

Summary Handout

“Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened”

Lesson

4

Summary

Scripture Summary:

Moses 4; 5:1-15, Moses 6:48-62; Adam and Eve bring forth children—Adam offers sacrifice, serves God—Cain and Abel born—Cain rebels, loves Satan more than God, and becomes Perdition—Murder and wickedness spread—The gospel preached from the beginning.

Adam's seed keep a book of remembrance—His righteous posterity preach repentance—God reveals himself to Enoch—Enoch preaches the gospel—The plan of salvation was revealed to Adam—He received baptism and the priesthood.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Who Remembers the “Fall of Adam” Anymore?: The fall of Adam is one of the faded doctrines of Judaism. Discovery of ancient scriptures (The Pearl of Great Price) and the restoration of temples in modern times have restored understanding that was on the earth before. Following is a collection of Jewish thought on Adam, Eve and sin.

Literal or Allegorical? “For most of the medieval Jewish thinkers, the biblical story of Adam has both a literal and allegorical meaning. Judah Halevi wrote that in addition to the loftiest intellect ever possessed by a human being, Adam was endowed with the divine power that enables man to achieve communion with God. Maimonides held this to be possible through the development of the intellect alone, no other special gift being required. Adam's sin is understood allegorically by Maimonides as a failure to resist the demands of physical passion.”

Some Value in the “Allusion:” “In much the same way Joseph Albo interprets the whole of the story of the Garden of Eden allegorically, regarding it as a "symbolic allusion to man's fortune in the world." Thus Adam represents all of mankind; the Garden of Eden, the world; the Tree of Life, the Torah; and the serpent, the evil inclination. Just as Adam is placed in the Garden, in the midst of which stands the Tree of Life, so man is placed in the world in order to observe the commandments of the Torah. Having eaten from the forbidden fruit, Adam is banished from the Garden -- in the same way, writes Albo, as man is punished if he disobeys the divine commandments.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Meaning of Death has Faded: Death is another fact that has faded in meaning over the centuries. In Judaism, physical death is simply explained: “The Talmud explains that there are three partners in the creation of a human being; the father and mother who supply the physical parts, and God, Who supplies the spirit. At death, God reclaims his part, and the spirit lives on even though the body has died.”

What is the After Life? “The exact nature of this afterlife is the subject of great discussion in classical Jewish sources. All agree that after death the soul continues to live. The souls of the righteous enter paradise, or Gan Eden (Garden of Eden) as it is generally called. In that state "there is no eating or drinking . . . no envy, hatred or competition but only this: that the righteous sit with crowns on their heads and delight in the splendor of “God's presence” [Talmud]. The souls of the wicked enter hell, or Gehinnom, as it is known, where they undergo purification before they too can enter paradise.”

Some Rabbis Believed in Resurrection: “. . . That is that at a certain point in time God will bring everybody back to life and then the world will be a perfect place and physical life will go on indefinitely. This doctrine poses some obvious difficulties: the body actually decomposes after burial so how can it be reconstituted; furthermore what about overpopulation of the world? Those who believe in resurrection claim that anyway the whole process will be miraculous and the miracle will solve all the problems. Other rabbis however denied physical resurrection entirely and understood the afterlife to be a completely spiritual experience.”

Modern Judaism Casts Aside Belief in Resurrection: “The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides. Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy that lasted for hundreds of years. In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Yet, Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, Is So Significant: The question then arises about the purpose of such intense worship at the “Day of Atonement,” one of the holiest periods of a Jewish Year: “The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period.” “The essence of the day and the reasons for its special prayers and ceremony are expressed in the Torah: “For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord.” The Torah commands that on the tenth of Tishrei every Jew must “afflict his soul,” which is understood to mean that eating, drinking, wearing shoes made of leather, washing, anointing the body and marital relations are forbidden.”

Who is the Scapegoat? “In the times of the Temple in Jerusalem, the ritual performed by the high priest was the central feature of the Day of Atonement. The high priest, representative of the people, carried out the special service known as avodah. He took two identical goats and cast lots to see which would be sacrificed and which would be sent to Azazel. After sacrificing one of them, he sprinkled its blood on the altar and then confessed the sins of the people while placing his hands on the head of the live goat. Then the goat was sent into the wilderness . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

The Goat and The Gate: Jewish tradition indicates that this “scapegoat” was tied with a red ribbon and led out the “Gate of Mercy,” also known as the “Gate of Forgiveness” as well as the “Gate Beautiful.” It was led into the wilderness to “die on its own,” “bearing the sins of the people.”

Book of Jonah Read on Yom Kippur: What is even more interesting is that on this day, the Book of Job is read in its entirety. Jonah’s account is a simple chiasmus - a lesson in opposition. Jonah was sent “up and north” to preach repentance. Instead, he went “down and south.” He went “down into the sea,” “down to his death.” Yet, he was saved. He came back up after three nights and three days. That was the only sign Jesus of Nazareth gave the Scribes and Pharisees of his Messianic role as their Redeemer, the author of the plan of Atonement. “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (*Matthew 12:38-40*)

Like Jonah, I Recognize the Scapegoat: The message of the atonement is symbolic. The one scapegoat carrying the sins of the people is led away, in His mercy He forgives us. Believing and knowing that is beautiful. After three nights, on the third day, He arose!

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