

Yom Kippur

Day of
Atonement

The Historical Roots of Our Faith, Present Relevance for Believers & Prophetic End-Time Implications

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Introduction

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 the King of Kings.

On this day the high priest of ancient Israel went into the holy of holies of the Tabernacle of Moses. There he sprinkled blood on the mercy seat (*kapporet*) and the ground seven times. Atonement was made for the high priest himself, his family as well as for all Israel. On this day the sanctuary of the Tabernacle of Moses (and later in the Temple of Solomon), the priesthood, and all the Israelites 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 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 (*Yom Kippur*) events. The question may rightly be asked, if one is saved by the blood of the Lamb (Yeshua) when he was sacrificed at Passover (a picture of Yeshua on the cross), what need is there of 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*?

When speaking of Yeshua sanctifying or making the unsaved sinner righteous through the offering of his body once and for all at the time of one's conversion (Heb 10:10), the writer of Hebrews is speaking of Passover, which is symbolized by the red heifer altar that is outside the door of the tabernacle (Heb 13:10–13). This altar points to the cross upon which Yeshua shed his blood, to which one must first come in order to enter into the tabernacle. Only those who were spiritually purified could legally enter into the Tabernacle of Moses. Today, only those who are spiritually cleansed can enter into a spiritual relationship with YHVH. The tabernacle is a picture of that relationship. However, just because one has entered into the tabernacle of relationship with Elohim by the blood of the lamb and has had their past sins washed away, this does not mean the newly redeemed believer stops at this point in their spiritual journey growing in intimacy with their Creator. The sections of the tabernacle are a picture of the stages we go through in our spiritual growth. From the outer court of the tabernacle YHVH invites one to enter into the holy place and eventually into the inner most part of the tabernacle, the holy of holies where the very Presence of YHVH abides signifying the deepest and most intimate spiritual relationship with YHVH possible.

The writer of Hebrews encourages believers not just to stay in the outer courtyard where they have entered by the blood of the Lamb, but to boldly enter into the holiest place by the blood of Yeshua as well (Heb 4:16; 10:19).

Let us note what the author writes in this regard:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Yeshua, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of Elohim; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. (Heb 10:19–25)

What we learn from this is that not only can we enter the tabernacle of relationship with Elohim by the blood of the Lamb by having our past sins atoned for, but we continue onward into the deepest place of intimacy and relationship with our Heavenly Father by the blood of the same Lamb as well. Abiding in relationship with Yeshua the Messiah, remaining in fellowship with fellow believers and loving YHVH by obeying his commandments is essential to this process.

The Meaning of the Word *Kippur*

The word *Kippur* כִּפּוּר (*Strong's* G3725) is a form of the Hebrew root word *kapar* כָּפַר (*Strong's* G3722), which according to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT 1023) means “to make an atonement, make reconciliation, purge”). The mercy seat—the golden “lid” covering the ark of the covenant located in the *d'veer* (i.e., the inner shrine of the Tabernacle of Moses)—is the Hebrew word *kapporet* כַּפֹּרֶת (*Strong's* G3727, TWOT 1023c) and was “the place of atonement or the place where atonement was made.” The TWOT defines what happened at the *kapporet* as follows:

“It was from the ... mercy seat that [YHVH] promised to meet with the men [of Israel] (Num 7:89). The word, however, is not related to mercy and of course was not a seat. The word is derived from the root ‘to atone.’ The Greek equivalent in the LXX is usually *hilasterion*, “place or object of propitiation,” a word which is applied to [Messiah] in Rom 3:25. The translation ‘mercy seat’ does not sufficiently express the fact that the lid of the ark was the place where the blood was sprinkled on the day of atonement. ‘Place of atonement’ would perhaps be more expressive.”

The Work of the Levitical High Priest and Yeshua Our High Priest Compared

Some interesting spiritual parallels exist between the Levitical high priest of ancient Israel, and Yeshua the Messiah, who became our great Heavenly High Priest. Clearly, the former was predictive forerunner of the latter. For example:

- ☞ Yeshua is our Heavenly High Priest to whom the work of the high priest in ancient Israel pointed (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 9:11).
- ☞ The high priest was covered in blood when performing the sin offering sacrifices (Lev 6:27). Yeshua was covered in blood when he sacrificed himself as a sin offering upon the cross (Isa 52:13–14).
- ☞ The high priest sprinkled the mercy seat with blood from the sin offering (Lev 16:14). Yeshua sprinkled many nations with his blood (Isa 52:15).
- ☞ After performing the sacrifice, the high priest would wash himself and put on white linen garments (Lev 16:23). Though Yeshua’s garments were stained with blood, afterwards he was seen wearing pure white robes of righteousness (Rev 3:4–5; 7:9, 13–14).

The Importance of Blood in the Tabernacle Ceremonies

The writer of Hebrews (Heb 9:11ff) describes the importance of blood in the tabernacle and temple ceremonies of ancient Israel, how it relates to the remission of sins, and how it pointed to Yeshua’s shedding of his blood on the cross for the atoning of man’s sins:

But Messiah being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and

calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to Elohim, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

And for this cause he is the mediator of the Renewed Covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Whereupon neither the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Torah-law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the covenant which YHVH hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Torah-law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Messiah is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of Elohim for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place every year [on Yom Kippur] with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Messiah was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb 9:11-28)

What Is Fasting?

