other goat was for a matter of a sin offering and God gave Him to be sacrificed, in essence, for the sake of mankind, not to be offered upon an altar but to die, that His blood spill out to the earth *for* mankind. God gave Him *for mankind*. Awesome here to understand the incredible beauty, really, of such a plan, though it was a horrifying thing that had to take place, by the process by which we are able to be saved, to be changed, to be atoned to God, to be able to get rid of sin in *our* lives.

So again here, spiritual wilderness that depicts he is going to become a part of – again, representing what Satan did basically just because of sin; when pride entered in he entered into a spiritual wilderness away from God, void of God, void of God’s spirit and help and influence and beauty. It became his world and that which he works with - is a spiritual wilderness. Think of the different religions in the world let alone that which calls itself ‘Christianity’, and it’s a spiritual wilderness, it’s just a wandering until God finally calls people out of it, calls people out of blindness, out of darkness, out of Egypt.

Verse 11 – And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself and shall make an atonement for himself and for his house; again, repeated here, again reflecting the meaning of these things, going back and talking about this again. This is given basically in different segments and repeating some of the process here and building upon it. **...and shall kill the bullock for the sin offering which is for himself...**

Verse 12 - And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Eternal, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small – beautiful scriptures here, because we understand what incense pictures. It pictures prayers. When the incense was thrown upon the altar, that smoke that came up from it, the different kinds of things that were used to make up the incense itself and the aroma that came up from that, beautiful smelling, and that is reflective of something here. As beautiful as that was, this smell, the aroma, if you will, of that which came up in that smoke that filled the room

or filled the area at that time when something like that was done, are reflected... it pictures, it foreshadows, if you will, something that was to take place through time, or pictured something that was to take place through time – the prayers of God’s people, the saints as it talks about even in Revelation. It makes it very clear what the incense is representative of.

It says **beaten small**, lessons to be learned throughout this process here, of things we sometimes just rush over and read a story and yet there is so much meaning in it. And so, beaten small...when we pray that we don’t just have some general prayer that is so generic in nature but something that we put more effort into in our thinking and what we’re praying about before God and not get into the habit of just repeating something, i.e. the Lord’s Prayer. That’s what the world does in large part. You watch some of these old movies, old westerns or something like that, and when time comes for prayer, if there is much of one at all, or people get into a jam and they start repeating the Lord’s Prayer because that’s all they know. They don’t know what prayer is. They don’t have a relationship with God. They’ve learned to repeat something over and over again. There are different religions, even within traditional Christianity, they have different prayers that they have, the Catholics have a certain thing they do when they go through the rosary and repeat it again and again and again and again...it’s like spinning the wheel in certain religions and some of the things that people do then that to them is religious and it’s akin to praying and prayer supposedly to their god. You think, “Where is the meaning? There is no purpose in that!”

That’s why we have talked about in times past here, of recent time I guess I should say, of things to do with meals as well. We get into a habit of sometimes repeating something that it doesn’t even have meaning after a while, it has no real depth and purpose to it. That’s why we need to beat the prayers small, to not let ourselves get into a situation where we’re just repeating the same thing over and over again. How would it be if...? It’s like conversations, somebody passes someone, “How are you doing?” “Oh, I’m doing fine.” Neither one really cares and they’re just kind of a courtesy and it’s like it’s just something you do, it really doesn’t really have a whole lot of meaning. The person may not have any care whatsoever how you’re doing, it’s just a greeting without meaning...and it’s fine, it’s good to do, it’s good that people greet each other and especially if they continue on with some kind of conversation that goes beyond that, that could be something to be built upon, a moment in time where something is shared. Those moments are meaningful and powerful, far more than what we grasp sometimes.

So anyway, even with God, it’s a relationship with God and we go to Him with different things and we have to learn through this process, we begin to learn even through time that so often our prayers aren’t just about ourselves. Oftentimes people begin a process of growth where so many battles they’re addressing, so many things that are happening in life, and we tend to be physical and selfish by nature and so our prayers oftentimes are selfish in nature, they reflect that we’re just praying about ourselves and our own problems and we want God basically to work things out for us.

We feel...we can deceive ourselves into thinking we want His will, we want to know what He is revealing to us. Well, on the other hand because of how we’re praying we’re really asking God that we want it our way; we want Him to remove certain things from us or to give us other things. In time we begin to learn ‘not according to my will, but Your will be done’, and we begin to learn what that means in life, we begin to think about that and pray about that and it has meaning to us. We break down our prayers.

We can use the outline of prayer, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name’. Again, to be set apart, we have to...we can pray about that, “...help me to set apart You, by example, by how I live, by how I think.” We have to set apart the Sabbath for holy use and purpose – ‘...hallowed be Your name’.

If we love God and seek to honour Him more and more...help us to do so, help us to set Him apart in our conduct, to recognize the importance of example, to ask for help in that, of the kind of example we set of a kind of fellowship we have when we come together on the Sabbath with others of God's people when we have the opportunity, if we are able to have that opportunity, or if we begin to let down and don't even follow up with that opportunity anymore and begin to be less desirous of being around God's people and we desire something else.

So again, all the things we have to address in our lives. Are we truly setting apart God in our life? That's what the first part of that is all about – it's just not empty hollow words, but they can be if we're not careful, and then we just continue to build upon those things until in time we know how to pray, we learn how to pray, we have a relationship with God and we're not just praying about ourselves...and when we are it's looking deep into our life and seeking help to change the things that need to be changed, to do this matter of atoning, the getting rid of sin. Because the deeper we look into our own life the more we realize we have to get rid of certain things that really shouldn't be there because they are sin – sin in thinking. We have just gone through a series here about relationships and going to your brother, and there is so much to understand in that because it's a way of life *all the time* in how we think about others, how we talk about others, and on and on it goes.

So again, to pray about those things – just in talking about it here a little bit we can talk to God about that. That's what prayer is, talking to God about these things, seeking guidance and direction, seeking His help, seeking His favour to be able to see things and asking for help that we not deceive ourselves, and then discussing those things before God.

