

THE DAY of ATONEMENT

Sermon by Robert Schmid

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“This is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Now in case anyone doubt that this verse is in the Bible, lets open our Bibles to the book of Psalms, Psalm 118 and verse 24. In fact, lets all read it together:

“This is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

What day did the Lord make? We know that He made all days, but for today, He made for us this very special Day of Atonement. This raises two questions:

No. 1 -- Why did God make this Day of Atonement? and

No. 2 -- Why are we to rejoice in this day of Atonement?

Answering these two questions will be the purpose of this sermon. Answering these two questions is so important, that God has determined that we answer them every year on this annual holy day, this Day of Atonement.

Now in order to answer questions that are of a spiritual nature, such as the ones I posed, we need help to understand, and to understand correctly.

Psalm 111 verse 10 tells us:

“that a good understanding have all those who keep His commandments.”

And then, I like to go to the book of Ecclesiastes, Eccl. 4 and verse 12. The last part of verse 12 says that:

“A threefold cord is not easily (or not quickly) broken.”

I believe that God has provided us with such a threefold cord that will help us to avoid wrong answers to our questions. The threefold cord God has given us to understand spiritual truth, is:

No.1 His **Word**, His written word the Bible and His living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

No.2 His **Holy Spirit**, His power, which is absolutely necessary, and

No.3 His **Creation** by which we would know His eternal power and deity (Rom 1:20).

Just assume you tried to understand spiritual truth without the Word of God—the Bible. That would be hopeless. Or consider, trying to understand the nature of an invisible God without God’s Holy Spirit? No, you would surely end up with wrong answers, and so we want to rely today on a threefold cord, the WORD, the HOLY SPIRIT and GOD’S CREATION, a threefold cord which can not be easily broken, to answer the two questions before us:

Why did God make this day? and Why are we to rejoice in it?

So lets begin by acknowledging that the Day of Atonement is but one of seven annual Sabbaths God has given to His people. The Day of Atonement is but one of seven steppingstones, if you will, that explain the complete plan of salvation. But why *seven* annual holy days? Well, in order to answer that we must go back to the book of Genesis, and to the days of creation as they are described in Gen. 1:3 to 2:3. Here we find the creation of the weekly cycle, beginning with verse

3, and the creation of light on the first day. Then on the second day God created the firmament which He called Heaven. God was working, and on the third day He caused the dry land and vegetation to appear. On the fourth day (verse 14), He made the sun, moon and stars. Now in order for us to understand what He meant by “a day”, God ended each day's work by saying:

“And there was evening and there was morning, a new day.” Obviously, 24 hour days.

On the fifth day God created the birds and the fishes, and on the sixth day the animals and man. Then on the seventh day it says in Gen 2:1:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.”

Please notice that God specifically says that He rested on THE SEVENTH DAY, not only once, but three times? Brethren, it is not the first day, it is not the sixth day, and it is not any day. It is the *seventh, seventh, seventh* day and a threefold admonition can not be easily broken. So the seven day, or weekly cycle exists because God worked for six days, and rested on the seventh from all His labor. Man, of course is to follow God's example of working six days, and resting on the seventh.

But in addition to that, God also let it be known that to Him a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day (2 Pet 3:8), and so the weekly, seven day cycle, is but a precursor, an example of a seven thousand year plan that God has, which is revealed through His seven annual Sabbaths. Seven of course is the number of completion and perfection, and so, in Leviticus when God gave to Israel His annual festivals, He gave them seven annual Sabbaths.

Let's review them. We all know and understand that they are:

1.) The Passover,

the plan of salvation begins with Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. Without that beginning, without acceptance of that sacrifice, there would be no purpose of even considering any of the other holy days, for where there is no sacrifice for sin, there would only be death.

2.) Days of Unleavened Bread,

as soon as we have accepted the Passover, which is something God did for us—we had no part in it, God expects us, on the very next day, to *do* something. Beginning with the First Day of Unleavened Bread, He expects us to *stop sinning* and to search out the leaven, a symbol of sin, which is hidden in many places of our life. Again, you might ask why seven days of unleavened bread? Well the obvious answer is that we will have to fight the battle of sin for the rest of our life. From the day we are baptized to the day we die we must search out, overcome, and remove sin from our life.