It [the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*] is a day to *afflict your souls* (Lev 16:29 and 23:27) or literally “to humble ourselves.” The word *afflict* is the Hebrew word *anah* (*Strong’s* H6031) meaning “to oppress with the idea of humility or meekness in mind coupled with the idea of a suffering life rather than with one of worldly happiness and abundance” (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 682). The JPS *Jewish Study Bible* translates the phrase *afflict yourselves* as “you shall practice self denial.” Although this verse does not specifically mention fasting as a component of *Yom Kippur*, Jewish understanding on the term *afflict your souls* is firm that this refers to fasting (*ArtScroll Tanach Series Vayikra/Leviticus Commentary*, p. 404). With this view in mind, the pre-eminent nineteenth-century Orthodox Jewish sage, Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary translates *afflict your souls* as “starve your vital spirits” (*The Penteteuch–Leviticus*, p. 678). However, there is a scriptural link to be found between afflicting one’s soul and fasting (i.e., abstaining from food). That link is to be found in Isaiah 58, which some Bible commentators believe is a reference to *Yom Kippur*. In verses three and eight, the terms *afflict [one’s] soul* and *fast* are used synonymously. The word for *fast* is the Hebrew word *tsuwam* (*Strong’s* H6684) meaning “to abstain from food.” We also see the connection between *fasting* and *afflicting the soul* in Psalm 35:13 where David states, “I humbled/afflicted my soul with fasting.”

Additionally, rabbinical thought teaches that Leviticus 23:27 suggests five afflictions that one must endure on *Yom Kippur*: no eating and drinking, no washing oneself, no anointing oneself, no wearing leather shoes, and no cohabitation. It is suggested that these five afflictions correspond to the five times the term *soul/nephesh* are found in this passage (i.e., verses once each in 27 and 29, twice in 30, and once in 32; see Baal HaTurim’s commentary on Lev 23:27).

Christian commentators, Keil and Delitzsch begin to connect the dots for us as to why fasting is tied to atonement.

If the general atonement made on this day was not to pass into a dead formal service, the people must necessarily enter in spirit into the signification of the act of expiation [atonement], prepare their souls for it with penitential feelings, and manifest this penitential state by abstinence from the ordinary enjoyments of life. To *afflict (bow, humble) the soul*, by restraining the earthly appetites, which have their seat in the soul, is the early Mosaic expression for *fasting* (כִּוּם/*tsuwam*) ... ‘By bowing his soul, the

Israelite was to place himself in an inward relation to the sacrifice, whose soul was given for his soul; and by this state of mind, answering to the outward proceedings of the day, he was to appropriate the fruit of it to himself, namely, the reconciliation of his soul, which passed through the animal's death' (*Baumgarten*) (vol. 1, p. 591).

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is not to torture or punish oneself for the sins that one has committed during the past year. Rather, it is a time to deeply reflect on one's need for atonement, and to appropriate to oneself through deep heart reflection the sacrifice for one's sins that YHVH has made for us through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom all the animal sacrifices of the ancient Levitical sacrificial system pointed.

Furthermore, in sublimating the soul (the carnal mind, will and emotions) within each of us by afflicting it causes the spirit of man within to rise up. To have a deep and vital relationship with YHVH Elohim, the degradation of the soul with its earthly and carnal passions is necessary, since it is the spirit in man that most suffers as a result of the sin-bent tendencies of the soul. When the soul is "pushed down," the spirit can rise up and connect to or commune more efficaciously with YHVH. It is the spirit in man, as activated by the Spirit of Elohim, which is man's spiritual connecting link to his Creator (Rom 8:16; Job 32:8; 1 Cor 2:10-14; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:2-3; Prov 20:27). In brief, fasting helps us to transcend our physical natures and to focus without distraction upon YHVH.

In conclusion, Christian commentator, Matthew Henry says of the Day of Atonement,

He that would do the work of [the] Day of Atonement in its day, as it should be done, had need lay aside the thoughts of everything else.... [T]hey must lay aside all their worldly business, that they might the more clearly and the more reverently hear that voice of joy and gladness.... They must mortify the body, and deny the appetites of it, in token of their sorrow for the sins they had committed, and mortifying of their indwelling corruptions. (*Matthew Henry—A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 539, World Bible Publishers)

More on Afflicting the Soul

The biblical holy day of the Day of Trumpet (Shofar Blowing or *Yom Teruah*, which occurs just ten days prior to *Yom Kippur*, is the day of the awakening blast signifying the time for the righteous to awake from spiritual lethargy and lukewarmness and to be ready for the coming of Yeshua, our Bridegroom.

How do we awaken spiritually?