And so continuing on here; so it talks here about **verse 12** here, where it says **and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and to bring it within the veil**. Now, this is important to understand too here, because right now it's talking about what he's picturing and what he's representing as the high priest, of Jesus Christ, what he's foreshadowing. And so the matter of prayer is brought up here, and beaten small. Jesus Christ set us a perfect example of a relationship with His Father, of where His mind was; 'My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me.' That which feeds Him, feeds His life, His mind, His being – God indeed first in all things. And we grow in that; it's something we're to grow in, that God's way becomes more and more exciting to us, more and more meaningful to us.

I can't help but think right now, people who are still pulling back and going back into this Laodicean spirit and not really shaken fully out of it because of what we went through over the past few months – not a lot, but it's the few, the few who stand out! And we're living in a time right now that we don't have... we're not living in Laodicea right now. When Laodicea happened it happened to the entirety of the Church! The entirety of the Church came to a point in time where it was just lukewarm and people were pulling back and not as on fire for God's way of life, not being *atoned* as they should be to God, not getting rid of sin in their life as they should have, as we should have, and we became weaker and weaker and we didn't see it happening.

Today, because of where we are in time and because of those who are continuing to respond and grow and have what I have to classify as beautiful attitudes for some of the things they've gone through and how they've dealt with it, make in cases, in some cases obviously, making mistakes but repenting and *charging forward*, getting our act together! That is what repentance is about! That's a beautiful thing! The ability to repent and *then move forward*, because if there is no repentance, if we don't really make the *change*, then we really don't move forward and we begin to kind of drift and become a little

lukewarm – not *hot* and not fully *cold*, just kind of going through the motions or trying to make others think we're going through the motions.

Some aren't even going through the motions anymore when it comes to the Sabbath and when it comes to faithfulness to God and the responsibilities they're to have week by week or month by month before God, in things that have been mentioned that sometimes I just tire of almost of mentioning. But it has to do with that which is close to us; things about the Sabbath, things about tithing, things that people become slack in because God isn't first in their life! And I think, "What a horrible thing! Because you rob yourself and those around you and you're *not* on fire and you're *not* excited! You're *not* excited about this Holy Day!" You're fasting, you're going through the motions, but you're not excited like I'm excited. I'm *excited* by this Holy Day, *inspired* by this Holy Day and by all that it means, and by what God is giving us *additional* to understand – just a little bit here and there to add to the building, to build a little bit more upon what we had the year before in understanding. And to me that's inspiring and exciting! Why? Because it's a matter of God's spirit, it's a matter that we grow, it's a matter that God is first and we're growing in that, in a closer relationship with God!

But sometimes people begin to latch onto the world and the world becomes more meaningful, more their pull, and so they go through the motions. Yeah, maybe keep this day, maybe fast on this day, but really not *into* this day, just doing it because, well, they kind of have to to reflect something in their life that really isn't true. That's a horrible thing and those things are coming out this year. Those things *will come out* this year! That's why we have talked about that which, in essence, when it's all said and done, defines you. This year is defining everyone! There is not another period of time more important than this. *This* is the time that defines people in the Church.

And so again here, Jesus Christ brings the incense within the veil, and notice **verse 13 – And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Eternal, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat...the mercy seat**, the prayers, to cover the mercy seat. So much to learn from this! I'd give a sermon on this by itself – the mercy seat. Where is God? What are we to see? His power, His glory, His majesty? Indeed all powerful and all mighty...the One of mercy. It's the mercy seat. Even in times of judgment, and the very one who's going before Him, the very one who's pictured here, willing to sacrifice His life to add to the meaning of the mercy seat of God, for the rest of mankind, to get rid of sin, of how God is getting rid of sin, and it begins here, by the mercy seat of God and Jesus Christ desirous, willing and *desirous* to fulfill His part as this process began. All about God's mercy and God's mercy upon us, that we don't just have a physical life and that's it and then no more life, no more existence - the mercy seat of God, so that there is something beyond this life.

And it goes on to say here, let's read this again...**that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony so that he does not die**. So again, setting that example, showing the *importance* of prayer, the incense, the *importance* of bringing that before God, the *importance* of developing a relationship with God, of coming before the mercy seat of God, doing it in a right way, *doing* it, living it so that we don't die. To be able to go before the mercy seat of God, Jesus Christ setting the example of all this for us, of what He was willing to do, and to grasp the meaning of it then, the importance of developing a relationship with God, the importance of going before God in prayer – otherwise we die. If we don't develop a relationship with God Almighty before His mercy seat – and not just a mercy seat but one of great love – and if we are not willing to yield ourselves to that, desire that, and grow in that and cry out to God for help in that, to appreciate it, to be thankful for that, to see it for what it is, then we'll hold onto something different, we'll want something else... we'll *want something else* besides what God is offering and we'll slowly be dying. Laodicea was slowly dying... and well, it's a

spiritual thing because falling asleep spiritually is a process of death – not growing, not one of life – but because it's a matter of God's mercy seat He still has a plan to awaken people out of that and to continue a process in them for those who will receive it...because some won't.

Verse 15 – Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil; and so again here, picturing now with the offering here, indeed, Passover and what Passover was all about. **...and bring his blood within the veil and do with the blood as he did with the blood of the bullock and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat,** that's how we're able to obtain mercy, through the blood of this offering of Christ, of what this offering pictured, Christ as our Passover, **to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement;** a way of getting rid of sin, that's what it's all about, which is the way to become at one with God. But before we can become at one with God, and the process of becoming at one with God, is to get rid of sin, that is the process – getting rid of sin! First the process of being forgiven of it and then getting it out of our being, getting it out of our mind as our minds are transformed and we come into greater unity and oneness and agreement with God – Getting rid of sin. It's a lifelong process that God has given us this day, to live, to have, to become at one with God, to get rid of sin. It's beautiful, it truly is, when we see it and the great picture that it is and the great reality that it is, of what we're blessed to live.

Verse 16 – And he shall make an atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. What do you mean? Now, this is important! We're adding to, whether you know it or not, we're adding to as we go through this story today, over and over again, we've already had some things here that we have not had before. You may think that we've always had it, but sometimes we hear something and it's so beautiful and it's so clear we think we've always known it, but you haven't – *you haven't!* But God is giving us a *bigger picture* and a greater ability to see and understand some of these things and to be moved by and to be inspired by them indeed, sharing with us more and more, especially as these things are coming to a point of becoming more completely fulfilled now in God's great plan.

