

PARASHAT ACHAREI MOT

(AFTER DEATH)

LEVITICUS 16:1-18:30

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

Ezekiel 22:1-19

B'rit Chadashah

On the Veil of the Temple: **Matthew 27:5**

On Yeshua taking away sin: **John 1:29; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2**

On Yeshua our Great High Priest: **Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:11-10:22**

On improper sacrifices: **1 Corinthians 10:20**

On Yeshua redeeming us through his blood: **Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:22; 13:12; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; Revelation 1:5**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 16:1** The Conditions by Which the High Priest May Come into the Ark of the Covenant on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement)
- 16:6** Aaron's Personal Sin Offering/Atonement
- 16:7** Two He-Goats and the Lots
- 16:12** The Incense Service Sanctifying the Tabernacle From the Contamination of the Sins of the Israelites
- 16:20** The *Azazel* Goat
- 16:23** Aaron Performs the Elevation Offering for Himself and the People
- 16:25** Conclusion of the Service
- 16:29** *Yom Kippur*: A Day of Fasting, A Sabbath, An Eternal Decree
- 17:3** All Animals Slaughtered Are to Be Brought to the Door of the Tabernacle So That Israel Will Not Fall Into Demon Worship
- 17:10** Prohibition Against Eating Blood; the Life of the Flesh is in the Blood, Which Makes Atonement for Sin
- 17:13** Blood to Be Buried in the Earth
- 18:1** Forbidden Sexual Relationships
- 18:21** Child Sacrifices Forbidden

—18:22 Homosexuality and Bestiality Forbidden

—18:24 The Holiness of the Land

Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

- 1 **16:1**, A cursory reading of the Scriptures seems to indicate that there exists overlapping similarities between some of the blood atonement ceremonies of Passover/*Pesach* and the Day of Atonement/*Yom Kippur*. What are the differences between the sin atonement offerings of *Pesach* and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement)? Perhaps realizing the fact that the Passover occurred during the spring feast day season and Day of Atonement occurred during the fall feast day season may answer this question. Prophetically the spring feast days picture Messiah Yeshua's first coming while the fall feast days prophetically point to his second coming. How does this understanding shed light on the answer to this question?
- 2 **16:7**, Why were there two goats? Do both goats represent Yeshua and the atoning work he accomplished on the cross, or will accomplish yet in the future? If so, how does each goat represent a different facet of this work? Some see in the name *Azazel* some satanic implications, therefore leading them to believe that this goat represents the adversary himself and his ultimate exile from mankind. Is this possible? Is it possible to reconcile these two viewpoints? (See John 3:14, which sheds some light on this apparent dilemma.) We deal with the issue in more detail in our teaching article on *Yom Kippur* mentioned below.
- 3 Leviticus 17:11 is a crucial Scripture theologically regarding the blood atonement. Presently, the Jewish religion offers no hope for its followers in light of this passage. For believers in Yeshua, the message of Messiah and him crucified addresses this issue. The importance of the blood of the Lamb in the atonement for sins as well as in overcoming sin, sickness (1 Peter 2:24) and the powers of hell (Rev 12:11) cannot be over emphasized. How thorough is your understanding of the power of the blood? Do you appropriate this power on a regular basis in your life? The power of the blood is central to the efficacy of the communion elements. The concept of the blood of Yeshua is central to the gospel message with 40 to 50 references to it in the Apostolic Scriptures. Such terms are used as "blood of the Lamb," "blood of Messiah," "precious blood of Messiah," "blood of the everlasting covenant," "redemption through Messiah's blood," "blood of His cross," "communion of the blood of Messiah," "faith in his blood," and "purchased with his blood." Is the reality of the blood of Messiah in your life central to your faith walk? How so? If not, why not?
- 4 Leviticus 18 discusses sexual sin. We live in a sex-crazed society where the immoral and flesh-alluring antics of the heathens could easily ensnare the righteous if they let down their guard. Everyone seems to make excuses why their personal sex-sin is permissible. Torah is very clear about what is right and wrong in this regard. Liberal Christians have gutted Scripture to excuse sexual deviancies that Scripture calls abominable practices. You may not be living in open sexual sin, but what about your thought life? What about the movies, magazines, internet sites, television shows and advertisements you look at? We have to make a choice before YHVH: either we are a holy nation and people, or we are profane and worldly. Either hot or cold ... there are no gray areas. Lukewarmness will be spit out (Rev 3:16).