- ☞ We must seek the light of YHVH's word to shine in our hearts and to illuminate the dark and sinful areas of our lives.
- ☞ We must pray for the Set-Apart Spirit to reveal YHVH's truth to us and to convict us in the areas where we fall short of his high spiritual standards.
- ☞ We must enter into a time of serious reflection and self examination.
- ☞ We must humble ourselves through repentance.
- ☞ We must pursue consistent and persistent prayer and fasting by which we can become attuned spiritually to the heart and will of our Father in heaven.

Man is comprised of three parts: body, soul and spirit (1 Thess 5:23). We must be soberly aware of the struggle between the soul and the spirit for domination over what we do, say and think. (See Rom 7:14ff.)

It is the soul that sins (Ezek 18:4), for out of it come all the carnal passions and impulses to go contrary to the Word and will of YHVH (Matt 15:19). ***Because the soul is in opposition to the Spirit of Elohim, this is why it must be afflicted or repressed!***

Characteristics of the Soul

The soul of man is squirrely (restless, nervous, unpredictable). Like Hagar, when the going gets rough, the soul man flees (Gen 16:1-6). It likes comfortable circumstances and resists being stretched or inconvenienced. This reflects the soul's lack of character: lack of commitment, unfaithfulness, lack of reliability, lack of punctuality, inconsistency.

The soul man is rebellious to authority, for the Bible tells us that the carnal mind is at enmity with the will or Torah of YHVH (Rom 8:7).

The soul man wants to cover its sinful tracks, to hide its sin. It hates the light of truth. When Adam and Eve sinned, their first act was to cover and to hide themselves from Elohim. Sinners hate the light of truth (John 3:19). The soul man resorts to blame, accusation, deception, lies, self-preservation, self-defense, and self-justification to cover his sins. Notice the prominence of self? The self is number one to the soulish man.

The soul man is narcissistic; it loves, adores, idolizes, worships itself. It creates gods in its own image to serve. This path is the downward spiral of humanism, which we see in Romans 1, and that leads to the sins of idolatry and to the sexual perversions of homosexuality.

The soul man acts like a spoiled, angry, rebellious, self-willed child. If it doesn't get what it wants, it becomes fretful, irritable, angry and throws a temper tantrum, sulks and pouts.

Like *Esau*, whom the Bible describes as a "wild ass," the soul man is like a stubborn and rebellious donkey. By contrast, those who have experienced the working of YHVH's Spirit in their lives are meek, easily entreated, sensitive, not talkative, arrogant, boastful, and opinionated. They are slow to speak, respectful, and transparent.

How Are We to Treat the Soul Man?

The soul man must be suppressed so that the spirit man can rise up. Yeshua said, "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, but whoever will lose his life/*psuche* for my sake will find it [i.e., *zoe* life] (Matt 16:25; Luke 17:33). The soul wants to preserve itself so the flesh can dominate and have its own way — be its own god. On the contrary, the spirit man wants to submit to the Spirit (*Ruach*) of Elohim and wants the soul man to be subservient to YHVH, for it knows that this is the high way that leads to everlasting joy, peace and happiness and to an eternity in the presence of YHVH Elohim as a member of his spiritual family.

Why Do We Fast on Yom Kippur?

Fasting (abstaining from food) on the high holy day of the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) is a biblical command (Lev 23:27). The Scriptures teach us that it is the soul that sins (Ezek 18:4), therefore it must be sublimated to and dominated by our spirit, which is connected to the Spirit of Elohim, and which can't sin. When the mind of Elohim is in charge through his Spirit dominating our spirit, which in turn will dominate our soul, we can then walk in sinless righteousness. This in turn puts us in perfect accord with YHVH and in oneness with him.

The soul must be afflicted (meaning "to bow or humble," Lev 23:27). It was the sins of our soul that caused an innocent person (Yeshua) to have to die as a sacrifice in our place and to pay the price for our sins. At the cross, Yeshua poured out his soul as a sin offering for our sinful souls (Isa 53:10, 12).

YHVH requires us to deal with our unruly and rebellious soul, and fasting or afflicting the soul is a way to do this. David teaches us that the soul must be afflicted or humbled with fasting (Ps 35:13). By fasting, we loose the bands of wickedness (Isa 58:6–7). The soul must be saved (Heb 10:39; Jas 1:21); be preserved blameless (1Thess 5:23), be changed or have its thinking transformed (Rom 12:2); be weaned (Ps 131:2); be controlled (Luke 21:19); purified through obeying the Word (1Pet 1:22); be shepherded by spiritual leadership (1Pet 2:25); and be anchored so that we won't grow weary and faint during difficulties (Gal 6:9).

Yeshua is the Rock That Crushes Our Soul.

Matthew 21:42–44 speaks of being broken on Yeshua who is the spiritual Rock. He wants to grind our stony heart or sinful soul man into powder. This occurs as we "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls" (Jas 1:21) Our souls needs saving. When we are born again of the Spirit from above, our spirit man is reborn, and we become a new creation (2Cor 5:17; Gal. 2:20). If we resist the Word, YHVH will resist us because of our pride. Therefore, we are to humble ourselves under YHVH's mighty hand so that he can exalt us in due time (1Pet 5:5–6). When we fall on the Rock and our stony hearts are broken, the outer core of the soul is broken so that the inner beauty of the spirit man can come forth. With that comes the release of YHVH's *dunamis* power or *virtue*. The power and glory of YHVH were present in the holy of holies of the Tabernacle of Moses (a picture of the spirit man). But once we're born again, and as we grow spiritually, we must pass out of the holy of holies through the holy place (a picture of the soul man) and out into the outer court (a picture of the body and this physical world). There, our spirit man is to shine forth and to be a spiritual light to the world.