And he shall make an atonement for the holy place; What is the Holy Place? What is it that we're looking...? Mount Zion! Holy Jerusalem, if you will, that which God is building, the Temple, the Tabernacle that we're all a part of, blessed to be a part of in Elohim, in the Kingdom of God, in the Family of God. And so again, **he shall make an atonement for the holy place,** for that purpose, to get rid of sin, because it's the only way we can become a part of the Holy Place, to become a part of Jerusalem, to become a part of Israel spiritually, to become a part of the Temple, to dwell there for all eternity in Mount Zion.

And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness/sin of the children of Israel; so there has to be a way of getting rid of sin in order to partake of, to be in, to have part of the Holy Place. And so again, it says here...**because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions and all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacles of the congregation,** again, where God dwells, where we're able to dwell together with God, where the people came together to be able to come before, if they offered up things, sacrifices and so forth before God, offerings and the sacrifices, they had to come to the region in Jerusalem, the area of the tabernacle, the temple, and then of course the high priest and the Levitical priests had their duties and responsibilities to receive what was brought to them, but it was their means to have a picture at least of something that was a beginning of a relationship with God, it was to draw them to God, it was where they went to present themselves before God.

For us it obviously carries far, far, *far* more meaning to have this kind of opportunity to come before God, to have an opportunity to come to the Tabernacle itself, the Temple, in a far greater way than even what was pictured by them and what they did. And so again here, the picture of this, of what it's talking about here. Because it says, **and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation**, this atonement that's being made, this taking care of sin, if you will, of getting rid of sin, to do so... **so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness**. So again here, an awesome picture of what is being shown here, that while living in physical bodies for us, with God's spirit dwelling in us during our begettal. It's a process, we're begotten of God's spirit and we're not yet born, we're begotten and we're growing as the Kingdom of God in embryo, but it's a process, it's the beginning and this here reflects in a very powerful way this process of getting rid of sin so that we can have a relationship with God. That's what this is showing! It shows that there is still sin, there is still sin in our presence, but there is a way to atone for it, to get rid of it so that we can be here in such a place, **to be in the midst**, as it says here.

Again, reading it: **And so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness**; so even though the uncleanness still exists in us, in our life, we're able to have this blessing of being there in a relationship with God, and that's what this is all about. It shows it's through the Passover, the process of getting rid of sin; it's through Jesus Christ that we can be forgiven of sin so that we can continue in a relationship with God in the midst of our uncleanness. We're still unclean but God is getting rid of the sin, and Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day there are things that we see in ourselves, and through the week as we pray and cry out to God, there are things we see in ourselves that we want to get rid of, but it's through the Passover, it's through Jesus Christ that we can go before God day by day, repent of sin, and continue in this relationship, **in the midst of**, while we still have sin inside of us we don't even see yet, but God will bring us to see it as we grow. We'll never see all of it, we'll never see fully all of our selfishness and all that's inside of us, but it's a process of fighting and conquering and overcoming and growing spiritually and having this relationship with God and being able to continue in that during our physical lifetime. So, it's beautiful, actually, how this is written here, of what was written in the Old Testament here of something that is pictured literally spiritually in our lives.

Verse 17 - And there shall not be any one in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the holy place; now, that takes it on home! There is no one yet *in* the Family, not fully *in* it! Now, we're blessed to have God in us and we in God on a spiritual plane because of begettal, because we're still in the midst of sin, we're still in a physical body, the uncleanness is still in the midst of us in our lives day by day, we see it, we have to repent of it. But no one except the high priest is able to go in here – and we're not able to yet go in in what this pictures here in the sense of the tabernacle, in the depth of it in the sense of being in Elohim, in the God Family.

Verse 17 again – **And there shall not be any one in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the holy place until he comes out and he is made**, or as it is really, **after he is made an atonement for himself and for his household and for all the congregation of Israel**. And so again, this entire process of leading up to the coming of the 144,000 because that's what's being pictured here; it's a leading up to, because of His Household, the Church, the cleansing of, the purifying of, of getting rid of sin through the Atonement, through the Passover, through Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God as our High Priest blessing us, being blessed by this process of God able to continue to live and dwell within us until this is fully accomplished, until Jesus Christ returns, and when He returns then the first phase of God's plan, the firstfruits, the 144,000 come with Him and they will be *in* the Tabernacle now, they *are* the building of the Tabernacle, the construction of it. Right now, as Mr.

Armstrong used to talk about, we're the Kingdom of God in embryo, we're the Tabernacle in embryo, we're not yet born, we still have sin in the midst of us.

And so again here, **verse 17 – And there shall not be any on in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make it**, not any other human being, no human being save this one here, save the High Priest, save Jesus Christ, **to make an atonement in the holy *place* until he comes out and has made/after he has made an atonement for himself, for his household and for all the congregation of Israel.**

Verse 20 dropping on down here – **And when he has made an end**, in other words, work now complete and time for Him to return out of the Holiest of Holies, this is where the high priest was, now it's time for Him to come out of the Holiest of Holies, and as a part of this process here then He *brings* the Tabernacle with Him, the first great part of the Tabernacle, the first great part of the Temple, the 144,000 who come with Him because they're resurrected, that which is pictured in Pentecost and those who return with Him. **And when he has made an end of reconciling the holy *place***; and so that's the beginning, that's the beginning phase of the building of the Tabernacle, the first great phase after 6,000 years. **And when he has made an end of the reconciling of the holy *place*, and the tabernacles of the congregation**, to this point in time of 144,000, because there is still a work that is going to continue on with those who are still alive now who are able to continue on in the Millennium, who have that begettal process in them, but *this* phase of the completion of the Temple, there is more to be built upon it, to be given to it, but *this* phase happens here.

...the reconciling of the holy *place*, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: so again here, that which happens at this point in time, at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth and now this live goat, the timing of it, just before the point where the Millennium is fully established, it's here, the timing of it, but before the Kingdom of God is fully established over all this earth, over all mankind, that which is going to take place first is to deal with this being, this particular goat and what this goat pictures, the azazel.