3.) Pentecost,

once God has seen that you are serious about removing sin from your life, He then says Ok, this person really means it, and so He will give us a gift, the gift of His Holy Spirit, which gives us the power and ability to quit and overcome and remove sin, and to understand spiritual truths.

Now, so far we have covered the Spring Holy Days, and I am sure you are all aware that these first three Holy Days are history. In other words they have already happened and we look back on them when we celebrate them. They are designed to change us *personally*. The next four Holy

Days are the Fall Holy Days that we look forward to, they are yet to be fulfilled. They are designed to change the *world*.

4.) The Feast of Trumpets,

the blowing of the trumpets will announce the return, the second coming of Jesus Christ.

5.) The Day of Atonement,

is the day when Satan will be bound for one thousand years.

6.) The Feast of Tabernacles,

which again lasts for seven days, is representing the Kingdom of God for one thousand years, ruled over by Jesus Christ.

7.) The Last Great Day,

this will be the time when all those who have not had an opportunity to accept and know Jesus Christ in this life, will have that opportunity that God promises to all who have ever lived. It is my personal belief that all who have ever been conceived, will also be resurrected. Spiritual life, just as physical life, begins at conception. Once you receive God's Holy Spirit at baptism you are a child of God, and God, as the loving Father that He is, will take care of you until you are born, born of God at the resurrection.

So the seven annual Holy Days explain the complete plan of salvation. One simply can not know and understand what God is doing without a knowledge of the weekly and annual Sabbaths.

We are very blessed to have this knowledge, but we must forever be vigilant to defend and uphold this wonderful truth that has been given to us.

Speaking about upholding truth, lets take a quick detour and look at Rev., the 21st chapter. This, of course is the chapter describing the New Heaven and the New Earth, and in verse 8 it tells us who is NOT going to be in the New Jerusalem that is going to come down from heaven (Rev. 21:8).

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.”

Now we can all relate to the obvious, and that is that there will be no murderers, no idolaters and no liars in the New Jerusalem, because the commandments make that perfectly clear. But, I can't help but wonder about this first category which says that NO COWARDS will be there! We all know that there is no such commandment that says: “Thou shalt not be a coward”! Who are the cowards? Or - What is a coward? Well, a coward is one who is fearful. Fearful of doing something, fearful of standing up for something. One might have been given a talent by God, but he is fearful - he is a coward to use it. A coward might be someone who is hiding his God given talents under a bushel instead of letting his light shine. This is something to really think about. You don't want to be a coward. God has given us precious knowledge and understanding of his Sabbaths and of His plan of salvation, about who and what He is, and we must be defenders of the truths that have been given to us.

All right, now that we have an overview of the Holy Days, lets begin to examine the Day of Atonement more specifically as it is described in Lev. 23:26-32. Did you notice, here we have

another three fold cord. Three times in these verses God admonishes us that we shall, that is that we must, afflict ourselves on this day. And that is, of course, why we are fasting today.

Now lets ask the question: What is an “atonement” and what does the word “atonement” mean?

Allow me to read the foot note on Lev. 16, from the Harpers Study Bible that I use, which explains it better than I can: (Read foot note A & B on page 168 & 169).

"The nature of Christ's offering of Himself on the cross is comprehended under the word *atonement* (kippur). This word (derived from the Hebrew *kipper*, "to atone") means to cover over by an expiatory sacrifice. It includes Christ's payment of the penalty for sin and His rendering to God a life of perfect obedience. He suffered vicariously, i.e., as a substitute, the just for the unjust, dying in our place and stead (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). In the New Testament the word *reconciliation* is used (from the Greek *katallage*), which means to effect reparation legally and morally for injury done (Rom 5:11) and thus to bring about a restored relationship between those who were at enmity with each other. Man had broken the law and God's justice required the penalty of death from the sinner. This penalty Christ paid in the atonement. The effect of the atonement is to provide righteousness and eternal life for those who accept it by faith in Christ (Eph 2:8-10)."

