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September 2009
Tishrei 5770

7th month of the biblical calendar
1st month of the secular calendar
September 27th—Kol Nidre (PM)
28th—Yom Kippur

High Holy Day greetings in Yeshua!

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement to make atonement for you before the Lord your God.'" (Leviticus 23:26-28)

"For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever." (Leviticus 16:30-31)

The ABCs (Alef-Bet) of Yom Kippur AVODAH (ah-vo-DAH)

The *Avodah* is a central part of the liturgy for a traditional *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) service. During the *Avodah*, the multifaceted duties that used to be performed by the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement are recounted. These duties, found in Leviticus 16, could only be performed when there was a Tabernacle or a Holy Temple in Jerusalem. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., these very detailed activities ceased. It is interesting to note that atonement in bible times centered around the high priest. His work (worship), on that most sacred of all Jewish days, was extremely demanding, and even life-threatening. After a seven-day period of preparation, the high priest was forced to stay awake the entire night before the fast, eat very little, memorize the order and details of the myriad procedures on *Yom Kippur*, hoping that he would not violate any of God's rules and prescribed rituals and be struck down by the Lord. There was a real element of the Fear of the Lord connected with the Day of Atonement!

AZAZEL (ah-za-ZEL)

Azazel is the Hebrew word for scapegoat. The root of the word includes the concept of removal. Part of the duties of the high priest on *Yom Kippur* involved two male goats. Lots were cast to determine which goat would be "for the Lord" and which would be for "*azazel*" or the scapegoat. The high priest then tied a piece of crimson-dyed wool (based on Isaiah 1:18) between the horns of the scapegoat, and tied a similar piece of wool around the neck of the goat which was to be sacrificed. The former was slaughtered by the high priest (Leviticus 16:5) and its blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the people of Israel. After laying his hands on the head of the live goat, confessing over him all the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the children of Israel (Leviticus 16:20-21), the *azazel* was handed over to a specially designated person who would lead it off into the desert. The two goats were actually one offering as expressed in Leviticus 16:5. Mitch and Zhava Glaser in their excellent book, **The Fall Feasts of Israel**, make the following comment: "The slaughtered goat showed the congregation that God's wrath was appeased, while the live goat was sent into the wilderness bearing the sins of Israel, illustrating that they had been removed (Psalm 103:12)." [This clearly demonstrates that the grace of God was **not** a New Covenant invention!]

When the *azazel* arrived at the cliff, the attending priest removed the crimson wool from its horns

and divided it in two. One piece was tied onto the horns again, and the other to a part of the cliff. The priest then pushed the goat backwards over the cliff, bearing Israel's sins as it plunged to its death.

According to Jewish tradition, the piece of crimson wool turned white each year, signifying that God had accepted the sacrifices, and atonement had been made for the sins of the nation of Israel. The *Mishnah* (early rabbinic legal code compiled in the 2nd century) states that forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the red wool stopped turning white. We verified this on one of our trips to Jerusalem when we spoke with someone at the Temple Institute. She attributed this phenomena to Israel's apostasy, but we know that the timing coincides with the one great atoning sacrifice of the Messiah of Israel, who like the *azazel*, has "removed" our transgressions from us!

CHET (guttural cHET)

If there were no *cHET* (sin), there would be no need for a Day of Atonement. There is, and *cHET* or sin does not have the same meaning in contemporary Judaism as it does in the Torah. First of all, there is no belief in "original sin." Modern Judaism believes that people start life with a pure soul, which can be kept pure through much struggle and determination. In other words, the *yetser hara* (evil inclination) can be conquered by human effort. A person's repentance can atone for his sin, as can his suffering or even his death. In traditional Judaism there is no vicarious, substitutionary atonement for sin. It is believed that each person pays for his own sin. There are also some Jewish people today who don't believe in "sin." Nevertheless, many Jewish people know that they have somehow "missed the mark" or "fallen short," the actual meaning of the Hebrew word "*cHET*." That's why on one day of the year, Jewish people are found in synagogues repenting the *Al Chet* prayer, a very lengthy confession of sins, based on the confessional of Nehemiah 1:6, "*Please let Your ear be attentive, and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You...*"

The revelation that is desperately needed today is that the *cHET* that separates us from God, who longs to be close to us, can only be removed in the prescribed way that He has ordained.