And it goes on in **verse 21** and it says **And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him**; unique words that are used here and things that are given. This word is used over and over again about confession that's made before God – it has to do with sin. And something that we do when we go before God in prayer and the process of repentance and how we're able to live a part of Atonement, of getting rid of sin, of becoming more at one with God in mind, in being, in unity and oneness, it's this beginning process here that's reflected in us as we repent of sin, as we *accept* our responsibility and confess, acknowledge, our sin. That's an awesome thing, because that's a hard thing for human beings to do, to acknowledge that they are wrong, and yet everyone has to do it, everyone has to learn how to do it, not only learn how to do it but want to do it, embrace that, and seek to change, to be transformed, to become something new and different that God is offering us.

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess/make confession before God, because *he won't do it*, that being won't confess before God so the High Priest does, Jesus Christ does, to make it clear all his sins, what he has done that's brought him to this point, to this judgment, to this moment in time of why he's going to be separated. That's what this is talking about.

...and confess/make confession before God over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions and all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. There has been that in the past that I haven't fully understood about this particular verse because we have basically said that,

no, this isn't about the sins of all of Israel being placed upon that goat, the sins of all mankind being placed upon the goat because we're all responsible for our own sins. That is true. That is true but it is also true that it's because of this being that sin exists, that *all* sin has existed, because of what this being did. It began with him. It has existed because of him. Evil has existed because of him, because of pride, because of what he did from the very beginning. That's sin. And so his part in it has been all sin, indeed, and the purpose and the reason for how man was made and the process by which man had to be made in order to become a part of the God Family, and that attitude and that spirit that exists that we must all come to see for what it is. Yes, we are all responsible for our own sins, and we have to make confession and repent of our own individual sins, of our own responsibility; we can't confess about someone else's indeed, we have to confess of ours. And some of that may include of what we have done to cause others to stumble and others to sin, indeed. Now, this being has caused all to sin, in essence. His spirit, that spirit, that attitude, that mind.

And so again here, the reality is, the truth is, that sin exists because of him and so in that manner, in that part he is guilty of sin and of those things that have been pushed upon mankind, that have been taught to mankind, all the sins that have gone before, all the sins of mankind, all the false religions, all the false ways, until God begins to draw them out of it. He is the author of sin. He is the one who's promoted sin. He is the one who is the adversary and has promoted that which is adversarial to God, to resist God, that spirit that's permeated the earth and literally has permeated the minds of human beings. So does Satan have a part in that, had a part with all human beings? Yes. That's been the battle that's existed. We have enough in our own human nature, and during the Millennium people are going to have enough in their own human nature to fight, but in the past 6,000 years *that* spirit has always been around.

And so it says, **and confess over him all the iniquity's of the children of Israel and all their transgressions and all of their sins.** So he's had part in it! Everyone is responsible for what they have chosen to do, but he's had his part in it and influenced it. But everyone else has their own responsibility for what they have chosen. You can't blame your sins, your faults on someone else, like so often I hear about, or you hear about some situations in life... it's a very common thing in the world and it's been common even around the environment of the Church of God, where people will blame all their troubles, all their woes... I got an email here not too long ago here from a young person that his parent is in the Church and this young person wrote me an email cursing and swearing and probably under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time because of the language and because of the basic error of the message there, the email and so forth, but beating up his parent and me as a pastor and as a minister, and we're the blame, and his parent is the blame; and I didn't see anywhere in there at all where there is ever any acceptance of all the stupid, foolish, ignorant, horrible, hideous decisions he's made in his life to make his life such a miserable mess, but everybody else is at fault. And you think, "What a horrible spirit!"

But that's the way it is and that's the way Satan thinks – he's the scapegoat, it's not his fault, it's everybody else's fault. It's not his fault, he didn't accept the responsibility. So there comes a time when confession has to be made over him to tell the truth for what it is and it's made by the High Priest, by the King of kings, by the one who has never sinned, ever, in His life, before He was changed and made spirit and became the first of Elohim, to be born into Elohim.

So again here, an awesome picture of that which is being shown here then, of that which is true, that indeed he has had his part in sin. And so, nobody does anything perfect in this life, and yes, we pick up traits, we see things; even as children grow up they see certain traits and they have certain battles because of their parents. That's why I love the way Mr. Armstrong used to explain and talk about how

it's going to take 3-4 generations for young people to grow and have their families and for 3-4 generations later before so much of the influence of what was being done wrong by the parents and the parents before them, and their parents before them, because of their influence in their life as they're being reared because we're not perfect, and we see wrong things and we learn wrong practices. But the choices we make of doing the wrong when we come to understand the truth, when God gives it to us, that's our responsibility, we have to fully accept it. Nobody else made us do it. Yes, we may have some things, we learned some bad habits and some wrong things along the way, some of them just as a matter of genes sometimes, you just have certain proclivities just because of your genes, but you can't blame your genes, you've got to blame yourself! Because *you* make the choice. And so we make the choices don't we, and we have to accept our own responsibility for our choices...not to blame someone else.

That's why I've oftentimes talked about how that you become upset at someone else – is it their fault? Are you a scapegoat? It's their fault for your bad attitude? ...for your wrong reaction? ...for your reviling back? No, it's ours! We have to accept it! Nobody makes us do that! It's nobody else's fault, it's just fully ours and we have to have the ownership of it, indeed, and we have to repent of it. That's what God says.

And so again, **putting them of a fit man into the wilderness.** In other words, it's going to be fully separated. Sin! What a beautiful thing...sin is going to be separated from mankind! The one responsible for sin, the one who pushes and promotes sin and confusion and the adversarial position and is the god of this world right now, referred to as the god of this world by Paul in Corinthians, he's going to be separated from mankind. What a beautiful picture! And so it's another part of the process of sin being separated from mankind when God's Kingdom is established on this earth. Sin will still be there but this being who pushes and promotes it and gives all the deception and the adversary and the spirit that goes with him is going to be separated. What a beautiful world, the world tomorrow, just because this being is separated.

