

**September 16, 2018 - Yom Kippur - Lev. 16:1-34 - The Ritual for Yom Kippur**  
**Torah Readings: Leviticus 16:1-34 - The Ritual for Yom Kippur**  
**Psalm 80**  
**Haftarah: Ezekiel 16:9-14, 59-62**  
**Ezekiel 36:16-25**

**Leviticus 16:1-2** - "And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."

God struck down Nadab and Abihu with fire after they approached the sanctuary with "strange fire" - incense which was not lit from the coals of the Brazen Altar touched by blood of the sacrifice (**Leviticus 10:1-2**). Aaron is warned now about how to properly approach the Holy Place, and only go into the Holy of Holies on one day, Yom Kippur.

The Talmudical treatise on the ritual of the day of atonement is entitled 'Yoma,' "the" day, which sufficiently expresses its importance.

"mercy seat" - *kappôreth* - covering. It was the golden plate that covered the ark, but the blood sprinkled on it seven times on Yom Kippur covered over and atoned for the sins of Israel. Two golden cherubim were facing each other and God's Shekinah Glory rested between them.

Targum of Jonathan: "for in my cloud the glory of my *Shechinah*, or divine Majesty, shall be revealed upon the mercy seat"

Aben Ezra says the sense is, that the High Priest should not enter but with incense, which would make a cloud, and so the glory not be seen, lest he should die.

- **Exodus 33:20** - "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live"

The smoke filled the Holy of Holies to prevent, according to some sages, any presumptuous gazer prying too curiously into the form of the mercy seat, which was the Lord's throne.

### **Preparation of the High Priest**

"Seven days before the Day of Atonement he was separated from his wife, and lodged in a chamber in the Temple, lest he should contract defilement, which might unfit him for the performance of his pontifical duties. The elders or the representatives of the Sanhedrin read and expounded to him the ordinances contained in this chapter; which he had to practice in their presence, so as to make sure that he could rightly perform all the ceremonies. This continued during the whole night previous to the Day of Atonement, when he was kept awake, so as to prevent any pollution arising from a

dream or accident by night.

"He read, in the silent hours of darkness, the Books of Job, Daniel, Ezra, and Chronicles; and if he was no scholar, and could not read, the elders read them to him. As it was deemed important that he should not fall asleep, the priests who surrounded him alternately snapped their fingers, and made him walk on the cold pavement of the court. When the chief of the thirteen priests who were appointed to perform the ordinary duties in connection with the service in the sanctuary had ascertained that the morning had dawned, that the ashes had been removed from the brazen altar, and that the time of the early sacrifice had arrived, the high priest was conducted to the baptistery, where he immersed his whole body in water." - *Ellicott's Commentary*

**Leviticus 16:3** - "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering."

Personal worthiness did not qualify him to enter, only the blood of the sacrifice. And although acting as a type of Christ the mediator, as a sinful man he needed the cloud of incense as a veil to come between him and the holiness of Yahweh.

"A bullock for a sin-offering" - owing to his high office, he had to bring a more costly sacrifice, which also represents the highest apprehension of the meaning of the sin offering.

"A ram for a burnt offering," in token of his dedicating himself wholly to God.

According to the Jewish writers, he went in four times on that day, first to offer incense, a second time to sprinkle the blood of the bullock, a third time to sprinkle the blood of the goat, and a fourth time to fetch out the censer; and if he entered a fifth time, "he was worthy of death" (Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 9.)

**Leviticus 16:4** - "He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on."

Wearing his "golden garments" he had, on this day, and for the previous week, offered the regular daily sacrifices, and performed the other duties of the sanctuary.

But to enter the Holy of Holies he attired himself in spotless white linen, like the other priests, as a token of the holiness without which none, in a spiritual sense, can enter the divine presence. Plain dress was more in harmony with a season of humility.

In the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel, the angel of God is clothed in linen (**Ezekiel 9:2, 3, 11; Ezekiel 10:2, 6, 7; Daniel 10:5; Daniel 12:6, 7**)

The Bride of Christ is also described as wearing white linen: It is "granted to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of

saints" (**Revelation 19:7, 8**).

Targum of Jonathan: The High Priest bathed as often as he changed his garments, which were no less than five times on this day. The tradition is, no man goes into the court for service, even though clean, until he has dipped himself: the high priest dips five times, and sanctifies, i.e. washes his hands and feet 10 times on that day.

