

The Preparation and Ministrations of Israel's High Priest

Compiled by: Keith Sorrels 3/2012 - semperkeith.com

The High Priest by: Pastor Tony Holyde - Hebrews 9:6-28

- **Selection:** the position of High Priest was a much sought after position - stardom and fame and only had to do one thing each year, the work of the sacrifice on the day of atonement
 - During Jesus time, selection was corrupted - it went to the highest bidder, to very wealthy men who bought their way into the position - the High Priest even had a palace to live in.
 - in AD 70, the Zealots murdered the High Priest and those wealthy men who were contending for the position and they set up a common man, a stoneworker as the High Priest. This would be the last High Priest that would serve. His name was Phannias ben Samuel.

- **High Priest preparation** - there was a lot riding on this man since he had to be clean and had to perform the sacrifices perfectly because forgiveness for all the people's sins depended on him.
 - Since the High Priest hadn't done anything all year, he had a couple helpers to:
 - ◆ Instruct and train him on how the sacrifice is done
 - ◆ Keep him from defiling himself.
 - ◆ Anoint him with ashes from the red heifer to cleanse him from the defilement like touching a corpse. This was to be done twice the week preceding the event.

 - **The night prior of the Day of Atonement** - the night of affliction, the High Priest is not going to sleep tonight. The helpers job is to help keep him from falling asleep by snapping their fingers (called a holy snap) without touching his ear. He is not only tired, he is hungry since he has not been pigging out like the rest of the people who will fast on the Day of Atonement
 - ◆ The helpers will be quoting prophecies to him.
 - ◆ The High Priest was barefoot on the cold marble floor this helped him to stay awake.
 - ◆ Before the sun rises, he will be led away because the first sacrifice is before dawn. He will take a bath (one of 5 baths taken today) and he will wash his hands and feet 10 more times.

 - **Attire**
 - ◆ Wearing 2 different outfits today
 - ◆ Zhave - Gold
 - ◆ Big di Lavon - White

 - **Procedure**
 - ◆ He will bathe in front of the people (behind a modesty screen) Mikvah ritual bath
 - ◆ When he comes out, he displays his head to show that he was completely immersed.

◆ **First Sacrifice is before dawn**

- Golden outfit - he does the regular morning sacrifice and he tends the Menorah.

◆ **Second sacrifice** - White outfit a bull and two goats.

- He inspects and approves the animals.
 - First the bull, he lays his hands on its head and pronounces the name of the Lord - YHVH the only day of the year His name is said, this day, he will do this 10 times.
 - The goats are inspected and they are dedicated to the Lord by laying his hands on its head and pronounces "to the Lord." Lots, (sticks of different lengths) were drawn by each hand and the shorter one (short end of the stick) are drawn. The goat that gets the short one, will be the scape-goat. The other one is slaughtered and sacrificed. There is a tradition, superstition really that if the goat dedicated to the Lord was drawn with the left hand, it would be bad luck. With the right hand, good luck. You will see how this fits in later.
 - The Priest will tie a crimson sash onto the scape-goat.
 - Now he takes the bull and he transfers all of his sins and his families sins onto that bull and the crowd says "blessed be the name the glory of his kingdom is forever and ever."
 - The bull is then killed and the blood stirred so it won't coagulate so it can be sprinkled.
- For the first time, he will enter the Holy of Holies on behalf of his own sins. He has with him a golden censer, normally it is a silver censer but on this day, it is gold.
- He will take some coals from the fire pan and take them into the Holy of Holies along with a ladle of incense.
 - His attitude is terror, here he bought his way into this position and he is hopeful that his sacrifice would be accepted otherwise, it's death.
 - He pulls the veil aside and enters and puts the incense onto the coals in the censer so that there are clouds of sweet smelling smoke before the throne of God.
 - Then he steps back to the other side of the curtain into the holy place, being careful not to turn his back on God as he walks outside to the people.
 - The proof that his sacrifice was accepted was that he was alive and he walks out to the court of the priests so that all the people on down through the various courts of the men, women and gentiles, could see him and appreciate that he was alive.
 - Next he will take some blood and enter the Holy of Holies again and sprinkle the blood once up to Heaven and seven times down to earth. He is sprinkling onto the mercy seat.
- Now he is going to kill the selected goat, the bull sacrifice was for him, the goat is for the people. He transfers all the sins of the people onto that goat and the crowd says "blessed be the name the glory of his kingdom is forever and ever."
- He will take some of the blood back into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it onto the mercy seat as before. Then he comes out and show himself to the people that he is still alive.

- **The Scrape-goat** - this goat sent away with a crimson sash the High Priest tears the sash into three pieces.
 - Someone is appointed with take one (1/3) piece of the sash and take the goat to the wilderness.
 - He will stop every 1/2 Sabbath day's journey (about 2.5 miles) checkpoints to be seen and witnessed by the people.
 - Finally, they stop at the cliff. One of the pieces of sash was tied onto the door of the Temple and according to the Mishnah, when the sacrifice was complete, the part of the sash tied to the Temple door, turned white. Someone has said it relates to: though your sins be as scarlet, they will be white as snow.
 - The person with the scrape-goat ties a part of the sash onto a bush or rock and then the goat will be encouraged off of the cliff. According to tradition, the former method was to merely release the goat but one time, the Scrape-goat actually wandered back into Jerusalem which was a shock to the people and seen as a bad omen.

- **Tradition** also says that after Jesus was crucified until the end of the ceremony in 70 ACE :
 - The sash stopped turning white.
 - The Scrape-goat lot always went to the left hand.
 - In the Holy place, the western end of the menorah, the closest lamp socket to the Holy of Holies could not be light. This was the servant lamp which was supposed to be lit first and the other lamps were lit with that.
 - The doors of the temple kept blowing open by itself. Since the veil of the temple was torn, with the door open the people could not see into the Holy of Holies.
 - They, the religious Jewish leaders, saw these things as warnings about the coming destruction of the temple and they quoted Zec 11:1, Open your doors, O Lebanon, That fire may devour your cedars. This was because the inside of the temple was paneled with Cedar from Lebanon and when the Temple was destroyed, it was burned.
 - The fire so burned the Temple that the gold melted and flowed down into the building blocks. The blocks were taken apart by the Romans to remove the gold. This brings to mind the Jesus' prophesy in Mark 13:2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Praise the Lord God for all he has done!