Soul Man Must Be Broken and Retrained to Accomplish YHVH's Purposes

Jacob had to deal with his soul — to overcome it and learn to rule over it (Gen 32:32). Jacob's sinew, representing the strength of the flesh, only shrank. It was not removed. What does this signify spiritually with regard to the

old flesh nature? When one is born again of the Spirit does he lose his soul (mind, will and emotions) nature? No. Rather, the soul must be transformed and renewed by the Spirit of Elohim to be conformed to YHVH's perfect will (Rom 12:2). The soul man will still try to assert dominance over the spirit man, but our spirit man must rule over it. Paul discusses this struggle between the two for dominance in Romans 7:14–25.

In his book, *The Merismos*, Randy Shankle has some powerful insights about the struggle between the soul man and the spirit man. For example, Matthew 26:36–46 details Yeshua's final hours in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest, trial and crucifixion. *Gethsemane* means "wine press." *Gath* was a vat used in treading down the grapes to make juice. *Shemen* refers to any form of liquid and is also the word for oil or anointing. The English word *semen*, or the substance of reproduction or life derives from this word. Grapes are put into a vat and pressed until the unhindered flow of the pure juice flows forth (p. 116).

It is in our own Gethsemane, the place of pressure, that the vessel of our soul man must be broken resulting in the pouring forth of the true anointing of YHVH in our lives. The more the vessel is broken, the more the presence of YHVH comes forth, and the quicker the Spirit of Elohim can flow through us (Shankle, p. 72).

When Gideon's army's clay lamps were broken, the light within shone forth, Israel's enemies were defeated. Metaphorically, the clay lamps represent the body and soul of man, while the candle within is the spirit of man as activated by the Spirit of Elohim. When the soul man is broken, the Spirit of Elohim within us can shine and we will have victory in our lives.

What does it mean to deny the self as spoken of in Matthew 16:24? It is speaking about denying the soul its lustful appetites. Those who would follow Yeshua must deny the soul the right to live, to move, or to chose independently of YHVH. This is what Paul meant when he said, "I die daily ... (1 Cor 15:31). When we do this we lose our lives (*psuche*) and we will find the life (*zoe*) of the Spirit. We must lose our soul-life (Matt 16:25) in order to gain the abundant spiritual life Yeshua promised (John 10:10, Shankle, p. 137).

This is what afflicting the soul on Yom Kippur is all about. As the soul is pushed down or afflicted, the spirit man can rise up, and then it can connect with the Spirit [word and will] of Elohim. When all Israel afflicts their souls on *Yom Kippur*, then it is possible for all Israelites to come into alignment with each other through the sacrifice of Yeshua resulting in being reconciled to YHVH and coming into at-one-ment with Elohim through the blood, the spirit and the water of Yeshua, which are one (1 John 4:6, 8).

The altar of incense before the veil is the picture of this. The 12 tribes of Israel come together at the table of show bread (on *Yom Terub*) in the Tabernacle of Moses as pictured by the 12 loaves of unleavened bread. When united in fellowship, they can become united in prayer and worship before Elohim, which is pictured by the altar of incense, which is located before the ark of YHVH's Presence or before his throne. There, on *Yom Kippur*, they present themselves as the chaste, virgin righteous-robbed bride of Yeshua ready to enter into the wedding *chuppah* of the holy of holies on *Chag Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles.

Coming into the Presence of YHVH is a process that traditionally starts 40 days before *Yom Kippur*. Joel chapter two talks about this. It starts with the blowing of the shofar, sounding the alarm and warning about the coming of the day of YHVH's judgment and calling the bride of Yeshua to prepare herself for the coming of the bridegroom. Verse 12 and onward begins speaking about the fall feasts and how we are to prepare for those days.

When Soul Is Broken, the Zoe Life of Spirit Comes Forth

Yeshua said that he was the Good Shepherd who would give his life (*psuche*) for his sheep (John 10:10, 11, 17, 18). He laid down his life, and the soul (his self will) was squeezed out of him at Gethsemane and the cross. From him flowed the anointed, life-giving substance or seed, which would have the power of reproduction (Shankle, p. 124–125). This will happen again and again in our lives. If we do not understand it when it takes place we may end up resisting the purposes of YHVH, and we will fail to pass our spiritual test necessary to move us to the next level in our spiritual growth.

Live as Yeshua lived, not to be ministered to, but to minister, to be poured out. Communion is a picture of this—the broken bread and the poured out wine (Matt 26:26–28). When taking communion, we are drinking the life that Yeshua poured out. We are identifying with the revelation that as we drink, our lives have ceased. We are no longer our own. We have become broken bread and poured-out wine, broken and distributed to others to take to them the *zoe* life of YHVH (Shankle, p. 126).