"Day of Atonement. The sacrifice of bulls and goats did not remove sin (Heb 10:4), for only the death of Christ on Calvary could do that. But redemption before Calvary was possible. The Old Testament sacrificial system enabled men to manifest their faith so that their sins were "covered," looking forward to the death of Christ. Thus, in a sense, each sacrifice was like a check drawn against a bank deposit; in and of itself a check is but a scrap of paper, but it effects true payment nevertheless, because eventually the money itself is transmitted to honor the check. Every faith-supported sacrifice of pre-Christian times was drawn against the account of Christ's atoning merit on Calvary. In the Old Testament era the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement was repeated annually when the high priest entered the holy of holies (and not without blood) to atone for himself and for his people (Heb 9:7). Since the sacrifices were a type of Christ's perfect and final sacrifice, the old dispensation ended with Christ's death and there was and is no further need foe animal sacrifices (Heb 9:12-28)."

We see here that the literal Day of Atonement, which is still in the future, will bring about full reconciliation between God and man. Why? Because blood was shed either symbolically with animals, looking forward to the Spring Holy Days, or literally, through the Son of God on Calvary looking back to the Spring Holy Days as we do.

So the Day of Atonement is primarily about reconciliation and unity, something we desperately need in the Church of God and in the world as a whole. Consider the words of Jesus Christ in 1John 4:20 - 21 when He said:

“If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.”

God says: If you say you love me, but hate your brother, you’re a liar and liars will not be in the kingdom of God. Then God says: We CAN NOT love Him whom we have never seen, if we hate our brother whom we see. It simply can not be done. This is a very serious admonition that we really need to take to heart.

This day of Atonement, is so very important because it will bring about unity between you and your brethren which in turn will allow us to love God as we ought to.

Lets review, at least in part, the symbolism as it was acted out each year by God's people the Israelites.

For those of you new to this material, or for those who have forgotten what took place on the Day of Atonement in Old Testament times, I strongly recommend that you review this material in Leviticus, and from either the old or the new booklet on the Holy Days.

You might remember from Lev. 16 that only the High Priest could enter into the holy of holies, and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. First, Aaron had to present a sin offering for himself and his family before the mercy seat of God. Then he was to take two goats and present them before the Lord. Then Aaron had to cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and one lot for Azazel. The one lot for the Lord represented Jesus Christ who would be slain to pay the penalty for our sins. The other goat was presented alive before the Lord to make atonement upon it. The high priest was to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites - all their sins - and he was to put them on the head of the goat. This Azazel, or Scapegoat as it is translated in the KJV, represents Satan who bears responsibility for all sin and now gets it all back. That is true justice.

Then the goat is send out by a fit man, one who is qualified, into the wilderness into a solitary place as we can now also read about in Rev. 20:1-3.

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized that dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended.”

Surely, we can see that once Satan is removed, unity will be possible as never before. We simply can not imagine a world without the influence of Satan. A world without sin. It will be tremendous. But what about in the mean time? What does the Day of Atonement mean for us today?

Well the word Atonement can of course also be read as AT-ONE-MENT. What does it mean to become At-ONE with God? Now I grand you that today we only see through a glass darkly. We see, but we do not yet see all things. After all, God is spirit and we are physical. But consider God's first and most important commandment He has given to His people. God commands us in Ex. 20:3

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

A very short and precise command not to have any other gods before the one true God. That's a tall order considering the many other gods there are. And yet, we must follow this command for the simple reason that only the true God can save us from the penalty of sin, which is death.

Now, we have to ask ourselves did God intentionally reveal Himself in such a way that it is impossible, or at least very difficult, to know the true God from the false gods? Did God tell us in His Word that in order to know Him we must first attend a theological seminary and study the creeds and statements of beliefs that men have written, in order to know Who and What the true God is? No, we all know that He said no such thing. In fact, He said exactly the opposite. Lets read it in Matt 18:3-4

“And Jesus said: Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

So, God wants us to approach Him with a childlike attitude. And so, I now want to talk about how God is ONE GOD as seen through the eyes of a child, and I consider myself a child of God.

Before I do this, let's talk for a moment about the false gods that we are to stay away from. There are obviously many, and I can not address them all for the simple reason that I do not know them all. But I do want to say a few words about two concepts of God that are prevalent in Christianity and in Judaism. Two concepts of God that I consider false, or at least false to my understanding of God. Two concepts that need to be understood, in order to help us understand the one true God of the Bible.

