

## Dates of Destiny: Future Tense

In the previous chapter, we explored the first four “Feasts of Yahweh,” those whose fulfillments are now history. But Yahweh listed seven such days in total: there are still three *qodesh miqrym*—holy convocations—specified in the Torah that have as yet seen no fulfillment parallel to those that are already past. We are therefore anticipating three more earth-shakingly significant events—not merely three important days in the life of Israel or critical milestones in the unfolding plan of Yahweh (though these three remaining *mo'edim*, or appointments, will certainly be all that) but events that also meet several restrictive criteria.

First, they must fulfill overt prophesy. That is, they must bring about conditions that Yahweh has predicted in His Word but has not yet caused to happen. As noted in the previous chapter, these should include the transformation of our frail human state into something permanent, the spiritual restoration of Israel, and the coming of the reigning Messiah. Merely being seen as a “good thing” for God’s people does not necessarily qualify something as a candidate for one of these three remaining *miqrym*.

Second, there must be a logical tie-in to the unique rites and rituals associated with these days in the Levitical instructions. Passover had to do with slaying a lamb, the Feast of Unleavened Bread required the removal of yeast from the house, Firstfruits anticipated a harvest, and the Feast of Weeks focused on the time lapse since the previous *miqrym*—defining its celebration on the first day of the week: circumstances that were all—if we’re willing to see them—reflected in the events that fulfilled the prophecies. In the same way, the coming *miqrym* will have some connection to whatever it is that makes them unique: the Feast of Trumpets will have something to do with blowing trumpets or shouting; the Day of Atonement will involve affliction of the soul, and the Feast of Tabernacles will feature some permutation of the building of temporary dwelling places.

Third, they must fall upon the precise dates mandated in scripture, that is, the first, tenth, and fifteenth days of the month of Tishri on the Hebrew lunar calendar—which fall in the Gregorian calendar’s September or October. These, therefore, are commonly called “the Fall Feasts,” for they all occur in the autumn. By this criteria, such momentous events as Israel’s independence day (May 14, 1948) or their stunning victory over the forces of Islam in June, 1967, could not be considered fulfillments to Yahweh’s final *miqrym*, no matter how much prophecy they may have fulfilled otherwise.

Fourth, as with the first four, these last three will be fulfilled literally, though within the framework of Yahweh's consistent and extensive matrix of symbols and metaphors. (For example, if you hope to comprehend the significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, you must understand that leaven or yeast is God's symbol for sin, pervasive and corrupting.) My point is that "spiritual" or "allegorical" fulfillments, devoid of any concrete, overt, historical manifestation or consequence, won't cut it as candidates for fulfillment. If it takes scholarly eloquence or clever argument to "prove" something has happened, then it hasn't.

And fifth, each of these last three *miqrym* (as before) will involve interaction between God and man. We can't by ourselves precipitate their fulfillments. On our own, we are quite incapable of controlling or even influencing Yahweh's timetable, though His agenda is scheduled solely for our benefit. Therefore, even if every living child of Yahweh, every soul redeemed by the blood of Yahshua, were to shout for joy or blow the *shofar* in commemoration of the Feast of Trumpets on the next occurrence of the first day of Tishri, that would not *in itself* constitute fulfillment of the *miqra's* prophecy, no matter how cool it would be. Fulfillment *will* happen, but only when Yahweh is good and ready.

#### FEAST OF TRUMPETS

There are three primary passages in the Torah where instructions concerning the seven Feasts of Yahweh are grouped: Leviticus 23, Numbers 28 and 29, and Deuteronomy 16 (though in Deuteronomy 16, the Feast of Trumpets isn't mentioned at all, for reasons that can only be understood if you comprehend what the *miqra* predicts—something we've discussed before and will again). All Maimonides had to say about it (based on what he saw in Leviticus 23:24-25) was to rest on the day (in Mitzvah #130) and also (since we're dumb sheeple and might miss it) not to work on it (Mitzvah #131). I've got no earthly idea what the difference was supposed to be. Adding to the confusion, the Rambam referred to the day as *Rosh Hashanah*, meaning "the head of the year," or "new year's day," although Yahweh plainly stated that the beginning of the Hebrew year was to coincide with the new moon in the month of Nisan, in the spring (a day, by the way, that was *not* designated as one of these seven *mo'edim*). The autumn "new year" was a bad habit the Jews picked up during their captivity in Babylon. One of many, it would seem.