YHVH cannot distribute us until there is brokenness. We are to become broken bread and poured-out wine. You will never become broken until you fall on the rock and say, "YHVH, in Yeshua's name, take your mighty

hand and work brokenness within me. I want to be broken by the hand of the Master. Take out of me resistance, anger and hostility. Take out of me arrogance, haughtiness, and pride. Take out of me those things that are my opinions, views, and ideas. Make me something in the hands of the Master so that you can take me, break me, and distribute me to people in need.” (Shankle, p. 236)

Gethsemane is a place of pressure. The pressure that came on Yeshua was to seek and save his life, but he knew that his willful soul had to be sublimated to the Spirit and will of his Father. He therefore brought his soul under control of YHVH’s will and he poured out his soul-life and became spiritual life (*zoe*) to many through his brokenness. Messiah, the grape, dropped into Gethsemane, the wine vat, and the pressure of the Father came upon his soul. The Spirit of Elohim would not let him go until the true anointing came forth. It squeezed upon Yeshua until he became sorrowful and very heavy, even unto death. When he did, the new wine, the juice (blood, Deut. 32:14; Gen 49:11) of the grape came forth to intoxicate the world with his aroma and taste, and the fragrance filled the earth. It still draws men to Messiah. They will drink of him until they cannot live without his influence (Shankle, p. 132).

Now that you know what the Bible means when it commands us to *afflict our souls*, will you submit to YHVH’s process of spiritual refinement so that life of his Spirit can flow through you?

The Jubilee Year Starts and Ends On Yom Kippur

The Jubilee Year started on *Yom Kippur*. All slaves were set free, debts were forgiven, and the land was returned to its original owners (Lev 25:8–9). *Yom Kippur* was the day for new beginnings in ancient Israel.

The Two Goats of Leviticus 16

Leviticus 16 outlines a curious ritual involving the sacrifice of two goats. Lots were cast over the goats, and one goat was chosen to be for YHVH and one goat was called the *azazel* goat. YHVH’s goat (offered by the high priest as a sin offering) represents Yeshua’s sacrificial atonement for our sins.

The *azazel* goat, also called *the scape goat* or *goat of departure*, spiritually represents the entire removal of sin’s defilement from the tabernacle and camp of Israel out into the wilderness. (Note Ps 103:12 where YHVH removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.) Some view the *azazel* goat as a picture of Satan, the one to commit the first sin and who subsequently tempted man to sin. Leviticus 16:10 says that this goat “makes atonement for our sin.” It is blasphemy to say that Satan makes atonement for our sin. Only Yeshua did this, not Satan! *The Soncino Pentateuch* says of the *azazel* goat of Leviticus 16:10 that the word *scapegoat*, as used in the KJV, is a poor translation and should be rendered as *dismissal*. In the Septuagint, it is translated as *the one to be sent away*, which agrees with the term used in the Mishnah. *Azazel* is not a proper name, but a rare Hebrew noun (עֲזָזָאֵל ayin, zayin, lamed, zayin, lamed contracted to עֲזָזָאֵל ayin, zayin, aleph, zayin, lamed) meaning “dismissal, or entire removal.” It is the technical term for the entire removal of sin and guilt of the community, that was symbolized by the sending away of the goat into the wilderness.

There is some difference of opinion as to the symbolic meaning of the *azazel* goat. Some say it is a picture of Satan who initially tempted man to sin or rebel against Elohim, and has been doing so ever since. Since he was the first sinner and rebel against Elohim and has constantly incited man in this sin and rebellion ever since, he must consequently bear the responsibility for his actions. This he will do when he is bound and thrown into the bottomless pit at the beginning of the millennium. The *azazel* goat being dismissed into the wilderness is a picture of this. On the other side, there are those who teach that the *azazel* goat is a picture of Yeshua who bore our sins upon himself and died alone in our place. Which view is correct? Well, both. Sort of...

The most important key to determining who this goat represents is found in Leviticus 16:10 which reads, “But the goat, on which the lot fell for *azazel*, shall be set alive before YHVH, **to make atonement over him**, to send him away for *azazel* into the wilderness.” Note the bold italicized portion. Who made atonement for our sins? Satan or Yeshua? Scripture does not reveal the devil as the redeemer of mankind. Only Yeshua was our atonement as Scripture reveals. Please note:

And not only so, but we also joy in Elohim through our Master Yeshua the Messiah, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Rom 5:11)

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb 1:3)

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. (Heb 7:27)

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb 9:26)

Furthermore, the act of laying on of hands (Lev 16:21) onto the *azazel* goat symbolizes the transference of sins from the guilty party (the children of Israel) to the innocent *azazel* goat. The innocent becomes the sin-bearer. Of course, who can deny that this is a perfect picture of Yeshua and not Satan!

Spiritually, the *azazel* goat represents the entire removal of sin's defilement from the camp of Israel into the wilderness. In Psalms 103:12 Elohim removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. YHVH does this, not Satan!