First, let's talk about the idea that God is a Trinity. The official definition of this doctrine is: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God in three divine and distinct persons.

The primary problem with this Trinity doctrine is that it is not in the Bible.

The Trinity doctrine, as most of you know, was formulated in the third century by men who were part of the Roman Catholic church organization and the civil Roman government. This doctrine not only is not in the Bible, but it is in direct contradiction to the concept that God is a family.

A Trinity is obviously limited to three, and one can not add to a Trinity, otherwise it would no longer be a Trinity. What that means is that you and I could never become one with God!

A family in contrast, consists of a minimum of two, with no limit as to the number of additions there can be. That means you and I, and all people who are called by God, can truly become a part of the God family, can truly become ONE with God.

It is my belief, and I believe that I have the Spirit of God, that the doctrine of the Trinity is false, and that it keeps one from understanding the true God and how to become ONE with God, as this Day of At-one-ment symbolizes.

There is another teaching of who and what God is. It is known as monotheism. Now the word MONOTHEISM like the word TRINITY is, of course, also not in the Bible. The word monotheism consists of MONO which means ONE and THEISM which comes from the Greek word THEOS, in other words it means ONE GOD. This concept like the trinity affirms that there is but one God, but out of necessity it must denounce the deity of the Word of God, it must denounce that Jesus Christ is God. In other words monotheism does not, and can not, allow for Jesus Christ to be God simply because according to this teaching there is only ONE God and that, in this context, is God the Father. Under this concept Jesus Christ becomes a created being. He becomes God's Representative, yes, they even acknowledge that He is the Son of God, they call Him the Savior, many things, anything, *but not God*.

This type of monotheism is not only advocated by the Jews, but by many other groups, including individuals within the churches of God organizations. Often it is said that the Jews ought to know God, and we should be able to learn from them, but let me just say that the Word of God plainly says that those who reject and do not know the Son, can not, and do not know the Father. The Jews having rejected Jesus Christ, simply can not know the Father. Nothing else needs to be said!

Again, therefore it is my belief and my conviction that this type of monotheism is false, for it will also keep us from becoming ONE with God, and must therefore be rejected. Please understand, obviously there is the God the Father, and obviously there is Jesus Christ the Son of

God, and obviously there is the Holy Spirit, and yes, there is only ONE true God. The problem is not with these individual parts and words, the problem is how these words are used and how you put them together,

How are we then to understand the ONENESS of God, and how are we to become ONE with the ONE true God as this Day of Atonement, this day of At-One-Ment advocates and symbolizes.

We have already seen that we must approach God in a child like attitude. We obviously need His Holy Spirit, and God said that we would know Him, even His eternal Deity, by the things He created. Now, I ask you, what was God's greatest creation? Was it not man and woman, which by the way was not only good, as were all other things God created, no, the creation of you and me was VERY GOOD. Now, when God says that something is very good, it is very good. In fact, I believe it means that there ain't anything better anywhere. I hope you feel that way about yourself, for you are truly God's crowning creation.

How then is God one, and how are we to become ONE with God? I would like to appeal to our children, our teenagers and all my brethren to stay with me on this, for I desire to share with you my childlike understanding of the ONE-NESS of God. In John 17, Jesus Christ prayed to His Father, and no prayer of Jesus Christ will ever be denied! He prayed that you and I would become ONE with each other and ONE with Him, as He is ONE with the Father. Nothing more and nothing less.

Jesus Christ was and is totally and completely ONE with His Father, and He wants you and me to obtain that same ONE-NESS. That's what this Day of Atonement is all about.

Lets start in the beginning and go to Gen 1. Here are some verses Theologians have argued and written about for centuries. In Gen.1 and verse 26 it says:

“Let US create man in OUR image.”

These two little words US and OUR have caused more confusion than we can imagine. The US and OUR are obviously plural. A few verses later however, in verse 29 it says:

“Behold I (not WE) have given you every plant yielding seed etc..”