And the goat shall bear upon him, he shall carry upon himself, in other words, **all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.** So that all that's passed, has passed, and there are going to be people who are resurrected at the end of the thousand years who lived during that first 6,000 years and they're not going to have that being around anymore either, but he's going to be separated for a thousand years, and have to bear that, bear that himself. That's why he is going to bear that himself and those who are with him, to bear their part in what they've done in backing him and fighting against God and resisting God as well as they became the demons.

And so it says, **and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness.** And truly, a spiritual wilderness then for him, it's going to be one that he's not going to enjoy, because they like to do what they do with life, with other life that God has created, to torment, to hurt, to destroy - it's just their mind, it's just the way they think - to use, to misuse, to abuse; perverted, distorted minds.

Going on here, let's just continue on then and this really, then, we've gone through this, we've seen the entire picture basically of an outline of the entire Day of Atonement that is about Jesus Christ, what He is going to do, the process of being atoned, the process for God's people in the first 6,000 years and candidly, the same thing that's going to continue on in time, that same process exists through the Passover. But then how God is going to deal with this being and those who follow him, this being, the other goat, the azazel and what he pictures, of the one who is going to be separated, and talking about

the return of Jesus Christ then and His returning out of, the coming back out of the Holiest of Holies and returning. Just a beautiful picture all the way through.

Well, let's turn over now to a section of scripture here, as I said from the beginning, and generally I do this if I'm going to do this certain phase of it, starting in Leviticus 23, to go to the source of where God commands all holy convocations. Because there it's listed, the weekly Sabbath, the Passover, which is a holy convocation, a commanded assembly, and then of course the High Days that follow, the seven that follow throughout the year. Leviticus 23, just reading about *this* day.

Leviticus 23:27 – And on the tenth day of the seventh month, which is today, there shall be a Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation unto you; and you shall afflict your souls, that's what we do, we afflict our souls in a physical way and hopefully in a spiritual way as we look into our lives, as we seek to change and yield ourselves to this process of atonement, which we understand begins with repentance and then a desire to become more at one with God, to be in unity and agreement with God because it goes beyond then just repentance, but it's the process of getting rid of sin and a desire we have of continually becoming stronger in spirit with God and why we seek to draw closer to God. And so we afflict our souls because this isn't normal and natural for human beings to do this, but it's something that God has called us to, this process. And so this afflicting our souls reflects so much, this matter of humility.

But going on here, **and you shall afflict your souls and offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Eternal;** and in the Hebrew here, this word 'before' even carries a greater impact, if you understand, 'before the face of', or better, 'in the presence of'. It literally means 'in the face of', 'before the face of', but it has to do with being 'in the presence of'. So it's a matter of being in the presence of God Almighty and this process of atonement. This is where it's happening, before the presence of God – so much so that as we grasp it we want to continue in the presence of God so much so that we want Him to dwell in us and His Son to dwell in us and we in them.

...to make an atonement for you before/in the presence of the Eternal your God. For whatever soul/life, in other words, living person, **that shall not be afflicted,** in other words, refuse to humble oneself and willingly sacrifice their life before God – because that's what it comes down to. It's a matter of a lack of willingness, not yielding ourselves to be afflicted, if you will, to afflict our life... because we have to battle this life! We have to battle this nature that comes with a physical existence! Selfishness, it is a battle! And we have to enter into that battle and not accept the selfishness or try to play some lukewarm game or just go through the motions, because that isn't acceptable. No change can take place in a lukewarm spirit! Only if we're in the battle, only if we're engaged in the battle, only if we desire and *want* to be atoned to God, to be of the same mind, to get rid of sin.

So...**whatever soul shall not be afflicted, in that same day he shall be cut off from among his people.** And so we understand the importance of something that's pictured here in a literal day of afflicting ourselves, a willingness to humble ourselves before God in order to - you know, that matter of being the opposite of pride...humility is the opposite of pride – the desire to get rid of sin, and humility expresses that in a very powerful way because it's about self and fighting against self. It takes *humility* to fight against self, not lifting up self, not trying to raise up self or self's ideas or thoughts or ways.

So again, we observe this instruction 'to afflict your soul' or 'afflict your life' is what we're being shown here, as a matter of fasting. That's what we do, we fast. And it doesn't take very long – it should teach

us very powerful lessons, that which we picture physically should teach us that which is very spiritual – that it doesn't take very long going without food and water that you become weak. And that should teach us, we need God. We should humble ourselves and not want our way but want God's way. We can't go very long; you become weak without God on a regular basis, of going before God in prayer, of seeking God, of desiring God. And you can't coast! You can't be lukewarm! Because those things are the opposite of what this is about. That way isn't the way of humility. That isn't a recognition that apart from God, apart from God's people when you have opportunity to be with them and you don't choose that, or how we treat one another, how we treat God's people, those things that are so important in relationships, of humbling ourselves.

And so it's just lesson after lesson, the importance of willingness to humble ourselves in prayer before God because we know we need Him. That reflects whether we have humility or pride, whether we're relying on ourselves or whether there is a real knowing there we need God. That's why we pray! Because we come to the deeper understanding *we need God* every day, every moment of every day.

So again here, this matter of fasting, which is an act of humility, this must be done in order to make *any* offering to God, before we make any offering, before we make *an* offering of any kind to God, before God will receive it. It has to be done with humility. That's the difference between Cain and Abel, a different spirit. People can offer up something to God, but again here, it's the attitude, it's the spirit in which it's done, and if it's done in a spirit of pride it's of no value. If it's done in humility that's the only way it has value and purpose and can truly be affective and God be in it in any manner or form.

Let's turn over to a Psalm. Never really gone through this in talking about the Day of Atonement, but it's so beautiful because it has so much to do with this day, it truly does. I was going to read some of the latter verses but in reading through the entirety of the Psalm it just drove the point home more and more, and God's showing here that there is a need to go through this this year – Psalm 51 – because it screams out Atonement, it truly does. It reflects Atonement over and over and over again, this story of what we're observing here today.