**Leviticus 16:5** - "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering."

Better, "two shaggy he-goats"

During the second Temple time the two goats had to be alike in value, equal in size, and of the same color. If one of them happened to die after the decision of the lot, a new pair had to be purchased

"two kids of the goats for a sin offering:" - the one of which was killed, and the other let go alive, and both were but one offering, typical of Christ in both his natures, divine and human, united in one person

**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."

The High Priest stood by the side of the bullock, which was placed between the porch and the altar towards the east. He was arrayed in his white robes, with his face towards the west. In this attitude of a penitent sinner, he laid both his hands upon the sacrifice and confessed his sins in an audible voice in the sight of God and the assembled congregation as follows: "O Lord, I have committed iniquity; I have transgressed; I have sinned, I and my house. O Lord, I entreat thee, cover over the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins which I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house; even as it is written in the Law of Moses thy servant, 'For on that day will he cover over for you, to make you clean; from all your transgressions before the Lord ye shall be cleansed' - To this the congregation replied: "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever." Whereupon the high priest repeated this confession a second time, including in it the children of Aaron, God's holy people.  
- *Edersheim, The Temple*

### **Casting Lots**

**Leviticus 16:7-8** - "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat."

The priest, placing one of the goats on his right hand and the other on his left, took his station by the altar, and cast into an urn two pieces of gold exactly similar, inscribed, the one with the words "for the Lord," and the other "for Azazel" (the scapegoat). After having well shaken them together, he put both his hands into the box and took up a lot

in each: that in his right hand he put on the head of the goat which stood on his right, and that in his left he dropped on the other. In this manner the fate of each was decided.  
- *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

The word "Azazel" can also be interpreted to mean "the goat departing or sent away" But the words, "one lot for Jehovah and one for Azazel," require unconditionally that Azazel should be regarded as a personal being.

The desert and desolate places are mentioned elsewhere as the abode of evil spirits (**Isaiah 13:21; Isaiah 34:14; Matthew 12:43; Luke 11:24; Revelation 18:2**)

Later Jewish writings saw Azazel as a fallen angel - (Book of Enoch 8:1; 10:10; 13:1ff.)

Immediately after the lots decided the destiny of the two goats they were distinguished from each other by peculiar marks. The one which was "for Jehovah" had a red woolen thread tied around its neck, whilst the one "for Azazel" had a scarlet thread tied on its head or on its horns.

A portion of the red cloth was removed from the Azazel goat and tied to the Temple door. Each year the red cloth on the Temple door turned white, as if to signify the atonement of another Yom Kippur was acceptable to the Lord, as a reference to **Isaiah 1:18** - "Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [crimson], they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [white] wool"

The red cloth turned white each year until 30 A.D., when the cloth remained crimson each year up until the time of the Temple's destruction.

**Leviticus 16:9** - "And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering"

**Leviticus 16:10** - "But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."

Targum of Jonathan - "to send him to die in a place strong and hard, which is in the wilderness of Zuck"

### **The Secret of Azazel's Identity**

Aben Ezra (Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra - medieval Spain) suggests, there is a secret or mystery in the word Azazel, and says, you may know it and the mystery of his name, for he has companions in Scripture; and I will reveal to you, says he, part of it by a hint, when you are the son of thirty three, you may know its meaning, that is, by reckoning thirty three verses from the word "*ha'midbarah*", the word after "*azazel*" in Leviticus 16:8; where this word is first mentioned, which will fall on Leviticus 17:7; "they shall no more offer unto satyrs"; (Rashi explains the word *l'saeerim* - satyrs - to mean *l'shaydim*,

unto the demons) and so R. Menachem interprets Azazel as Samael, the angel of death, the devil, the prince that hath power over desolate places.

Maimonides - The derivation of the word Samael is "Sam-El", the "blinding of God."

So Jews believe Samael represents that part of human nature which blinds the individual from perceiving the ultimate reality, God. He is also the accuser, and the "prosecutor" in the heavenly court.

### **Into the Wilderness**

Jesus also went into a desert place and was tempted by Satan as a foreshadowing of his role as scapegoat. (**Matthew 4:1-11**)

The Scapegoat was taken to the desert by the "*ish iti*", a specially prepared man or a "fit man," to make sure the mission was accomplished. The scapegoat was so impure, that the man that led him into the wilderness stood in need of washing and cleansing (**Leviticus 16:26**) Similarly, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit.