DAM (dahm)

Dam is the Hebrew word for blood. The sacrificial system of ancient Israel involved much shedding of blood. The entire Kidron Valley is said to have smelled of blood, as the blood of the sacrifices drained down from the Temple courts. Why was so much blood necessary? Blood represents life. Sin brought death. Only life could restore life. Blood was in some sense "holy" and life-giving. Covenants were sealed with blood. God's people were forbidden to eat blood. The shedding of blood was God's way of making people right with Him. It provided atonement. "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*" (Leviticus 17:11)

The book of Hebrews in the *B'rit Hadasha* tells us about Yeshua, The Eternal High Priest, who entered the Most Holy Place in Heaven with His own blood, obtaining eternal redemption once for all. Through Messiah's atoning blood we have, 1) forgiveness (Mt 26:28, Eph 1:7), 2) justification (Rom 5:9), 3) sanctification (Heb 13:12), 4) cleansing (1 Jn 1:7), 5) peace (Col 1:20), 6) nearness to God (Eph 2:13, Heb 4:16), 7) eternal inheritance (Heb 9:14-15), 8) redemption (Eph 1:7, Heb 9:12), and 9) victory (Rev 12:11).

KAPPAROT (kah-pah-ROAT)

Kapparot in Hebrew literally means "expiations" with the idea of covering or atoning. This ritual began in the ninth century by some Orthodox groups who felt the need for a blood sacrifice, but could not comply with God's requirements for the Day of Atonement since the Temple in Jerusalem had long been destroyed. Given this reality, on the day preceding *Yom Kippur*, they took a chicken and swung

it three times over their head while reciting the following prayer: "This is my substitute, my vicarious offering, my atonement; this cock (for males, a hen for females) shall meet death, but I shall find a long and pleasant life of peace." Rachmiel Frydland, in his book **When Being Jewish Was a Crime**, recounts his family's personal experience of *Kapparot* growing up in World War II Poland. You will be blessed and inspired by the amazing story of this precious, humble Messianic Jewish pioneer.

KIPPURIM (Key-pur-EEM)

The biblical name for the holy day which occurs on the tenth of *Tishrei* (September 28th this year) is actually *Yom HaKippurim*, although it is known today as *Yom Kippur*. *Kippurim* is a plural noun and means atonements. This may be a reference to the three groups of offerings which were made by the high priest to cover sin (note: from the root *kaphar*, to cover, expiate, cleanse, disannul, forgive, purge or pardon, **cover**, not **remove**, but hide from God's sight for another year). Sin was finally removed forever by the once for all, eternal sacrifice of Yeshua.

KOHEN GADOL (ko-HEN gah-DOLE)

Kohen Gadol is Hebrew for High Priest, the central figure or focus of *Yom HaKippurim*. The High Priest had an awesome responsibility on this day. His duties included numerous immersions, changes of clothing, scripture readings, benedictions, burning of incense, and sacrifices both for himself, his family and for the nation of Israel as a whole. During the course of the holy day, he also uttered the sacred, ineffable name of the Lord ten times. He entered the *Kadosh Kodashim*, the Holy of Holies, alone, passing beyond the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The *Kohen Gadol* was the mediator for the nation of Israel. But since the priesthood was an inherited position, the High Priest was not always a very godly person. This was the case at the time of Yeshua. As the ultimate High Priest, he stood out in sharp contrast to some of the earthy high priests who were merely a shadow of the perfect High Priest to come. *"For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever."* (Hebrews 7:26-28)

Yeshua is a superior high priest who offers a superior sacrifice: His own blood. When He died, the veil in the Temple was supernaturally split in two, giving us access to the very presence of God—not one day a year—but every day.

TEFILLAH (teh-fee-LAH), T'SHUVAH (t'shu-VAH), TZEDAKAH (tz-da-KAH)

Prayer, Repentance, and Charity. These three practices have replaced the blood of atonement in traditional Judaism. How did that happen? Without a Temple, priesthood or sacrifices, (whether in Babylon or after 70 A.D.), God's people needed to find a way in which there could be atonement for sin. Prayer (*tefillah*) became one substitute for the sacrificial offerings, since even the prophet Hosea said, *"Let us render for bullocks the offering of our lips."* (Hosea 14:2) A large body of prayers for forgiveness, *Selichot*, are recited during the entire High Holy Day season. Charity (*zedakah*) became a second substitute. The rabbis went so far as to say, "Charity delivers from death." (Baba Batra 10a)

Possibly the most important substitute for atonement through blood is repentance (*t'shuvah*). Traditional Jews point out that God said through the Prophet Hosea, *"...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn [make t'shuvah] from his way and live..."* (Ezekiel 33:11). The Hebrew concept of repentance includes the idea of turning from sin, asking for forgiveness, and going the other way—God's way. While it is true that repentance **must** precede redemption, repentance alone is only a part of atonement God's way.