In Leviticus 16:22 we read, "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." Throughout the Scriptures there are numerous references to Yeshua bearing our sins.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and YHVH hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isa 53:6)

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isa 53:12)

So Messiah was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb 9:28)

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (1 Pet 2:24)

I believe that the *azazel* goat has a secondary meaning as well. Though it doesn't outrightly represent Satan, but Yeshua, we will see that our Savior, while hanging on the cross, represented sin in its totality and in its extreme, and so, for a brief, moment took on the image of the serpent himself. Yeshua said of himself in John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." In the Scriptures, the serpent is a picture of Satan, the adversary (Gen 3:1, 2, 4, 13, 14, 15; Rev 12:9; 20:2).

In Leviticus 16:8 we see that as the two goats stood before the high priest, one on his right hand and one on his left, the lots would be cast and one would become the *azazel* goat and one would be the goat that would be sacrificed in the tabernacle sanctuary itself. It is interesting to note that in hebraic thought, the right hand is the hand of strength, power and judgment, while the left hand is the hand of mercy and grace.

Both Adam Clarke and Matthew Henry in their commentaries say that both goats refer to a different aspect of Yeshua's atonement. Henry says, "Thus [Yeshua] was prefigured by the two goats, which both made one offering: the slain goat was a type of [Messiah] dying for our sins, the scapegoat a type of [Messiah] rising again for our justification... [after which] the entrance into heaven which [Messiah] made for us is here typified by the high priest's entrance into the most holy place (Heb 9:7)" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary On the Whole Bible*, vol. 1, p. 509). Henry doesn't explain just *how* the goat going into the wilderness typifies Yeshua's redeeming us, but I should like to offer an alternative idea in this regard. Perhaps, the *azazel* goat represented Yeshua's soul descending into hell and there taking the keys of death (1 Pet 3:18–20; Rev 1:18).

Yom Kippur and the Great and Terrible Day of YHVH

If we view YHVH's fall feast days in prophesying events surrounding the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah, we see that *Yom Kippur* has prophetic end-times significance as well. If our understanding is correct, it pictures the day when:

- ☞ YHVH's judgment upon the earth will occur prior to the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah culminating in the battle at Megiddo.
- ☞ The beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire.
- ☞ Satan will be judged and cast into the bottomless pit.
- ☞ It is the time when YHVH will have the last word on man's 6000 (rebellious and sinful) years on earth.

- ☞ Rewards and punishments are meted out to humans.
- ☞ The Babylon the Great system is judged and destroyed.
- ☞ The earth is cleansed and readied for Messiah to “touch down” upon the Mount of Olives.
- ☞ The restitution of all things talked about in Acts 3:21 occurs.

All these things must occur before Yeshua the Messiah can bring peace to this earth and establish his world-ruling kingdom. Those who would oppose his sovereign rule must be eliminated. Righteousness will prevail.

Understanding Yom Teruah—A Precursor to Yom Kippur and End-Time Prophecy

Yom Teruah is on the first day of the seventh month, which corresponds to the seventh or last trump of 1 Corinthians 15:51 and Revelation 11:15–18 as well as the shofar blast to which Yeshua refers in Matthew 24:31. These three passages speak of the resurrection of the saints and their reunion with Yeshua in the air at his second coming at the end of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21) just prior to the Wrath of Elohim period (the Seven Bowl Judgments of Rev. 15 and 16).

Matthew 24 is a blueprint that discusses, in chronological order, the tribulation period, the great tribulation and the resurrection (rapture or catching away) of the saints to meet Yeshua in the air *after* the great tribulation. The chronology of these events is apparent. Let’s analyze this in some detail.

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples ask Yeshua three questions who then answers those questions in chronological order. These questions are in the context of verse two where Yeshua is prophesying about the destruction of the Temple and its buildings.

Question one is: “Tell us when shall these things be?” (that is, the destruction of the temple). Question two: “What shall be the sign of your coming...” Question three: “...and of the end of the age?”

Yeshua then proceeds to answer the questions one-by-one. The first question the disciples ask Yeshua is this: When shall these things be? From verses 4–20 he gives an overview of the last days (plural) starting with the era surrounding the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 until the present era. There are 2 days, or 2000 years, between the death of Messiah and the second coming, and the entire time has been one of intense persecution and *tribulation* of believers. The Tribulation has been going on for nearly two thousand years! It is estimated that in recent decades nearly 50,000 believers are martyred each year around the world in communist, Moslem, Hindu, totalitarian regimes or in tribal conflicts. Yeshua gives an overall perspective of that 2000 years and what the spiritual condition will be for his people with some general warnings and some prophecies as to what will happen. For example “the Gospel will be preached in all the world,” which has not fully happened until the past century. It is doubtful that Yeshua’s prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation being placed in the Temple (verse 15) has occurred yet. This will probably occur after the third temple is built in Jerusalem just prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation mentioned in verse 21.

The second question the disciples ask Yeshua is, “What shall be the sign of your coming?” This Yeshua answers from verse 21–28. This is referred to as the great tribulation (Gr. *megathlipsis*) period (verse 21). The saints will also go through this period as is clearly stated in Revelation 2:22 and 7:14.