The sages say the atonement of the day of Yom Kippur was really a result of the goat that was designated *I'azazel* and not the goat that was brought as a sacrifice. Their reasoning was that a sin offering atones for a single act of sin. The Scapegoat, however, has all the sins of the Children of Israel laid on its head, which he bears away.

Maimonides makes a truly astonishing statement - The Scapegoat renders atonement WITHOUT REPENTANCE for all commandments that are not punishable by *kares*, excision.

Why? Satan loses the power to accuse on Yom Kippur. The numerical meaning or gematria of his name is 364. With 365 days in the year, this one day, Yom Kippur, he is without power.

The Midrash continues: "as a result Samael will see that there is no sin on Yom Kippur and will explain before God, 'Creator of the world, there is one nation in this world which are akin to the ministering angels. Just like the ministering angels are barefooted, so too on this day the Jews are barefooted'." Samael makes similar observations when addressing God with respect to eating, drinking, standing all day, cohabitation, making peace amongst themselves and being free of sin. In all these activities the Jewish people on Yom Kippur are comparable to the ministering angels. The Holy One upon hearing these testimonies from the prosecutor Samael, makes atonement for the altar, the sanctuary, the priests of Israel and for all the people of the assembly of Israel. This is the Agadah that the Maimonides quotes to help understand the Scapegoat.

### **Incense**

**Leviticus 16:12-13** - "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it

within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:"

Having provided himself with two handfuls of the finest incense, and holding the censur with the fire in his right hand, and the cup with the incense in his left, he now entered for the first time through the second veil into the Holy of Holies, advanced to the ark of the covenant, and deposited the censur between its two staves. During the second Temple he stepped forward to the stone which was the substitute of the Ark, and placed the censur upon it.

Similarly, the censur is seen in Heaven:

- **Revelation 8:3** - "Then another angel, who had a golden censur, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne."

The coals of the Brazen Altar, used to ignite the Golden Incense Altar, represent the sufferings Christ endured on the cross. The taking off the coals signifies the cessation of his sufferings as they are transformed into incense, a sweet savor of acceptance before God - and the intercession of Christ.

### **Sprinkling of Blood**

**Leviticus 16:14-15** - "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:"

Another priest stood with the bowl of the blood of the bullock, stirring it, to prevent it coagulating.

During the second Temple the high priest sprinkled the blood once upwards and seven times downwards, in such a manner that the eight sprinklings formed a continuous line on the ground. As he sprinkled he was obliged to count one, two, three, &c, lest he should make a mistake.

If the High Priest made a mistake in the ritual inside the Holy of Holies, the world would end, according to the rabbinical tradition. So immediately before entering the Holy of Holies, the priests would tie a rope around his ankle. Why? Because any mistake inside the Holy of Holies could be deadly. Since he was the only one allowed into the Holy of Holies, pulling on the rope would be the only way for the priests with lower rank to get the body out.

### **The Holy Place and Brazen Altar Cleansed**

**Leviticus 16:16-17** - "And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel."

**Leviticus 16:18** - "And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel."

While this was going on, none of the ordinary priests were allowed to remain within the precincts of the tabernacle. The sanctuary or holy place and the altar of burnt offering were in like manner sprinkled seven times with the blood of the bullock and the goat. The object of this solemn ceremonial was to impress the minds of the Israelites with the conviction that the whole tabernacle was stained by the sins of a guilty people, that by their sins they had forfeited the privileges of the divine presence and worship, and that an atonement had to be made as the condition of God's remaining with them.

The exclusion of the priests indicated their unworthiness and the impurities of their service. The mingled blood of the two victims being sprinkled on the horns of the altar indicated that the priests and the people equally needed an atonement for their sins.  
- *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

### **The Scapegoat**

**Leviticus 16:20-21** - "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:"

The Mishna records the confession of Israel's sins:

"O Lord, they have committed iniquity; they have transgressed; they have sinned, - thy people, the house of Israel. O Lord, cover over, I entreat thee, their iniquities, their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before thee, - thy people, the house of Israel. As it is written in the Law of Moses thy servant, saying, ' For on that day shall it be covered over for you, to make you clean; from all your sins before the Lord ye shall be cleansed'"

- *Edersheim, The Temple*

During this confession of sins the people remained prostrate in humiliation and prayer in the court of the tabernacle, and it was the custom of the high priest to turn towards them as he pronounced the last words, "Ye shall be cleansed." At the conclusion of the confession, the high priest handed over the goat to a "fit man," that is, to a man who was standing ready to take charge of him, and sent him away by his hand into the wilderness.

