

On Atonement

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the critical role of blood sacrifice for atonement as prophesied in Isaiah 53, challenging both Jewish and Christian understandings of righteousness and repentance.

Scripture: Leviticus 17:11, Deuteronomy 32:35-36, Isaiah 53:10, Hebrews 3:12-13, Hebrews 10:29-30

Topics: "Atonement", "True Repentance"

Description

Art Katz emphasizes the critical nature of atonement in the Jewish faith, arguing that true forgiveness cannot be achieved through human deeds or rituals, as highlighted in Isaiah 53 and Leviticus 17:11. He challenges the assumption that God is satisfied with current religious practices that neglect the necessity of bloodshed for sin remission. Katz warns against the dangers of a hardened heart and the consequences of disregarding the sacrifice of Christ, urging a return to the foundational truths of the Scriptures. He critiques the inadequate attempts at atonement, such as the ritual of 'shlug kapporah,' and points to the prophetic fulfillment in Jesus as the ultimate guilt offering. The sermon calls for a deeper understanding of God's displeasure with superficial faith and the need for genuine repentance.

Transcript

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In view of Leviticus 17:11, ought we not, as Jews, to consider that, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin"?

That Isaiah 53 condemns and renders invalid any attempt of man by 'mitzvot' or deed to attain to righteousness? That one cannot circumvent this remarkable provision of God by privately assuming a negotiated repentance and a divinely received forgiveness? Is not this assumption the very setting aside of the non-negotiable Law of Moses and the Prophets (for example, Isaiah 53)? Are our current Judaistic and religious equivalents and practices being performed with the assumption that God is content? Why do we refuse to include in the annual Haphtarah readings this most significant section from Isaiah? Would it be out of place then to consider that our entire historic calamity, as Jews, is much rather the statement of His displeasure rather than His acceptance?

In a book addressed specifically for Jewish consideration, the New Testament instructs us:

How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." (Hebrews 10:29-30, quoting Deuteronomy 32:35, 36).

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:12-13).

On remote occasions, you will find some Jews, who, instinctively recognizing the need for atonement through shed blood, 'shlug kapporah.' That is, they swirl over their and their children's heads a slain chicken! This reaches back to the biblical injunction in Leviticus 17 cited above. How pathetic is this and every alternative to the provision of God prophesied in Isaiah 53 of One who would "render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand" (chap. 53:10b).

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