Psalm 51:1 – To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, came to David, and God sending Nathan to David to speak of his sin and what he'd done with Bathsheba, when he began to sin. And here is the king, the king of Israel, and this story of the prophet who came to speak to David, because God sent him to deliver David a message, and it reflects an attitude and a response then from David and what his desire was in a relationship with his God. And it's an incredible story too. We don't have much time to go into it, but here as David looked down upon a rooftop and saw Bathsheba, if you will, bathing, and he was aroused by that, drawn to her, began to lust after her – not in a right way obviously because it became a matter of lust, to have seen her there naked in an area washing herself would have been one thing and to turn from that, but he didn't do that. He began to develop on it in his mind. It reflects something about sin here.

Now, people can look at this story and be so appalled by it, and it is an appalling thing that happened, but it reflects what happens with sin, because this is the process. It's one thing if something comes into your mind and you see something, but it's what you do with it after you receive it. It has to do with the mind and how you think, what develops then into action and what develops into sin. You can't control everything that comes into your mind. There are things that are going to come into a mind, but what you do with it once it comes there, that's what's important before God, that's what determines sin. And so that's what God shows us, that's what Jesus Christ began to show in the very beginning – and matter of fact, He used one example of adultery, 'if you lust after a woman in your heart...' Well, it's one thing

to see something in your mind, to have a thought in your mind, but it's when you begin to dwell upon it and you begin to have a wrong thought and wrong thinking and wrong drawing to someone or to something. It's not just about one thing here – every sin is adultery before God. Every sin that people commit is a matter of idolatry before God, but generally we can tend to think in physical ways of something, “Oh, I'd never do that!” And yet people have and people do and men have and men do, and women in this world do as well, have done it.

I'm just talking about that which is just physical here, of something of this nature. And yet it's the very process of sin, it's the very process of what happens in the mind, and to understand this is what is so important in life. David went so far as to have another man die because of this, in a distorted fashion, in a wrong way, in a wrong spirit because of something he desired so much he was willing to... How far do people go when they have sin in their heart and in their mind? What will they do to betray other human beings to get their way? Again, we can look at this and be so appalled, but we need to be appalled at our sins, because spiritually this is what it's like.

Going on with the story here (again, that could be a whole sermon in itself).

Verse 1 – Have mercy upon me O God, according to Your loving kindness. You know, it's important when we go before God in prayer, when we repent of sin, because you know what this is, this is the beginning process of atonement, getting rid of sin, how we get rid of it. Well, we are blessed because we can go before God, because of a covenant, because of a new covenant we've entered into with God, a covenant, it's our only covenant in that respect, before God, that we have come before Him and to understand that it's a matter of God's loving kindness. God, over and over again talks about His desire for us... is to be freed from sin. And so to acknowledge it, to understand there may be things you're going to have to go through and suffer a penalty for things you've done in your life, but to be forgiven, that's what's important. And then what you have to pay for it, ah, sometimes God will remove that and sometimes you're going to have to suffer for a time, there is going to be something you're going to have to learn. He doesn't always just remove the penalty because you've repented. David had a penalty to pay. Israel had a penalty to pay because he was king over all of Israel and because of the example of that and because of the influence of that and because of others' choices because of that in life and because of what they did and justified because of that.

It says, **Have mercy upon me, O God;** that's what we do, we go before the mercy seat of God, but to understand it is a mercy seat and so that's why it's being spoken of in this way. And so we go before the mercy seat of God; He is a God of mercy and... **according to Your loving kindness, according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.** Well, that's what God tells us He *wants* to do with us. He wants to blot out the transgressions. Isn't that what this day is about? Getting rid of sin, becoming at one with God, and it is the process of getting rid of sin. That's really what it's all about in every respect.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity; a desire – we have to come to the point in times, especially there are some times in life that become greater than others, and you may have to do it many times a day and many times a week and many times a month and many times a year sometimes for the same thing. You've just got to keep going before God and repenting and fighting the fight. It's when you cease to fight it and give in or begin to justify or take liberty of the freedom you know you've been given through repentance. It isn't a license to continue in sin, there is a fine line there, and the relationship with God that we must build upon.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin; it's just like that desire of having all the dirt wrung out, use whatever it takes, pour in the Clorox, make me white, even if it hurts! It's going to hurt, but please.... that desire that we need to have before God in earnest to change, to become something different. This reflects an earnest desire to get rid of sin and we must engage in that, truly. Atonement isn't an easy process; it's a matter of afflicting our soul, afflicting our life. It isn't going to become easy, it isn't easy; it isn't easy to come out of sin, to change, to do something different.

For I acknowledge my transgressions; see, that's where we have to start! We have to acknowledge and confess! That's what confession is about; it's a matter of acknowledgement, accepting the responsibility. That says so much right there. Not blaming anyone else – it's no one else's fault, it's only 'mine' if I sin! No one else's whatsoever, no matter what they've done to 'me'. If 'I' respond, if 'I' sin, it's 'my' sin. And so this is what God wants us to do, to acknowledge, to acknowledge the sin, to confess, if you will, before Him, to, in other words, to acknowledge ownership.

...and my sin is ever before me. There are those things that should ever be before us; to understand who we are and what we are, to not think of ourselves better than what we should, because it's so easy to do. That's what happens when people judge others in a harsh way or a condemning way or looking down on someone, because it's this attitude, "I would never do that!" You know, when there's that attitude, oh, be careful, that's so untrue, the very thing you're doing is worse than what they've done. If only we could see that! The very act of doing that is *worse* than the sin we condemn in others, truly is. If only we could see it.

Against You, and You only have I sinned and done evil in Your sight. So again, it's a matter of recognizing that it's about God, it's about our relationship with Him, and that does hurt others then, and we have to come to acknowledge that as well, which things are spoken of as we go along here. But this is where it begins, before the Great God of the universe, the Almighty God. **...and done evil in Your sight,** in other words, God sees it all. Others may not see it but God sees it, and so we can sin openly, blatantly, and when we do we do it right before Him. Nothing is hidden from God. We can't be like Adam and Eve thought, that they could be in the thick of the trees and not be seen of God. No, we're seen all the time, all of our thoughts, all of our being, everything is open before God, nothing is hidden from God, and we have to acknowledge that.