The “I” is obviously singular. So, naturally the question arises is God plural or singular? Is He ONE, TWO, THREE or MANY? The Trinity doctrine makes the case that God is ONE in THREE, in other words both singular and plural, with emphasis on God being ONE. Monotheism makes the case that God is ONE or singular—period.

There is an old saying that states that “the Bible is so simple that we need help to *misunderstand* it” and Satan has given us plenty of help to misunderstand. Mr. Armstrong used to teach that the Bible interprets itself, and so in order to understand the apparent contradictions in Gen.1, we go to John 1 for an explanation. Please, take off your theological hats, and put on this childlike attitude which will make John 1 comprehensible and clear. Remember what Jesus Christ said when His disciples asked Him to show them the Father, He said:

“Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me”? ”He who has seen me, has seen the Father!”

What was Jesus Christ like? Was He not like any other human being, like any other Jew of his day? Of course He was. Jesus Christ looked like you and me today, so please, as we go over John 1:1 look at your neighbor, look at me as I speak, or look into a mirror to understand how God is ONE, but also spoken of as TWO. John 1:1:

“In the beginning was the Word.”

Have you ever asked yourself, why it doesn't say: "In the beginning was God." Wouldn't that make a lot more sense? Now I do not necessarily know the ultimate answer to this question, but I do want you to be aware of the fact that it says that: "In the beginning was the **Word.**" There is obviously significance to this.

Please look at me. In the beginning was "my word". It's the first thing that you can see and hear as it comes out of my mouth. Lets face it, my mouth is the biggest thing in my face, and you are all not that much different. In fact, consider a new born baby and you will know that in the beginning there is the babies very first cry—the babies very first word. It is my word that emanates from me, and reaches you through the magic of sound and hearing. You can not perceive my thoughts with your five senses. That's why in the beginning is the Word. Everything I want to communicate and accomplish I do so with my word. That's how God does it. So,

**"In the beginning was the Word of God;
and the Word of God was with God;
and the Word of God was God."**

What else! My word and me, that is my word and my mind, my head, are inseparably ONE, and so is your word and your mind ONE, just like God's Word and God's mind are ONE. That's why Jesus Christ said in John 12: 49:

"I have NOT spoken on my own authority; the Father who send me has Himself given me commandment, what to say and what to speak. What I say, therefore, I speak, just as the Father has told me, so I speak."

The Word can only say what the mind, the head, what God, directs the Word to say. There is only ONE God, but depending on the context, He is sometimes spoken of as TWO because the Word is personified, just like the Spirit of God, or the Wisdom of God, are often personified.

Please note that I did not say: That God is ONE in two BEINGS. That's another false teaching. There were not two BEINGS. My word and I are ONE BEING, and so is God's Word and God, ONE BEING.

There is no conflict between the "US" and the "I" of Gen. 1. God is ONE for there is but ONE true God, but consisting of God's Word, that was with God, and that is God. That's the simple message of John 1:1.

Now lets turn to John 1:14 and read what is happening to the Word:

"And the Word BECAME flesh and dwelled among us."

Now, this is where faith (which is a gift from God) comes into the picture. Remember that one of our three cords is the Holy Spirit. You either believe that the Word of God became flesh, became human, and thereby became the Son of God through procreation, or you don't. This is not primarily a matter of understanding, this is primarily a matter of faith and believing the Word of God. This is a miracle! It is not to be explained, it is given for us to believe! Will God find faith on earth when He returns? I can not here go into all the details of procreation. Suffice it to say that God through His Holy Spirit, caused His Word to be implanted into the virgin Mary, impregnating here and nine month later she bore a son whose Father was God. Lets take a look in Matt. 1 were it tells us what happened. Matt 1:18-23

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of

the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying: 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear (do not be a coward) to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet (Isaiah 7:14): "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanu-el (which means, God with us)."

Who is with us? Emmanu-el, God is with us. Not some created being as some would have you believe. Not just a great prophet, no, it was the Word of God, in the flesh, full of grace and truth and we beheld His glory as of the only Son of the Father.

So, the Word of God, became the Son of God through procreation,

and God the Mind, or Head, became God the Father through procreation. BC, that is before the birth of Christ, there was God and His Word. AD, that is after the birth of Christ, there was God the Father and His Son.

