

SIGHTINGS

Jesus in the Old Testament

“Haven’t you read the sightings?” That’s the question Jesus effectively asked two men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus explained to them how the Old Testament (Hebrew) Scriptures pointed to Him. We read, “Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him.” (Luke 24).

Our current series looks at some of the celebrations in the calendar of ancients that point the way to Jesus. A series like this is particularly appropriate this time of the year in preparation for Easter as we remember the extreme act that Jesus went through in order for us to feast in relationship with God.

USING THE DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Some Christians prepare for Easter with a season called Lent. Effectively, it’s a time of increased spiritual reflection and preparation. With that in mind, the daily questions and reflections are designed to help you re-appreciate God’s involvement in your life and the radical call from Jesus to live as his followers.
2. In addition to these questions, you might want to take a page of the directory to pray through each day. Over the course of this series, you would have prayed for everybody in our church community.

USING LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

Spiritual Growth best happens in community. If you’re not already in a LifeGroup, contact the office to find out more. You can also go to our website and find a group at <http://www.mabc.org.nz/content/life-groups>. How about making a commitment to check it out for the duration of this 5 week series?

Monday: Preparations

1. Read Leviticus 16:1-2.
2. Background: The Day of Atonement came around just once a year. It was the climax of 10 days of soul searching and confession by the people of God. Entering into God’s presence can’t be taken lightly. There were certain requirements the People of God needed to observe. It required the high priest, as the representative of the people, to go through a detailed and careful process.

3. Take some time to reflect on the message from yesterday. You were reminded that we are all separated from God by sin and that God loves us so much that He sent His perfect Son to pay the penalty for our sins. The 'gospel' requires that we each, individually make a choice either to accept God's salvation or reject it. What choice have you made and why?
4. The Psalmist prays, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" – Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV). Pray along similar lines and allow time for God to bring things to mind.
5. Turn to page 11 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Tuesday: High Priest

1. Read Leviticus 16:3-14 and Hebrews 7:26-28
2. Background: Entrance into God's presence required a prepared and set apart high priest. This priest was the spiritual representative of the people. He was the only guy who was able to enter into God's presence – and that, only once a year! What he wore, and his own physical and spiritual cleanliness was vital.
3. What did the high priest wear? (see Lev 16:4). Normally, the high priest wore regal clothes not this simple, humble clothing. Why might this be?
4. Why did the bull need to be sacrificed? (see verse 11). What might this say about leaders?
5. The Book of Hebrews compares Jesus with the high priests in the Old Testament. As you reflect on Hebrews 7:26-28, consider how Jesus is like these OT priests and how He is different? Is there any fear of Him botching the job?
6. Write a prayer expressing praise to Jesus as your High Priest.
7. Turn to page 12 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Wednesday: The Most Holy Place

1. Read Hebrews 9:2-7
2. Background: Entrance into God's presence required right protocols in the temple. At the very front of the tabernacle was a room called the 'Most Holy Place' protected by a thick curtain. Within this room was the Ark of the Covenant, the place where God made his presence known. This is the place the

high priest would go, once a year, to atone for his own sins and that of the community.

3. The tabernacle was effectively a movable temple, which was placed right in the middle of the Israelite community as they journeyed through the wilderness (three tribes on the north-side, three tribes on south-side, three tribes on the west-side, three tribes on the east-side). What implications might the location of this temple have for the place God should have in our lives as a community?
4. When Jesus died, the thick curtain separating the people from the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom (see Mark 15:38). In Jesus, we now have access into the very presence of God. Reflect on the following text from Hebrews: *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* – Hebrews 10:18-25.
5. Write a prayer expressing praise to Jesus for giving you free access into God’s most holy place.
6. Turn to page 13 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven’t met them before.