Against You only have I sinned and done evil in Your sight; so that you are justified... so it's showing something here about sin and judgment upon sin. It says, **so that you are justified when you speak,** in other words, because He sees all things and knows all things, and that's true in our life, that we've done truthfully so, badly, sin, evil, but God is of truth in the sense He knows everything. There is no deception there whatsoever, God knows everything, He knows *exactly* what has taken place and full of truth of all incidences and all situations and judges rightly then. And he says, **and be clear,** in other words, clean and pure when You judge. So when we're judged it's clean and pure, it comes from God because it's absolutely the truth about what we've done and we need to acknowledge it then and confess it and seek to get rid of it.

Behold I was shaped, this is very awkward now in the King James and how this is stated here, almost makes it sound like there is something wrong with what happened with his mother, that his mother did something wrong, and that's not really what it's talking about here at all. I've wondered at different times and different years for years – well what happened, where is it in the story, where is it written in the Bible, what happened, that he came about as a result of sin in his mother's life? That's not what it's talking about.

So it says here, **Behold I was shaped in iniquity**: What does that mean? It's how it's stated here, it's very awkward English and in large part because they didn't have any understanding of what they were translating here. They didn't understand the mind of God and the words that are being used here and what God was saying. **Behold I was shaped**, it just means to be brought forth in pain. It even gives this in different examples, 'as labour and birth', 'like in childbirth', and so, **Behold I was shaped in/into iniquity**, in other words, this is when he was brought forth, there was labour and just like in labour pain and it's what happens. There is labour that takes place and what you come into is you come into sin, you're born a physical human being and all physical human beings sin because we're selfish, and this is what we're born into, this is the way life is. That's basically what it's saying.

So, **I was shaped/moulded into**; there's a purpose of why God made us physical and this is part of what David is addressing here. **...and into**, not just 'in', but **into sin did my mother conceive me**, in other words. It wasn't a matter of her being in sin, it was a matter of what took place here as a result of – actually a better way of translating this was '**I was born into iniquity, and into sin did my mother conceive me**' in the sense of giving birth and giving life, bringing 'me' into the world. So, **I was born into iniquity, and into sin did my mother conceive me**, gave me life, gave birth to me, into sin, into transgression, into this world. And that's the way the world is – all mankind, as Paul said, 'everyone has sin'. All people have sinned – God makes that very clear over and over in scripture, except for one, that's Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 – Behold, You desire, a word that means 'delight in'. **You delight in truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom**. So, truth, and when it says truth here it isn't just a matter of *knowing* the truth, it isn't just a matter of knowing the truths of God, which is something we must have in order to indeed grow in oneness with God, in order to overcome sin, in order to even know what sin is, to be in unity with God, to know what it is we're to be in unity with, and if we're not in unity with that that is sin and must be repented of and we have to come to see that. But it's also a matter of it being truth in the inward parts of our own accountability in life, of what we have done that doesn't agree with God, to be truthful about it, to be honest about it before God. God sees everything anyway; that's what he just got through saying. He says, 'You see everything! There is *nothing* that escapes you!' in essence that's what he's telling God. "And everything You see and when You judge Your judgment is true because what I've done is... You know! Nothing is hidden from You, so when You judge You're clear, You're pure, what You give is pure and clean in every respect. I'm the one that has done wrong and I am the one that must come to see it and learn to be truthful to You."

So when we confess or acknowledge our sins it's a matter of being true to God, of being truthful. And that's what it says, **You delight in truth in the inward parts**, being true, truthful about ourselves and about our own sins and about our own problems and battles and indeed, being filled with the truth too is another part of that, but a lot of this context here is about Atonement, in essence, how to be atoned to God, of how to get rid of sin, of how to become indeed at one with God.

...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom; in other words, in the deepest recesses of our being and our mind, to know wisdom. Well, what does that mean? Well, we've gone through sermons, we've talked about things. We're going to hear some more at the Feast, even about some of this. But the process there of being able to learn, of being able to see ourselves, of understanding why we're made this way as human beings is a matter of knowledge and then we begin to grow in understanding of that and then we come into agreement with it and it's our life and we acknowledge that God is true and His way is true and indeed we're at one with Him, in agreement.

So it goes on to say here then in **verse 7 – Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;** so it's like this matter of Clorox, it's like wanting something to be totally white and clean, or some other kind of soap that helps to take something out in the laundry, maybe especially the bad stains, and whatever the best stuff is in getting the worst stains that stain our lives out of us. Then indeed, wash me thoroughly with it in order to be clean and pure; **wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.** That desire, it's like a white garment that reflects/pictures righteousness and being without sin, this thing of getting rid of sin, atonement, and the desire then to repent. And so God delights in truth in the inner person, the ability to acknowledge our sin, the ability to see where we're wrong, the ability... and the willingness to, again, this same matter over and over again, ownership – not blaming someone else. That's the mind of Satan! He's the little scapegoat! Don't be a scapegoat! Don't think you're a scapegoat in life! Acknowledge your sins, accept it, because only then do we begin to change, and we really... it's a matter of acknowledging that something is sin first.

That's why people become lukewarm, because they begin to drift and begin to justify various things that they're doing in their life and they don't see the sin. Their minds become distorted in their thinking and they don't realize there is sin involved.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make/Help me to hear joy and gladness; the way we're able to rejoice before God, to be *excited* about God's way of life, to rejoice in His way of life, in His plan, in His purpose, and to rejoice in conquering and overcoming sin, to be *thankful* for what God has placed before us and to be a part of it. And it's through conquering sin, it's through this process of being atoned to God, of becoming more and more at one in unity and oneness with God.

Help me to hear joy and gladness; and that the bones which you have broken may rejoice; what does this mean, 'the bones you have broken'? It's this willingness to sacrifice self again, this attitude of afflicting our souls, because it hurts! It hurts to see what we are. It hurts to fight against what we are. It hurts to see selfishness for what it is and how ugly it is, and it takes humility to afflict our souls, to accept the ownership of what we are, and then the joy of realizing that we don't have to stay that way. It's what we can *become* that's so much more important! It's the change, it's the transformation, and the more we yield ourselves to it the more, in that respect, the fuller, the more joy, the more beautiful life becomes. And that's what he's talking about here.

So this Psalm really reflects in large part the process, again, of Atonement.