Jesus Christ clearly said in John 10:30: **"I (one) and my Father (one) are ONE."**

In other words there are now TWO BEINGS who are ONE. The same (involuntary) ONENESS that existed between God and His Word, continues to exist as (voluntary) ONENESS between the Father and His Son.

Now what about you and I? How are we to become ONE with God, as Christ is ONE with the Father? Well the same way as our example Jesus Christ, who came to show us the way.

Jesus Christ who is our example said: **"You (we) must be born again,"** born again as Jesus Christ was born and born again. We of course must first repent, something Jesus Christ did not have to do for He was sinless from the beginning. We must be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit which enters our mind and makes us begotten children of God. At the resurrection we will be born again, born of the Spirit, born of God, which makes us God Beings. What else? If what is reproduced from a flower seed is another flower, if birds reproduce other birds, if four-legged animals reproduce other four-legged animals, if humans reproduce other humans, and if God, who has already proven to us through His Son Jesus Christ, that that which is begotten and born of God, is God, then whatever else, or better, whoever else is begotten and born of God, must also be of the God kind. Yes, Jesus Christ was only the first-born of many brethren in the ONE God family, and He will bring many sons to glory, to reign and sit with Him on His throne. What an incredible story!

Now let me make a few comments of what it means to be begotten and born of God, in contrast to what it means when God creates something. God spoke the universe and all that is in it into existence through His word. It was an act of creation and Gen 1:1 plainly says so: **"In the beginning God created...."** God spoke and it was. An act of creation.

In contrast, when the Word became flesh, as we read in John 1:14, it did not happen through a creative act, it happened through *procreation*, it happened through the re-productive process of a begettall and a birth. Creation is instant. God speaks and it is. Procreation, or to be born, is a process which takes time. In fact, creation took six days. Procreation is taking 6000 years. Obviously, creation and procreation are not the same thing.

Every human being, with the exception of Adam and Eve who were created, came into existence through this process of a begettall and a birth, which means that we all know how it works.

So, when Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus and by extension to all of us that:

“You must be born again”,

He meant exactly that same process, except instead of a physical birth, He was talking about a spiritual birth. We must be *born again* by God, not a second time from human, physical seed, but from the holy seed, the Word of God, through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Anyone who has received God’s Holy Spirit is begotten of God and will be born of God at the resurrection. In the meantime we see through a glass darkly, like the un-born in the mothers womb, but then, when we are born, we will see God face to face. Now we know in part, then, when we are born, we shall understand fully. So, what does it take to become One with God? You must be born again, you must be born of God in order to fully become ONE with God. That’s the message of the Day of Atonement, and Jesus Christ is our example in all of this.

Let’s recap. We started off with asking two questions. Why is this Day of Atonement, which God has made, so special? and - Why are we to rejoice in this day? This day is special because it is a reminder that, not until this annual holy day is fulfilled, can we truly become ONE with each other, and truly become ONE with God. In the meantime, sin is ever at our doorstep, and not until sin is fully removed can there be complete At-one-ment. Satan was the author, the originator of all sin. Then through Adam and Eve sin came to all of mankind. The antidote, the solution to sin is the sacrifice of the Son of God, paying the penalty for our sinfulness through His voluntary death on the cross.

On the Day of Atonement, *all sin*, which Jesus Christ assumed in our behalf, will be put back on Satan, and then sin, and the author of sin, will be completely removed for the duration of one thousand years.

Is this reason enough to rejoice in this day? You bet it is! But there is another reason why we are to rejoice today, and that is because a very special prayer of our elder brother Jesus Christ will be fulfilled. Let’s read from this high priestly prayer which is specifically addressed to the Church, His Bride, which is you and me. (John 17: 20-26)

“I do not pray for these only (His Disciples), but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have send me. The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, so that the world may know that you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you: and these know that you have send me. I made known to them your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

The fulfillment of this prayer is what this Day of Atonement is all about. Perfect unity, perfect At-one-ment through the Atonement, between all brethren, and perfect unity, love and harmony with our heavenly Father and our elder brother Jesus Christ.

This day is truly the Day which the Lord has made, so let us rejoice and be glad in it.