

The Days of Awe Are Fast Approaching: Your Time to Get Right with God

When we forget our computer password for some indispensable app, or we think our information has been compromised, we can ask for a reset. After a series of questions, sometimes an image verification, and maybe updating various contact information—you enter a new password and are on your way again. Some apps and websites make you reset your password ever so often to keep your information secure.

In the Old Testament, God laid out a planned reset for His people every year. It starts the Jewish New Year and consisted of Rosh Hashanah, 10 days of repentance, and ended with Yom Kippur, also referred to as the days of awe. Observed in the fall, it was a time of reflection, repentance, cleansing and celebration of God's goodness.

God specifically set aside this time, every year, for His people to reset their lives and relationship with Him. If beliefs or character of His people had been compromised or they had gotten off track, these days of awe provided an opportunity to stop, listen to God, remember His Word and get right with Him.

As Christians, we are not under the Law, of course. But the principles God reveals through the Law are important to understand and incorporate into our lives today.

The Israelites celebrated these days of awe beginning with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. The observance included several offerings designed to reset their hearts and minds for the year ahead. At the beginning and end of this period, the people were instructed to make a burnt offering, a meal offering and a sin offering

as outlined in the book of Leviticus. And they all point to Jesus!

Perhaps you have never realized the entire Bible is about Jesus, even the meticulous descriptions of sacrifices in the book of Leviticus. Since these days of awe are about bringing us into right of relationship with the Lord, it is important that we understand the principles behind these offerings.

The burnt offering illustrates a total surrender to the Father's will. This is the essence of true worship, a heart that is in total submission to God. The burnt offering is a beautiful picture of Jesus' heart of love and consecration to His heavenly Father. It is listed first among the list of Levitical sacrifices because of its foundational role in pointing to the example of Christ. His passion was the ultimate fulfillment of the first and greatest commandment: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our might (Mark 12: 28-34). His passionate prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane should be our cry as well: not my will, but Yours, be done (Luke 22:42). So, any reset in our lives must also start with surrender to the Father's will.

The meal or grain offering represents the obedience of sinless service which naturally flows out of the surrendered life. It depicts Jesus as the perfect man, totally without sin, joyfully obedient to the will of His Father, on behalf of a sinful world (). It also represents communion with God. Through Jesus' sinless service, He became our grain offering so that we might freely commune with the Father. This too is essential if we are to live a life pleasing to God and be in right relationship with Him.

The sin offering typified Jesus as the guilt substitute for our sins. He, and he alone, is our guilt-bearer. As our sin offering, Jesus paid a debt which He did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay. As we reset our lives through repentance, it is so important to realize that Jesus took away

our guilt and paid our penalty, which is death (Rom. 6: 23). In Christ, we have received not only forgiveness, but the very righteousness of God! If you truly see that, you will want to shout!

Once the Israelites had reset their relationship with God, they were also instructed to make peace with one another. As Christians, we also need to make peace with fellow believers—crossing racial, denominational and generational lines to meet at the cross of Christ.

Many Christians use the days of awe as an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with the Lord and with one another. They set aside time to seek God as King David did in Psalm 139:23-24, praying, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my concerns, and see if there is any rebellious way in me, and lead me in the ancient way.” We can do this at any time, but if you have not done so recently, this season is an excellent time to reset our lives, relationships and way forward.

In 2019, Rosh Hashanah begins the evening of September 29 through sundown Oct. 1; and the days of awe end on Yom Kippur, Oct. 9. But prior to that is the Hebrew month of Elul, which literally means “housecleaning” and is a time of preparation for the holy days in the Jewish tradition. But it is also a time of *spiritual* housecleaning, an outward symbolic gesture of inward spiritual cleansing and reflection.

In 2019, Elul begins at sundown on Aug. 31 and ends with Rosh Hashanah, sundown Sep.t 29. It is a good time to do some spiritual housecleaning both personally and corporately.

For some time, God has been speaking to us in the ministry we steward, as well as those around us a word of reliance on Him. The word is in three parts: Stay low, in a posture of humility; draw near, by staying close to His presence and incline our ears to hear what He says so we can act when He

speaks.

Now is the time to get ourselves ready for this thing that God's about to do and to participate with Him. We must prepare our hearts and our lives for what God has for us in the coming season so that we participate with Him and not just be a spectator in the grandstands of cheering and shouting. Instead of knee-jerk reactions or allowing the world to dictate our actions, we must posture ourselves in humility so we can reflect Christ in a world of turmoil.

We are in tumultuous times, so it is crucial for each of us, individually, as well as the corporate body of Christ, to maintain right relationships and attitudes so we can walk in the way of the Lord and lead many to Christ. We have a free 10-day devotional to walk you through a spiritual reset during these days of awe, or for use at any time.

As you step into the fall, do some spiritual housecleaning as you ask God to search your heart and reset your life so there is nothing hindering you or the ministry God has for your life! To download the free devotional, go to

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You can read more about how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Levitical sacrifices in Doug Stringer's book, *Born To Die That We May Live*.