Hide/Conceal Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities; isn't that our desire? And you know, God does. We repent of sin and it's gone! It's just gone! And we should have confidence and boldness in that. To hate it, to loathe it, but to realize it's gone, and the desire is that God just put it fully away from Him. Isn't that what we desire when something has been wronged to somebody else, you've done something wrong and you just hope and pray, you just want them to be able to erase it from their mind, that they don't ever remember it anymore, that they don't ever see that in you anymore and that you're different before them? That's the desire that's being prayed about here. **Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.**

Create in me a clean heart; I love this, 'create'. It is about the creation of God. It is about something that is being done in our lives. **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew,** or as the word is, **repair a right spirit within me,** because there is that which has to change. It's a matter of repairing something that's wrong. It's a matter of *healing* something that needs to be healed or *repairing* something that's

not working right and make it work right. And so that's what God is doing, creating a right heart, a right spirit within us.

I'm just going to read to you some verses, **Isaiah 57:15 – For so says the High and the Lofty One, who inhabits/dwells in eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit.** You know, a broken spirit, broken, in other words, self is broken, the selfishness is broken to where we accept ownership, we acknowledge the sin and humble ourselves. And that hurts! We afflict ourselves, willingly so because we want something better, joy and the fullness and the beauty of being more at one with God.

So again here, **I dwell with him in the high and the holy place with him also that is of a contrite and a humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;** to *revive*, to make it alive! Just physical life is not what it's all about, but to revive spiritually, to end up and to have that which is spiritual is what it's all about.

Verse 18 – I have seen his ways and will heal him; to repair. There are things that are just not working right in our lives. We're made this way, but because of the way we are, physical, and because of the spirit that's in us, the human mind that has sin and does sin, *that* needs to be healed, it needs to be repaired so that it's not that way. Another way of talking about it is it needs to be transformed. **I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.** It's a matter of afflicting ourselves, of even mourning at times of what we are because we want to get rid of the evil, we hate it.

Verse 19 – I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace; God desires to give us peace. **...to him that is afar off and to him that is near, says the Eternal, and I will heal him,** repair, make whole – that's what it's all about.

So **Psalm 51** again here, going on in **verse 11 – Do not cast me away from Your presence; do not take your holy spirit from me;** here's the realization that that's what sin does, and we want to be clean of it so that we can have a continuing, constant relationship with God, and *not* being cut off because of sin.

Restore/Return as it is here, **to me the joy of Your salvation;** so when sin is there it's a downer. Indeed, it should be a downer, it should be something that we become low about and humble ourselves and afflict ourselves and acknowledge and confess our sins and repent and want to be different. So that *desire* has to be there! That's a part of the transformation! That *desire* has to be there, that *humility* has to be there for the transformation, for the mind...and that's an awesome thing, that with God's spirit can *change* and we become something different.

So again here, **Restore/Return to me the joy of Your salvation; and hold me up with Your free,** or as it is here, **Your willing spirit.** The word means 'willing' here. Indeed, God gives to us freely but it's a matter of something that is reflected here from God. *God* is willing and He desires it, but we have to want it and receive it. We have to want to do God's will; because God's always willing and wanting to give us of His spirit.

Verse 13 – Then, I like the word 'then' here in this case, even though it's in italics, but 'then' is definitely implied here because that's what it's all about. **Then will I teach transgressors Your ways;** *then* we're able to help others by a right example, **to teach them Your ways,** to set and reflect a right example in life of how to live. With sin there we're not able to teach anything, because actions teach a lot more

than words. Sometimes we think this is all about teaching and what comes out of our mouth and we're out here teaching others. No, no, no, no, no, it's what you live that speaks so much more loudly, if you will. **...and sinners shall be converted unto You.** By that light, by that witness, by that example through time, that's exactly what God is doing.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, just means from blood, it's just the word for blood. We have to understand what it means here because it does have to do with sin and what it does. So it says, **Deliver me from blood**, in other words, because of sin and others that are hurt by it, because it's in relationships that others are hurt. It's like this thing of killing and murder, that sin toward others, relationships, when it's wrong toward others it's a matter of spilling of blood, it's a matter of hate and murder before God, it's not a matter of love.

Verse 15 – O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth Your praise; in other words, what comes out of our mouth will be unity and oneness with God and a right way of life, it'll reflect that, that's how we'll talk, that's how we'll converse. Not something fake as we try to talk about God or try to talk about something about God. Yes, sometimes that comes out as a matter of something that happens in our life or something that's come out, something about a sermon or something that's inspiring or whatever, that's moved us, but not something we think we have to talk about in order to be religious but something that just comes out of us in the way we talk and the way we treat each other and how we talk about each other and how we talk about others.

Verse 16 – For You do not desire sacrifice; or else I would give it; and You do not delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. God can work with humility, He cannot work with pride. God's spirit does not work with pride, it requires humility. We must see ourselves for what we are and acknowledge that and desire that which is greater, which is God, from God.

Verse 18 – Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: and build up the walls of Jerusalem. The desire, the excitement, because this is what it's about, this is what's being constructed, the Tabernacle, as we read earlier about there, of Jesus Christ going into the Holiest of holies and then coming back out and no one is able to be there, to be a part of that, of the Tabernacle, of the building itself, but God has a process of working with us in the midst of our sins through our Passover until we're able to be a part of, literally then born into Elohim.

Verse 19 – Then you shall be/so that you may be, as it really should be stated here, **pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings: they shall then offer bullocks upon Your altar.** Meaning here then as we yield ourselves to this process on a spiritual plane and do things in a right spirit, in sacrifice to God, in sacrificing self, afflicting self – that's what fasting is about, afflicting self – that which pictures this process here of being atoned to God, of coming out of sin, of being made pure and white before God, filled with God's righteousness because of God dwelling in us.

Beautiful verses here of what it means to afflict your soul, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal because it's a matter of sacrifice, it's a matter of that which we willingly choose to do before God, and there is so much more we could go into in Hebrews where it talks about this very process and what we go through. But again here, some beautiful verses, a beautiful day even though we're not drinking liquid and we're not eating food. It all means so very much and it's so,so worth it, isn't it? And

it's so worth it when we'll just humble ourselves before God, indeed, and yield ourselves to this process of atonement in our life.

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