

Messianic Rabbi: Yom Kippur or 'The Silence of the Lambs?'

Many years ago, a movie came out that I didn't watch because I don't watch scary movies. Real life provides enough opportunities to fight against fear.

The title of the movie was *The Silence of the Lambs*. While I didn't view the film, I did hear about one particular scene. In this scene, in order to escape capture, the character played by Anthony Hopkins cuts off the face of another man and places it over his face so that he would appear to be the other man.

The idea of a man putting on a temporary covering to appear different than we are is nothing new. This concept has its roots in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned and realized they were naked and G-D provided them skins to cover their nakedness. The problem with these temporary coverings of skins is that they are temporary. The longer the skin from another creation exists apart from the dead animal, the more it deteriorates and rots.

The truth is, ever since the day that G-D provided those skins for Adam and Eve to temporarily cover the results of their sinful actions, man has been trying to cover his sins in this same way. The problem with man's attempts to provide his own covering is the temporary nature of his attempts.

G-D provided Yom Kippur as an annual reminder of the temporary nature of man's best attempt at providing a covering for his sins. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, or covering. You can read more about it in Leviticus 23.

On this day, once a year, the high priest would offer a

special offering to cover the sins of Israel. However, this offering, even if it was done exactly as commanded, would only cover the sins of Israel until the next Yom Kippur. This is because the covering provided by a death is temporary.

This year, as with every year since the giving of the Torah, Jewish people all over the world will gather together. They will fast and spend nearly the entire day in prayer in their synagogues. Yet, when they leave their synagogues, they will leave with no assurance that their sins will be covered. One reason they have no assurance is that there is no temple standing and no priest to make the sacrifice, so they have no actual covering, even a temporary one.

So because Jewish people have no actual Yom Kippur offering, their Yom Kippur service is all about their effort to pray hard enough and repent fully enough that they will die to themselves enough to become a replacement for the required offering.

No matter how hard they try or how sincere they are in their efforts of fasting and prayer, they will not be able to fulfill the requirement for the year to year offering that would provide covering or atonement required in the Torah. So at the end of the Yom Kippur service, instead of leaving the service with the joy of knowing that their sins are covered, the Jewish people leave their Yom Kippur service with absolutely no assurance that they are in right standing with G-D. The Jewish people are G-D's sheep, yet they leave their Yom Kippur services as silent lambs on a day that was designed by G-D to provide a joy-filled assurance of a temporary covering.

This is because today, with no temple or priesthood, the Jewish people do not even have a way to provide for themselves even the temporary covering for year to year.

But there is Good News! When the temple was destroyed, G-D

didn't leave His sheep with no hope, nor did He intend for them to remain silent. Not at all! The truth is that before the destruction of the temple, G-D had already provided a covering for not only the Jewish people, but for *all* mankind. This covering was different from the annual sacrifice that had been offered on Yom Kippur because this covering would not decay, as we read in Psalms 16:10 (TLV):

"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol nor let Your faithful one see the Pit."

This covering was different from the annual sacrifice because it was once and for all time, as we see in Hebrews 10:12-14:

"But on the other hand, when this One offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God waiting from then on, until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected forever those being made holy."

And this covering was different from the annual offering because the covering provided is not from something that died; it is from Someone who was resurrected, which is why we are commanded in Galatians 3:26-29:

"For you are all sons of God through trusting in Messiah Yeshua. For all of you who were immersed in Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed—heirs according to the promise."

Today, the Jewish people, and all of those who choose to accept the eternal once-and-for-all-time covering provided by Yeshua (Jesus), can observe Yom Kippur and walk in the service on this most holy of days knowing with complete assurance that their sins are not just forgiven and covered for another year, but they have been covered or atoned for *forever*.

As believers in Yeshua, it is our commission to spread the word of this good news to every creature—to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The message of Yeshua's perfect atonement is the reason that we, as G-D's lambs, should *never* be silent.
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