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ROSH HA SHANAH – PART 3

THE SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS – PART 1

Although Rosh Ha Shanah is over, I wish to say more about it.

The Old Testament law required specific animal offerings to be made at the temple during the Feast of Trumpets. These were to be continued daily during the Days of Awe (Tishri 2-9) and be doubled on the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10). They were to make burnt offerings of one young bullock (bull), one ram, seven lambs, and one kid (young goat). Each of these animals represented a special significance to Israel.

Let's start with the young bull offered on the altar before God. It represented the "offering up" or the "letting go" of all the pagan deities of Egypt. Their four hundred years of slavery represented bondage to sin. During that time, they had forgotten the God of their fathers and became intimately familiar with the pagan gods of Egypt of which there were many.

If you remember, upon deliverance in the wilderness, Moses spent 40 days on the mountain meeting with God and receiving the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. Upon returning down the mountain, he found the people in a festive mood having a party as they worshipped around a golden calf (young bull) that Aaron had made to be their god. The angry Moses then smashed the tablets. Why was a young bull calf chosen to be their false god? It was the chief god they had come to learn and worship in their Egyptian bondage.

The most sacred of the many Egyptian gods was the Apis Bull, which was their physical representation of the god Ptah, the god of all creation. This Apis Bull was so highly revered that when it died, it would be embalmed and placed in a tomb same as Pharaoh. A new young bull would be chosen to represent their creator god Ptah, and the cycle would be repeated.

When Israel made the golden calf, they were worshipping the pagan Egyptian god Ptah. Since Moses had grown up in the Egyptian royal court, he knew exactly what this represented. That is why he was so angry.

By offering a bull as a burnt sacrifice to Yahweh (Jehovah), it represented "leaving behind" all false gods and the bondage of sin they represented. Unfortunately, there were several periods of Jewish history where they forgot all of that and turned back to idolatry. During those times these biblical feasts were not observed. Eventually God would bring them back into observance although it often meant it would take being overwhelmed by their enemies to get their attention and cause them to repent.

It often takes "the worst of times" to get people to turn back to God. Is that what it will take in this day and age? Be prepared. Draw close to Jesus. He will see you through.