It is not until “immediately **after** the tribulation” that Yeshua makes any mention of the saints being “caught away (or raptured) (verse 29, emphasis added). The tribulation is past and the events Yeshua describes next point to the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah* or Day of the Awakening Blast).

Verse 30 talks about the sign of the son of man appearing in heaven. This appears to be unique astronomical occurrences including a possible eclipse and a new moon (*rosh chodesh*), which corresponds with the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*) as that is the only biblical feast day that occurs on the actual day of the new moon’s appearance on the first day of the seventh month of the biblical calendar.

Verse 31 shows that the angels at the sound of the great trumpet (another reference to the Day of Trumpets) will gather the elect from the four corners of the world where they have been scattered like lost sheep.

Verse 40 shows the fulfillment of the Day of Trumpets. In ancient Israel when two witnesses had sighted the crescent new moon (*rosh chodesh*) at the beginning of the month and the high priest was notified, a signal went out from the Temple and across the land that the new moon had been sighted and the Day of Trumpets had officially begun. Whatever anyone was doing, whether harvesting their wheat (for this was the fall harvest time) or whether they were grinding that wheat at the mill, all dropped what they were doing, ran back to their houses and began to celebrate the Day of Trumpets. Because no one knew the day or the hour when the new moon would be sighted,

they never were quite certain when this day would begin, but they knew the season and the approximate time period when it would happen. As Yeshua said, “No man knows the day or hour of my coming” but he didn’t say we wouldn’t know the season. We can know the season, for verses 32–39 indicates that. Paul also says in 1 Thessalonians 5:1–5,

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Master so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

As when the signal went out from the high priest to the land of Israel signaling the beginning of the Day of Trumpets, likewise when the Day of Trumpets is actually fulfilled, the heavenly shofar will sound, the righteous dead will raise, and instead of running back to their homes to celebrate the Day of Trumpets, the saints will be lifted heavenward to meet Yeshua in the air and will subsequently be delivered from the forthcoming Wrath of Elohim that is about to be poured out upon this earth.

Now look at the book of Revelation to compare this with what Yeshua reveals about the Tribulation in Matthew 24. This book, for the most part goes in chronological order and coincides with Matthew 24. First the seven seals occur (Rev 6:1–8:5) and then the seven trumpets sound (Rev 8:6–11:19). It is open to debate as to whether any of these events have occurred. Whatever the case, Yeshua speaks of two parts of the Tribulation Period: the general tribulation that has been occurring since the first century, and the Great Tribulation (an intensified period of tribulation to befall the earth) that occurs just prior to Yeshua’s return. Whatever the case and the exact timing of the Tribulation events one thing is certain: the Tribulation IS NOT the wrath of Elohim. Some may ask, “what about Revelation 6:16, where it seems to imply that the Wrath of Elohim is occurring at the end of the sixth seal?” To the casual student of Scripture this may seem to be the case, but if one reads carefully what is being said here in its context starting in verse 15 one will see that this declaration is being made *by men*. It is the perception of kings and great men, etc., who are having to go through the tribulation that this is the wrath of Elohim. This is what THEY are saying and is not a pronouncement of Elohim or any of his heavenly messengers. Scripture does not refer to any period as the wrath of Elohim UNTIL the saints of Elohim are removed from the picture. This occurs after the sounding of the last trumpet in chapter 11, verse 15, where the seventh angel, sounding the seventh trumpet (*shofar*) announces the coming of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Then in verse 18 it is recorded that the 24 elders in Heaven declare that the nations were angry and “your [Elohim’s] wrath is come” and the time of the dead that they should be judged that thou should give reward unto thy servants the prophets and to the saints and them that fear thy name. Small and great and should destroy them that destroy the earth.”

The Ten Days of Awe—The Time Between Day of Trumpets and Day of Atonement

According to Jewish tradition in the *Talmud* (*Rosh Hashana 6b; 16b–17a*), the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*) begins the time period of YHVH’s judgment of men. Elohim opens the books that have recorded men’s deeds, both good and bad. Scripture speaks of several books in which are recorded the deeds of men—one of which is the Book of Life (Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:7; 22:19; Dan 7:10; 12:1; Exod 32:32; Pss 56:8; 69:28; 139:16; Mal 3:16; Isa 65:6; Luke 10:20). During this time period the righteous are sealed and are granted eternal life in the world to come (Heb. *olam haba*), while the fate of the wicked is sealed—eternal death (in the lake of fire)—in the world to come. The intermediates will have until the end of the wrath of Elohim period to choose either the path of righteousness leading to eternal life or wickedness leading to eternal death. Peter also speaks of three categories of people: the righteous, the ungodly and sinners (1 Pet 4:18), which seems to fit the three classes of humans delineated in Jewish tradition.