- *Pulpit Commentary*

### **The Unpronounceable Name of YHWH**

Simeon the Righteous, who lived circa 300–273 B.C., was High Priest. During his tenure, he stopped pronouncing the name Yahweh, except on Yom Kippur, to keep it from being misused. He would pronounce the secret name of God three times during each of the three confessions that he made, as well as when he selected the lot for the goat "for the Lord." - 10 times in all that day, according to Edersheim.

Each time the Name was spoken, the people who could hear it cast themselves to the ground, while the multitude responded, "Blessed be the Name; the glory of his kingdom is for ever and ever" (in obedience to **Deuteronomy 32:3** - "Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.").

This secret of the Name's pronunciation was passed on from generation to generation, with appropriate students being reminded every 7 years of the correct pronunciation.

The Talmud says 40 years before the destruction of the Temple, the priests stopped pronouncing the Name. [Yoma 39b]. Eventually the knowledge of how to pronounce it was lost.

Another version of the tradition: The Talmud states that in the last generations before Jerusalem fell, priests chanted the name in a low tone, and so listeners could not discern its pronunciation. And when the Temple was destroyed, the name was no longer spoken aloud, though the pronunciation was still taught in rabbinical schools.

The Mishnah states that those who pronounce the name will have no part in the Messianic era.

**Leviticus 16:22** - "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

"a land not inhabited" = *eretz gezerah* - a land cut off, completely isolated from the surrounding country by some barrier of rock or torrent, which would make it impossible for the goat to come back again. Thus the sins were utterly lost, as though they had never been.

- **Psalms 103:12** - "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."



The scriptural directions here are simply to conduct the goat into the wilderness, where it is apparently to be let loose to pursue its own course. During the second Temple, however, the authorities decreed that the animal must be destroyed, contrary to the spirit of the Mosaic appointment. Accordingly one of the priests who was appointed to execute this mission led the goat to a rock called Zuck, in the wilderness, situate about 12 miles, or 90 furlongs, from Jerusalem. Between the holy city and this steep rock, 10 booths were erected at intervals of one mile, and persons were located in every booth to accompany the messenger to the next tent, which was distant a Sabbath day's journey. From the last booth to the rock, which was double this distance, the messenger had no companion, but he was carefully watched by the occupants of the last booth to see that he performed the ritual according to the prescribed order. On his arrival at the mountain he divided the crimson thread, which was the badge of the goat, into two; one half he fastened to the rock, and the other he tied between the two horns of the victim. Then the goat was pushed over a projecting ledge of rock, where it was dashed to pieces before it reached the bottom.

The persons stationed at the last booth to watch the proceedings waved linen cloths or white flags, thus signaling from station to station to the priests in the court of the Temple the arrival of the goat at its proper destination.

The sin offerings were considered so polluting they were almost "radioactive" in their uncleanness. The "fit man" had to go through an extensive washing and cleansing ritual.

Also, those who took the sin offering to be burned:

**Leviticus 16:27** - "And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp."

The Talmud uses scales to illustrate the effect of the Day of Atonement:

Rabbi Simeon b. Lakish said: Happy are the men to whom God imputes not guilt. Who are these? They are those whose transgressions God forgives. They are the Israelites made pure [meritorious] on the Day of Atonement, who specify all their sins, and God forgives them. 'On this day He will make an atonement for you to clean you, from all your sins shall He clean you.' Dost thou say, 'So, too, he cleans another nation?' No: he does thus to Israel only.

"On the Day of Atonement Satan comes to accuse Israel, and he particularizes their sins. He says, 'Lord of the World, there are adulterers among the nations, and also in Israel; there are thieves among the nations, and also in Israel.' And the holy blessed God he particularizes their good works, and takes a pair of balances, and puts their sins

against their good works, and weighs the one against the other; and when the two scales of the balances are alike, Satan goes to bring in other sins to overweigh; what does the holy blessed God do? Before Satan returns, he takes the sins out of the scale, and hides them, "under his purple garment"; and when Satan comes and finds no iniquity there, as it is said "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none" Jeremiah 50:20; and when Satan sees this, he says before him, Lord of the World, "thou hast taken away the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin" (Psalm 85:2).