Yom Kippur/The Day of Atonement—Past, Present & Future

YOM KIPPUR IS A DAY OF contradictions and contrasts: Joy and sorrow. Rewards for the righteous and judgments for the wicked rebels. Joy for the righteous when Satan and his demons, death and Babylon are destroyed by Yeshua the King of Kings who returns to planet earth on (or near) this day.

On this day, the High Priest (*Cohen HaGadol*) of ancient Israel went into the *Kadosh Kadoshim* (Holy of Holies). There he sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat (*Kapporet*) and the ground seven times. Atonement was made for the High Priest himself, his family, and for all Israel. On this day, the Sanctuary/Tabernacle/Temple, the priesthood, and the whole body of Believers (Body of Messiah) were cleansed. It represented corporate or community cleansing and entering into a deeper and more intimate relationship with YHVH. The Passover and Day of Atonement are related though different.

☞ *Pesach* (Passover) is the time of the sacrifice or atonement for personal sin—initial repentance from sins committed before being born again.

☞ *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) is the time of the atonement or covering of the individual's as well as

the corporate sins of Israel committed in ignorance (Heb 9:27) during the past year. On-going repentance is needed by Believers and the community of Believers to stay in right-standing (righteousness) before YHVH (1John 1:9).

It is important to note that the central significance of the shedding of innocent blood for the remission of sins is a central theme to both the Passover and the Day of Atonement events. The question may rightly be asked, if one is saved by the blood of the Lamb (i.e., Yeshua) when he was sacrificed at Passover (a picture of Yeshua on the cross) what need is there for further shedding of blood for the remission of our sins on the Day of Atonement? After all, Yeshua died once and for all (as the writer of Hebrews notes in 10:10) and why does the redeemed Believer need to revisit the idea of atonement and blood sacrifice all over again at Yom Kippur?

(To read Natan Lawrence's entire teaching article on Yom Kippur, go to:

http://hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/yom_kippur.pdf)

HAFTORAH READING — EZEKIEL 22:1-19

Are You Part of the Problem, or Part of the Solution?

The Parashah and Haftorah are connected in that the Parashah lays out strict regulations governing moral purity for the nation of Israel, while the Haftorah chronicles the violations of those moral prohibitions. For this, the land of Israel would vomit out her inhabitants (Lev 18:25), which is a graphic description of the Israelites being forcibly removed from their land by foreign conquerors and taken as slaves to a foreign land. The prophet Ezekiel chronicles the fulfillment of this prophecy since he lived through the fall and captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Ezekiel 22 is a precursor prophetic warning to the fulfillment of the actual event about which he prophesied.

What were Israel's sins inviting judgment?

- **Verse 3**, murders due to criminal activity and ritual murders as part of child sacrificial rites (a form of abortion)
- **Verse 4**, idolatry (i.e., anything that captures one's heart affection ahead of one's devotion to YHVH)
- **Verse 6**, leaders who through miscarriage of justice, or for political reasons are guilty of murdering their people
- **Verse 7**, a society that dishonors and disrespects parental authority—undermines the family
- **Verse 7**, oppressing or taking advantage of the aliens, the fatherless and widows
- **Verse 8**, despising the set-apart (holy) things of YHVH such as his seventh-day Sabbath and annual Sabbath festivals
- **Verse 9**, miscarriage of justice based on lies and slander resulting in judicial murders of innocent parties
- **Verse 9**, holding festivals honoring pagan deities
- **Verse 9**, sexual lewdness
- **Verse 10**, sexual relations with one's father's wife
- **Verse 11**, adultery with one's neighbor's wife
- **Verse 11**, incest
- **Verse 12**, bribery and miscarriages of justice resulting in the death of innocent parties
- **Verse 12**, charging of usurious interest
- **Verse 12**, unjustly wresting from one's neighbor that which is not one's to take—greed and extortion

For these sins, YHVH promised to scatter the Jews among the nations resulting in their becoming a profaned, defiled and polluted (worldly) people (verse 16). Judah would cease being a gold crown among the nations and become nothing more than a base metal for the base nation they had become because they had left their moral compass of the Torah—YHVH's divine instructions in righteousness.

The sins listed above are applicable personally and societally. Likewise, the punishments will befall the individual who commits them as well as the society who is guilty as a whole. YHVH, through Ezekiel's prophecy, was

not just concerned with the religious ills, but with the social, economic and political ills of the nation as well, for in reality they are all inter-related.

This begs some questions of the reader:

- How does our “modern” society compare with that of ancient Israel? Has man really changed that much over the millennia?
- Are you guilty of any of the sins mentioned above?
- What are you doing on a religious, political, economic, or social level to make a difference, or to be salt and light in the spiritually dark world around you?