What happens to the people in each of these three categories during the tribulation period? We may not have all the answers to this question, but we will share what we understand to this point. In Matthew 24:29, Yeshua states the time period of the resurrection (or rapture) is *after* the great tribulation (see verse 21), which corresponds with “a great sound of a shofar” (verse 31). This corresponds with “the last trump” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15–18. We believe that all these trumpet blasts correspond to those that will be heard on the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*), which announces the arrival of the beginning of the seventh month of YHVH’s Biblical year. This “last trumpet,” to which Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 15:52, in Jewish

thought, is to be distinguished from two other trumpet or *shofar* blasts, each of which occurs on various biblical feast days throughout the year: the first *shofar* blast occurs on Pentecost (Feast of Weeks, *Shavuot*), the last *shofar* occurs on the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*) while the final or great *shofar* blast occurs on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) announcing the beginning of the jubilee year.

We see then that the resurrection of the righteous occurs at the time of the last trumpet. This scenario fits perfectly with the chronology of the Book of Revelation where we find recorded the events surrounding the tribulation period and the first half of YHVH's period of wrath (the seven seals and seven trumpets [Rev 5–11]). **At the end** of the seven trumpets (i.e., the first half of the wrath of Elohim period) and at the sounding of the “last trumpet” occurs the resurrection or catching away (or rapture) of the righteous. This is the event where the righteous dead along with the righteous living are caught up to meet Yeshua in the air (Rev 11:14–18). While the angel sounding the seventh trumpet is announcing the return of Yeshua and the rewards for the righteous, he is simultaneously announcing the coming of the final portion or second half of the wrath of Elohim period (verse 18). Hereafter the seven bowl judgments (or seven last plagues) are poured out upon the earth (Rev 15–16) and are referred to in several places as the wrath of Elohim (Rev 11:18; 14:8, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19).

It is important to note that Scripture linguistically delineates the words *tribulation* (which is the Greek word *thlipsis*) and *wrath* (*orge* and *thumos*). These two words have very different meanings and applications. The wrath of Elohim is not called the tribulation and vice versa. The righteous are not appointed to wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9) and therefore will not go through the wrath of Elohim period. There is no indication from Scripture that they will be raptured before the end of the tribulation period. In fact, as noted earlier, Yeshua specifically states so in Matthew 24.

We mentioned above that according to Jewish tradition there are three categories of people and three books opened pertaining to these people: The Book of Life for the righteous, the Book of the Dead for the wicked and the intermediate book for those who are neither wholly wicked nor righteous. Do we see any indications of these three groups in Revelation during the tribulation and wrath periods?

The righteous (saints) are mentioned several times during the tribulation period and the first half of the wrath period (the seven seals and seven trumpets, Rev 6:11; 7:3; 9:14; 9:4; 11:13; 12:17; 13:7; 14:12) and of course, as noted above, the same saints are raptured (or “harvested”) at the sound of the last shofar blast at the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:15–18; 14:4–5; Matt 24:31, 39–40).

The wicked are mentioned in numerous places in the Book of Revelation during the tribulation and wrath periods, but we will specifically note the judgment poured out against them in Revelation 14:14–20, which is the second half of the wrath of Elohim period.

What about the undecided—the intermediate people, those who are neither wholly wicked nor wholly righteous? Are they mentioned as being on earth during the wrath of Elohim period when the seven last plagues or bowl judgments are poured out? In Revelation 16:2, grievous sores are poured out upon those who have taken the mark of the beast and who worship his image. By implication there appears to be a group of people alive on earth who have not taken the mark nor worship the image of the beast. These will not be afflicted with grievous sores. This may be reading between the lines, but logically, if all those alive on the earth were wholly wicked then what need would Scripture have of stating that the sores fell on those who had the mark and worshiped the image?

Additionally, Revelation 14:4 calls those who will be caught away or harvested (to meet Yeshua in the air) on the Day of Trumpets *first fruits among those redeemed (or saved) among men*. Clearly, this statement makes no sense if there are not more to be redeemed (saved) at a later time. This could refer to those who will have an opportunity during the wrath of Elohim period to be redeemed, as well as those Jews that, at the coming of Yeshua, will “look upon [Yeshua] whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son...” (Zech 12:10).

This author certainly does not understand all the details of these end-time events and the scenarios could change and probably will, but we submit these observations in light of an understanding from the Hebrew roots of the Scripture point of view for your careful consideration. No one has prophecy figured out completely. One thing is certain, though: we are commanded to watch and pray (Luke 21:36)!

The Harvest of the Wicked and the Saints

The fall harvest pictures the time period lasting from *Yom Teruah* to *Sukkot* (the Day of Trumpets to the Feast of Tabernacles, lasting 15 days). Revelation 14 speaks of two end-time “harvests” of which the fall festivals are a pro-

phetic or end-times shadow picture

The harvest of saints to their reward is mentioned several times in the Scriptures (Rev 14:4–5; Matt 24:30–31; 25:31–46), as is the harvest of wicked to their reward (Rev 14:15–20).

There is no mention of the saints during the seven bowls wrath of YHVH. This is because they have already been “harvested” and are gathered into YHVH’s “barn” for safekeeping. At the same time, the seventh bowl judgment is poured out on the Babylonian (Rev 18:23; 19:2) anti-YHVH system—the deceiver and corrupter of the world from the very beginning at the tree of knowledge.