Thursday: Sacrifice

1. Read Leviticus 16:18-19
2. Background: Throughout the year the people offered various sacrifices which all involved blood. Even the cereal offerings were mixed with animal sacrifice when it came to presentation at the altar. This is what was required to atone for sin. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sacrifice a goat and spread the blood over the Ark of the Covenant. It was a messy sight! This blood was the spiritual detergent necessary for a spiritual ‘spring clean’ of the people.
3. Reflect on the following verses from Hebrews, about Jesus: *“With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. . . .¹⁴ Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.”* – Hebrews 9:12-14

4. The New Testament says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9). Take some time to do that. Ask God to search out your heart for anything that needs to be made right with Him.
5. Turn to page 14 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

Friday: Scapegoat

1. Read Leviticus 16:20-22
2. Background: The sacrifices of the people removed the sins from the worshippers but these sins are pictured in the Old Testament as still staying on the altar. It is like sin is a substance. So, a spiritual 'spring clean' was necessary each year. A second goat was chosen as a scapegoat. Effectively, this goat was the moral rubbish truck that hauled away the faults of the community. When the high priest placed his hands on the head of this goat, it was a symbolic way of transferring the sins from the faith community and placing them on the head of this scapegoat. The goat was then led far away in the wilderness.
3. Imagine yourself standing within the tented walls of the tabernacle. You have just been through 10 days of soul searching and confession. As part of the faith community, you have agonized over your sin and longed for it to go away. How would you feel when the goat was led out of the area bearing all your sin and shame?
4. Jesus is referred to as our scapegoat. What does this mean? Read and reflect on the following passages:

*21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21*

13 But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." - Gal 3:13

5. What sin or guilt are you carrying around? Jesus is able to forgive and take the sin away because He is our scapegoat and substitute.
6. Turn to page 15 of your new church directory and take time to pray for others in our faith family, even if you haven't met them before.

LIFE GROUPS

ATONEMENT

OVERVIEW

This past Sunday, we looked at the Day of Atonement, a somewhat somber day that was the climax of ten days of soul searching and confession by the people of God. We see that entrance into God's presence can't be taken lightly. It required a prepared and set apart high priest who was the spiritual representative of the people. It required various protocols in the temple. It required a messy blood sacrifice. This day was effectively a spiritual 'spring clean' for the people. After the High Priest had prepared himself, he would take two goats. One goat was sacrificed and its blood smeared over the Ark of the Covenant in a messy sight. The other goat was a scapegoat that symbolically took the sins of the community far away from them into the wilderness. All this looks forward to Jesus in his work as our high priest (representative), the sacrifice necessary to deal with our sin, and the one who takes our sin far far away.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Tell the group about a funny or strange experience you've had at a Church.
2. Looking back at this week's teaching, what particular point, statement or scripture caught your attention, challenged or confused you the most?
3. This week we've learned that Jesus is our High Priest, sacrificial lamb and scapegoat! Last Sunday we were reminded that Jesus' actions on behalf of all people only become real to us if we personally accept His salvation and allow Him to be Lord of our lives. If you feel comfortable to do so, briefly share with the group when you accepted Jesus as your Saviour and how this has made a difference to your life.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Jesus is our High Priest. The Book of Hebrews compares Jesus with the High Priests in the Old Testament. Read the following passages and observe the similarities and differences between the Old Testament Priest and Jesus as our High Priest.

Passage	OT High Priest	Jesus as our High Priest
Hebrews 9:24		
Hebrews 9:12-14; 10:4		
Hebrews 7:26-28		
Hebrews 9:6-14, 25-28		
Hebrews 10:1-18		

2. Jesus is referred to as our scapegoat. What does this mean? Read and reflect on the following passages: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:28.
3. You have just heard one of your favourite Bible teachers on Christian radio/podcast say that God did not require sacrifice for himself. Rather, Jesus death primarily serves to inspire us to love God as He did. As you reflect on the teaching of the Bible about Jesus death and the background of the Old Testament, why should we understand death as necessary?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back at this week's teaching, what is the one take-away for you?
2. If you are not already a Christian, what is holding you back from accepting Jesus' salvation and lordship?
3. What sin and shame are you carrying that should be placed on your scapegoat, Jesus?

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Break into groups of 2-3 people and pray for a friend or family member who has not yet surrendered their life to Jesus.

Pray members in your LifeGroup will have the courage and conviction to share the good news of Jesus with others.