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THE DAY OF ATONEMENT – LESSON 3

The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur (Day of Covering), closed at sundown yesterday, but I wish to speak more about it and perhaps a little more on the Days of Awe. (Days of Admitting.)

Sacrifices continued as in the previous nine days with one difference. There was still one bull for a sin offering, one ram for a burnt offering, followed by seven lambs. However, instead of just one kid (young goat) there were now two kids brought before God. The High Priest was to cast lots to determine the fate of each goat, one to be sacrificed as a sin offering (the Lord's Lot) and the other to be the scapegoat.

The scapegoat gets to live. It is presented alive before the LORD to make an atonement (covering) for the nation. The priest would lay hands on the scapegoat and transfer all the sins of the people upon it. A "worthy" man would then lead away the scapegoat which symbolically bore all the sins of the people. The goat would be taken to an uninhabited wilderness area and released. The man would then return and wash himself and his garments with water.

This scapegoat symbolically took man's sins to where it (and the sins) would be seen no more. It could be seen like "casting sins into the depths of the sea" where sins are no more seen by God.

In fact, during the Days of Awe between Rosh Ha Shanah, many Jews do that very thing virtually. Based on Micah 7:19 it is written that God ***"will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."*** The families will gather at a body of water (river, lake, pond) and cast stones into the water. Each stone represents a sin they are casting off.

Water was seen as cleansing both body and soul. Many rituals involved a cleansing by washing with water. It cleansed the soul from worldly contaminations of sin or disease. Based on that, many of the Jews (though not all) would choose during the Days of Awe to be immersed entirely into a body of water.

That is what we call "water baptism." We will talk more about that tomorrow.