(Pes.R. 185a)

- From 'A Rabbinic Anthology,' by C. G. Montefiore, H. M. J. Loewe, p. 72.

The purple garment they explain by, "his garment of mercy"; which is true of the mercy of God covering the sins of his people, through the purple blood of his Son; which is the purple covering of Christ, under which the saints go safe to glory, and by which blood their crimson and scarlet sins are blotted out, so as never to be seen more.

### **Covering of Purple**

**John 19:2** - "And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him ca purple robe"

See **Song of Solomon 3:9-10** - "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love for (by) the daughters of Jerusalem."

The "chariot" mentioned reminds us of the Ark of the Covenant, and is the nuptial chariot or "sedan chair" in which, according to Pausanias, three only were carried - the bride, who sat in the middle, then the bridegroom, and then the friend of the bridegroom.

### **Establishment of Yom Kippur as an an Everlasting Ordinance**

**Leviticus 16:29** - "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever."

"afflict your souls" - Fast, and abstain from all outward signs of joy. Yom Kippur - The Day of Atonement - was the only public fast commanded by the Law of Moses.

### **Sins Before the Lord and Between Persons**

**Leviticus 16:30** - "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD."

Jewish tradition holds that atonement for sins "before the Lord" is contingent on reconciliation for sins "before men" or between man and man.

After the High Priest's confession each time, he repeats the phrase "You shall be clean" or "May you be clean." But the phrase has the reflexive sense of "purify yourselves" i.e. through repentance and reconciliation.

Still, the whole atonement depends on God:

Rabbi Akiva (Yoma 8.9) says "Blessed are ye O Israel. Before whom are you made clean, and who makes you clean? Your Father in Heaven; as it is written, "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean," (**Ezekiel 36:25**). And again it says, "O Lord the hope (mikvah) of Israel" (**Jeremiah 14:8**); as the mikvah (ritual bath) cleanses the unclean so does the Holy One, Blessed be He, cleanse Israel.  
- from 'Studies in Vayikra / Leviticus' by Nehama Leibowitz, p. 149-155

### **Jesus and John the Baptist at the Jordan**

The Mishnah tells us that the high priest immersed himself five times and washed his hands and feet ten times during the sacrifices and in ministering the office on Yom Kippur ( Moed, Yoma 3 Mishneh 3). The Mikveh was the means of maintaining a state of ritual purity before a holy God.

When Jesus approached John the Baptist to be baptized, John exclaimed (**John 1:29**), "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It was proper to use either lambs or kids of goats, one year of age or under, for the Passover offerings. The Passover offering prefigured all the other Old Testament sacrifices for sin, including the Yom Kippur ritual of the twin goats.

In Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 30, it is said, "The Messiah shall bear the sins of the Israelites." i.e. like the scapegoat on Yom Kippur.

But this time, God himself would provide the lamb, as he did for Abraham:

- **Genesis 22:8** - "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

### **Baptism on Yom Kippur**

During the Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, religious life was focused on repentance. Scholars believe this was the season when John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance at the Jordan River.

It was believed that the Messiah would come on one of the Sabbaths (weekly or Festival Sabbaths) and he would be commissioned to immerse the nation in the Jordan, as Joshua had done, in preparation for the Messianic kingdom. This was the reason that the Pharisees sent priests and Levites to question John as to whether he was the Messiah, the Prophet, or Elijah (**Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:19-26**). Hence, the statement of John coming in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way of Messiah.

**Isaiah 9:6** - "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given..."

Jesus was born on Rosh Hashanah: "a child is born." On Yom Kippur at his baptism, "a Son was given" - "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (**Matthew 3:17**).

**Leviticus 16:34** - And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses."

"To be observed forever" - or until the Messiah came and put an end to all these rites and ceremonies by fulfilling them.

For believers today, the fast should be seen as a time of rejoicing for what Christ accomplished.

- **Zechariah 8:19** - "This is what the LORD of Hosts says: The fasts of the fourth, the fifth, the seventh, and the tenth months will become times of joy and gladness, cheerful feasts for the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace."