

# Yom Ha’Kippurim – The Day of Atonements

By Constance Smith

An introduction to Yom Kippur (Yom Ha’Kippurim) or the Day of Atonements and its prophetic meaning, for Christians.

As I shared in a previous article, in the bible there are several *Moedim* or Appointed Times of God (YHVH), also referred to as “biblical feasts.” Most believers out there have heard of some of them, such as Passover (Pesach) or Pentecost (Shavuot.) But there are several moedim in the spring, and more in the autumn.

Yom Teruah, or the Feast of Trumpets is the first of the “fall feasts.” You can learn about that in the article I shared all about Yom Teruah.

Yom Ha’Kippurim or Yom Kippur as it is more commonly known, is the Day of Atonements. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> appointed time of God (YHVH) in the biblical calendar, and the second of the “fall feasts.” See the article about Yom Teruah to learn about the calendars and the controversy surrounding them.

Just like all of the biblical Appointed Times of God, The Day of Atonements holds tremendous meaning.

The Day of Atonements is the day that the High Priest of Israel made an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all the people. It was and is considered the highest holy day of the year. It is serious and somber. It is a day of understanding how sin separates us from relationship with the Father and even each other. It is a day of praying for forgiveness not only of our own sins, but of the sins of the nation.

The instructions given for this appointed time can first be seen in Leviticus 16.

*All scripture quotes below are from the [CJB bible](#).*

### **Leviticus 16:1-30**

*Adonai spoke with Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they tried to sacrifice before Adonai and died; Adonai said to Moshe, "Tell your brother Aharon not to come at just any time into the Holy Place beyond the curtain, in front of the ark-cover which is on the ark, so that he will not die; because I appear in the cloud over the ark-cover.*

*"Here is how Aharon is to enter the Holy Place: with a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering. He is to put*

*on the holy linen tunic, have the linen shorts next to his bare flesh, have the linen sash wrapped around him, and be wearing the linen turban — they are the holy garments. He is to bathe his body in water and put them on.*

*“He is to take from the community of the people of Isra’el two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. Aharon is to present the bull for the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and his household. He is to take the two goats and place them before Adonai at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aharon is to cast lots for the two goats, one lot for Adonai and the other for ‘Az’azel. **(A place of desolation – wasteland)** Aharon is to present the goat whose lot fell to Adonai and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat whose lot fell to ‘Az’azel is to be presented alive to Adonai to be used for making atonement over it by sending it away into the desert for ‘Az’azel.*

*“Aharon is to present the bull of the sin offering for himself; he will make atonement for himself and his household; he is to slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar*

*before Adonai and, with his hands full of ground, fragrant incense, bring it inside the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before Adonai, so that the cloud from the incense will cover the ark-cover which is over the testimony, in order that he not die. He is to take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle it with his finger on the ark-cover toward the east; and in front of the ark-cover he is to sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.*

*“Next, he is to slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood as he did with the bull's blood, sprinkling it on the ark-cover and in front of the ark-cover. He will make atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleannesses of the people of Isra'el and because of their transgressions — all their sins; and he is to do the same for the tent of meeting which is there with them right in the middle of their uncleannesses. No one is to be present in the tent of meeting from the time he enters the Holy Place to make atonement until the time he comes out, having made atonement for himself, for his household and for the entire community of Isra'el. Then he is to go out to the altar that is before Adonai and make atonement for it; he is to take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it*

*on all the horns of the altar. He is to sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, thus purifying it and setting it apart from the uncleannesses of the people of Isra'el.*

*“When he has finished atoning for the Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he is to present the live goat. Aharon is to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the transgressions, crimes and sins of the people of Isra'el; he is to put them on the head of the goat and then send it away into the desert with a man appointed for the purpose. The goat will bear all their transgressions away to some isolated place, and he is to let the goat go in the desert.*

*“Aharon is to go back into the tent of meeting, where he is to remove the linen garments he put on when he entered the Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. Then he is to bathe his body in water in a holy place, put on his other clothes, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, thus making atonement for himself and for the people. He is to make the fat of the sin offering go up in smoke on the altar.*

*“The man who let go the goat for ‘Az’azel is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water; afterwards, he may return to the camp.*

*“The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, is to be carried outside the camp; there they are to burn up completely their hides, meat and dung. The person burning them is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water; afterwards, he may return to the camp.*

*“It is to be a permanent regulation for you that on the tenth day of the seventh month you are to deny yourselves and not do any kind of work, both the citizen and the foreigner living with you. For on this day, atonement will be made for you to purify you; you will be clean before Adonai from all your sins. It is a Shabbat of complete rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves.*

There would be two goats that had been selected for this sacrifice. Lots would be cast to determine which would die, and which would be cast off to the wilderness. The High Priest would sacrifice the one

goat as the sin offering. But the other, called the scapegoat, he would lay his hands on and confess all of the sins of the people.

The laying on of hands represented a transfer, whether it was anointing, authority, blessings, or even curses.

### **Acts 6:5-6**

*What they said was agreeable to the whole gathering. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Ruach HaKodesh, Philip, Prochoros, Nikanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas, who was a proselyte from Antioch. They presented these men to the emissaries, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*

### **Genesis 48:14-19**

*But Isra'el put out his right hand and laid it on the head of the younger one, Efrayim, and put his left hand on the head of M'nasheh — he intentionally crossed his hands, even though M'nasheh was the firstborn. Then he blessed Yosef: "The God in whose presence my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak lived, the God who has been my own shepherd all my life long to this*

*day, the angel who has rescued me from all harm, bless these boys. May they remember who I am and what I stand for, and likewise my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak, who they were and what they stood for. And may they grow into teeming multitudes on the earth."*

*When Yosef saw that his father was laying his right hand on Efrayim's head, it displeased him, and he lifted up his father's hand to remove it from Efrayim's head and place it instead on M'nasheh's head. Yosef said to his father, "Don't do it that way, my father; for this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know that, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great; nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will grow into many nations."*

### **Leviticus 24:14-16**

*"Take the man who cursed outside the camp, have everyone who heard him lay their hands on his head, and have the entire community stone him. Then tell the people of Isra'el, 'Whoever curses his God will bear the consequences of his sin; and whoever blasphemes the name of Adonai must be put to*



*death; the entire community must stone him. The foreigner as well as the citizen is to be put to death if he blasphemes the Name.*

When the priest laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat, and confessed all of the sins of the people, he was transferring the curse from the people to the goat.

The goat was then taken out and let loose in the wilderness, never to be seen again, and carrying away the sins of the people.

### **Psalm 103:10-12**

*He has not treated us as our sins deserve  
or paid us back for our offenses,  
because his mercy toward those who fear him  
is as far above earth as heaven.  
He has removed our sins from us  
as far as the east is from the west.*

There is something else of interest about the ceremony of the goats. As we know, there were many customs and traditions that came

about in the keeping of the Moedim, and Yom Ha’Kippurim is no different.

One tradition that came about, was the tying of a wool ribbon or piece of string or a cord on the scapegoat. This wool ribbon or thread was dyed scarlet red.

Now scripturally as we read in Leviticus, the goat was simply supposed to be released into the wild. But over time another tradition was added, one that is quite shocking.

During the Second Temple period, the scapegoat was taken into the desert, then a crimson cord was placed on the horn of the scapegoat and tied to a stone then the goat was thrown off a cliff!

I guess they wanted to make sure that the cursed goat, carrying their sins, wouldn’t come back. This act is recorded in the Mishna (Jewish rabbinical writings) and teaches that the goat was dashed to pieces before it made it halfway down the cliff.

Now when I was studying this, I saw an interesting parallel.

When we look at the account of Jesus’s (Yeshua’s) betrayal, crucifixion and the death of Judas. We know that Yeshua was the

perfect lamb, the one whose blood was shed for our atonement of sins.

We see that Judas hung himself (something tied around him) and then when his body fell, he was dashed asunder. Just like the scapegoat came to be. (Matthew 27, Acts 1)

But this crimson wool tradition seems to something that progressed over time, and it had other significance during the period. Someone would take away the scapegoat, but how did the priests in the temple know that the sins of the people had been taken away? How did they know the goat had reached the wilderness or had gone far enough away?

The crimson red wool would turn white.

But to understand this, we have to take another look at the Mishna. They would put crimson wool thread or cord on the goat, but then they also put it other places.

*j. Yoma 6:5, 43d At first they would tie it in their windows, and some of theirs would turn white and some of theirs would stay red. And*

*those [whose threads stayed red] would be embarrassed in front of the others.*

So the people would take some of that crimson wool and tie it to their homes. Anyone whose wool didn't turn white, was shamed, because they obviously hadn't repented properly of their sins. Trusting the action of the High Priest's atonement weren't enough. Apparently, they needed to earn their forgiveness through better works.

Later they began tying the crimson wool to the entrance of the Sanctuary instead of each individual home. But again, sometimes it turned white, sometimes it didn't. It was changed again to the entrance to the Portico of the temple. Then to the inside of the entrance so that it was sort of hidden and you could only see if it you peeked inside.

In another portion of the Mishna it says:

*b. Yoma 67a "At first they would tie the crimson thread on the opening of the Portico from the inside, and when the goat reached the wilderness, it would turn white, and they would know that the mitzvah had been performed (=that the scapegoat had been pushed off the cliff), as it says, "Though*

*your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow” (Isa 1:18).*

Eventually they no longer tied scarlet wool at the temple, and it was instead tied to a rock where the goat was thrown down.

This is a quote from the Jewish website, Torah.com:

*“These traditions want us to imagine a time when a thread miraculously turned from crimson to white, signaling that the people repented and were forgiven. At the same time, the text is uncomfortable with a reality in which people would actually in real time know what God has decided; certainly this is not the case for the average Jew praying on Yom Kippur for forgiveness. Thus, the miracle is gradually moved from an accessible sign, either in people’s houses or the Temple, to far away in the wilderness, witnessed only by the person who accompanies the scapegoat.”*

The traditions of the scarlet thread span many years and like many traditions, have questionable origins, though in practice they had good intentions – at least to begin with. But these traditions were not commands of the Father.

## So How was the Day of Atonements to be kept?

Let's look again at scripture.

### Leviticus 23:26-32

*Adonai said to Moshe, "The tenth day of this seventh month is Yom-Kippur; you are to have a holy convocation, you are to deny yourselves, and you are to bring an offering made by fire to Adonai. You are not to do any kind of work on that day, because it is Yom-Kippur, to make atonement for you before Adonai your God. Anyone who does not deny himself on that day is to be cut off from his people; and anyone who does any kind of work on that day, I will destroy from among his people. You are not to do any kind of work; it is a permanent regulation through all your generations, no matter where you live. It will be for you a Shabbat of complete rest, and you are to deny yourselves; you are to rest on your Shabbat from evening the ninth day of the month until the following evening."*

So to review:

- It is held in the 7<sup>th</sup> month, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, which is from Sunset on the 9<sup>th</sup> day to sunset of the 10<sup>th</sup> day.
- It's a special Sabbath (Shabbat), do not work
- Have a Holy Convocation (think of a special "church service")
- Afflict yourself
- The priest would present offerings for himself and the nation
- He would make atonement with the blood of one goat
- The living goat carried the sins of the nation into the wilderness

It is interesting that the atonement of the sins of the people was made by the High Priest, and not in the presence of the people. They didn't see it happen, but they trusted that the atonement had been made.

Just as we didn't witness the death, burial and resurrection of our Messiah, but we trust that sacrifice that was made for the atoning of our sins.

## So how do we keep it today?

- Keep this as a holy Shabbat – a day of rest, no regular work (sunset to sunset)
- Have a holy convocation – time with the Father and other believers, if you can. Many people watch services online if they have no others in their community who keep the Moedim.
- Remember the atonement that was made for us
- Pray for our nation, confessing the sins and asking forgiveness.
- Afflicting ourselves

## What does it mean to “Afflict?”

The word afflict is “*ānâ*” (*aw-naw.*)

In many bibles, it is translated as “fast.” But that is not the same word. The word “fast” – to abstain from food, is “*ṣûm.*”

This word of afflict – *ānâ*, means “to become low, give heed, to pay attention, to give account.” And looking at the root of the word, it means “to look down, to bow, to be humble.”

To afflict means to give an account, remember, and to humble ourselves before YHVH. It is a day of somber reflection, and



thankfulness for the atoning sacrifice that was made by our High Priest, Yeshua.

### **Hebrews 4:12-16**

*See, the Word of God is alive! It is at work and is sharper than any double-edged sword — it cuts right through to where soul meets spirit and joints meet marrow, and it is quick to judge the inner reflections and attitudes of the heart. Before God, nothing created is hidden, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.*

*Therefore, since we have a great cohen gadol (**high priest**) who has passed through to the highest heaven, Yeshua, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we acknowledge as true. For we do not have a cohen gadol unable to empathize with our weaknesses; since in every respect he was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that he did not sin. Therefore, let us confidently approach the throne from which God gives grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need.*

Many people **do** still fast on this day, just as our Jewish brethren do. Because when you think of somber, prayerful reflection – praying for the sins of your nation, there is little more serious than fasting.

Often what many people do in preparation for keeping the Day of Atonements, is to have a holiday meal on the 9<sup>th</sup> day, before sunset.

It is set apart as a day of holy preparations, with special white table linens and wearing white clothing, representing the hope of the cleansing of sin. Candles are lit and blessings are said over wine and bread (challah.) Then at sunset, Yom Ha’Kippurim commences, along with the fast.

Many take this very seriously, and fast both from food and water – not to mention other physical pleasures, entertainment, etc. The day is treated with the utmost seriousness and holiness. It is believed that Judgement will come and the end of the day.

Will their names be in the Book of Life, or not?

### **Revelation 3:5**

*He who wins the victory will, like them, be dressed in white clothing; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life; in fact, I will acknowledge him individually before my Father and before his angels.*

**Revelation 20:11-15**

*Next I saw a great white throne and the One sitting on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened; and another book was opened, the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from what was written in the books, according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead in it; and Death and Sh'ol gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to what he had done. Then Death and Sh'ol were hurled into the lake of fire. This is the second death — the lake of fire. Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was hurled into the lake of fire.*

Yom Ha’Kippurim – The Day of Atonements, is the day when the People of God stand in solemnity, knowing that the High Priest has made the atoning sacrifice, that the blood has indeed been spilled, and their sins are truly gone.

As far as the east is from the west.

That though the sins were crimson, they are now white as snow.

As I have shared in other articles, including the recent one about The Day of Trumpets, all of God's Appointed days (Moedim) have prophetic significance, and each of them point to the Messiah.

***The spring feasts all point to the first coming.***

Death, Burial, Resurrection and the coming of His Holy Spirit.

Passover & Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and Shavuot (Pentecost.)

***The fall feasts all point to the second coming.***

The Day of His Return, being Yom Teruah – the Day or Feast of Trumpets.

The Day of Atonement...standing Humbly before the Father. The day of examination...have we been atoned for by the High Priest?

And next will come the Wedding Feast of the Bride and Her Messiah. The Feast of Sukkot, or Tabernacles/Booths – but we will discuss that another day.