TZOM (tzohm)

Tzom, fasting, is an intricate part of *Yom Kippur*. This is believed to be what is meant by the command to "afflict the soul" in Leviticus 16 and 23, based on what the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 58:3 about humbling one's soul through fasting. *Yom Kippur* was known simply as "the fast" even in the New Covenant Scriptures (Acts 27:9). In Temple times, God's people were to fast (deny their flesh) as part of their spiritual preparation for the atonement that the High Priest would make for them. The traditional *Yom Kippur* fast is without food or water for twenty-four hours, from sunset to sunset. All Israel was to mourn over their sins. Anyone not afflicted in soul on that day would be cut off from his people (Leviticus 23:29). As important as fasting was, however, it did not atone for sin.

VIDUI (vih-doo-EE)

Vidui is the Hebrew word for "confession." The rabbis consider verbal confession as inseparable from *t'shuvah* (repentance). (The New Covenant would seem to agree with this! Check out Romans 10:9-10 and 1 John 7-8!) *Vidui*, then, is the sincere confession of sin. There are two lengthy confessions of sin that follow the order of the *Alef-Bet*, recited ten times on the Day of Atonement (to coincide with the ten times that the High Priest pronounced the sacred name of God).

Confession of sin is traditionally done in unison as a congregation. As each sin is mentioned, the traditional worshipper lightly strikes the left side of his chest, implying that the heart is responsible for the sins. "Even though he may not personally have committed that sin, he takes upon himself the guilt that results from his being part of a sinful nation." (Glaser) Perhaps we should do this on *Yom Kippur* this year. We, the citizens of the USA, have sinned against our Creator. There is much to confess, much to repent of. Repentance and confession of sin is the need of the hour. WE have sinned.

YAMIM NORAIM (yah-MEEM no-rah-EEM)

Yom is the Hebrew word for day (plural *yamim*). *Nora* is the Hebrew word for awesome. *Yamim Noraim* means "Awesome Days" or "Days of Awe," and refers to the ten days between *Yom Teruah* (*Rosh Hashana*) and *Yom Kippur*. According to rabbinical teaching, God decides whether or not a person's name is inscribed in the Book of Life for that year on *Yom Teruah*. For the next ten days, days of penitence, a person has the opportunity to repent of his sins and reconcile with his fellow man. Based on his change of heart and behavior during these ten days, his fate is sealed on *Yom Kippur*. For this reason, *Yom Kippur* is also referred to as The Day of Judgement.

ZEVACHIM (ze-vah-CHIM)

The sacrifices of innocent animals during Temple times foreshadowed Yeshua's final sacrifice for sin. An "exchange of life" principle was in effect, whereby the life of an innocent animal substituted for the life of a penitent sinner. We like the way Lawrence Duff Forbes expressed this truth: "There is a Divinely-appointed WAY TO GOD which leads to the permanent WALK WITH GOD. The sinner's WAY to the Holy God of Israel is by: 1) Substituting Sacrifice; 2) Offered through Divinely-appointed High Priestly Meditation; 3) Resulting in righteousness being Divinely and righteously imparted to the sinner; finally 4) Because of the death of the sinless sacrifice in the sinner's place."

We live in a sin-sick world, but there is a powerful cure for this terminal disease: ATONEMENT THROUGH YESHUA. Are you sick of sin? TODAY is God's *Yom Kippur* for YOU! Ask God to forgive your sin, repent, make a quality decision to go His way from this day forward. Receive Yeshua's atoning sacrifice for your sin BY FAITH. Be cleansed. Be set free. Be forgiven. Begin a new life in Messiah!

Love in Yeshua, the fulfillment of *Yom Kippur*, who now sits at the right hand of God as our mediating High Priest! (Hebrews 10:19-23)

Neil & Jamie