The Hebrew name for this *miqra* is found in Numbers 29:1—*Yom Teruah*: the "day of shouting," or the "day of blowing the trumpet." Strong's defines *teruah* as an "alarm, signal, sound of tempest, shout, shout or blast of war, alarm, or joy; a war-cry, battle-cry; a shout of joy (with religious impulse or in general)." Baker and Carpenter add, "It refers to a loud, sharp shout or cry in general, but it often indicates a shout of joy or victory, or a great shout anticipating a coming event. It

can refer to the noise or signal put out by an instrument. Amos used the word to refer to war cries.” Although it isn’t specifically named in the text, the “blowing” connotation would naturally imply the use of the ram’s horn “trumpet,” the *shofar*, the quintessential Hebrew implement for both raising an alarm and making a joyful noise. We should contrast the *shofar* in our minds with both the bull’s horn, a symbol of secular power, and the silver trumpet, or *hasoserah*, that was used to call Israel to worship at the Tabernacle or Temple.

The *miqra* of *Yom Teruah*, then, is prophetic of a specific future day when all that is implied in the word “*teruah*” will be brought to pass in the fulfillment of one of Yahweh’s most fundamental areas of promise. We can start to home in on precisely what that is by taking a look at other usages of the word in the Tanach. Let us begin in the Psalms: **“God has gone up with a shout (*teruah*), Yahweh with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding.”** (Psalm 47:5-7) Three things are seen happening in a single context: (1) Yahweh is going up; (2) this rising is accompanied by *teruah*—shouting and the blowing of the trumpet; and (3) God is consequently being praised by people who understand exactly what’s going on, namely, that He Himself is coming to reign as King over the whole earth. Today we believers sing praises to God, though to say we do it “with understanding” would be a stretch. But when “God has gone up with *teruah*,” we’ll finally *get it*. Notice, by the way, that Yahweh (the God who “has gone up”) and the reigning King of the whole earth are equated in this passage. *Yahshua is God*, not merely His anointed servant.

And as it turns out, God is not the only one who is “going up with a shout.” His people are going with Him: **“Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound (*teruah*)! They walk, O Yahweh, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, and in Your righteousness they are exalted.”** (Psalm 89:15-16) There is more going on here than Yahweh’s people being “exalted” in their earthly circumstances. In point of fact, our normal experience tells us that people who display Yahweh’s righteousness these days are as likely to be ridiculed and persecuted as glorified. What gives? The key is the Hebrew word translated “exalted.” *Ruwm* means to rise up, be raised, set on high, be lifted up. It’s the same picture we saw above: “God has *gone up* with a shout,” and now we’re told that the people who hear and respond to the “joyful sound,” the *teruah*, who walk in His righteousness and rejoice in His light, are to be “lifted up” as well.

I’ll readily admit that without the New Covenant scriptures to illuminate this, we might never have realized what’s being prophesied (until it actually happened, of course). But the Apostle Paul helps us to connect the dots. **“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be**

**changed.**” (I Corinthians 15:51-52) Putting the Torah, the Psalms, and the Pauline epistles together then, it transpires that the *miqra* of *Yom Teruah*, the Feast of Trumpets, predicts nothing short of the transformation of our decaying mortal existence into a glorious immortal, incorruptible state. Not all of humanity will be changed like this, you understand, but only those who fit the Psalmist’s description—those who “know the joyful sound—the *teruah*—and who walk in the light of Yahweh’s countenance.” These alone will be “raised incorruptible” in God’s righteousness on *Yom Teruah*.

How is this going to work? I mean, according to the requirements of the Torah, it all has to transpire (as Paul put it above) “in the twinkling of an eye,” on a single autumn day. The logistics are daunting, to say the least. It would take *God Himself* to pull this off. And so it shall: **“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”** (I Thessalonians 4:16-17) The shouting and trumpet-blowing (the *teruah*) will be done by God Himself, accompanied by an archangel. The “Lord,” the risen Yahshua, will descend to earth, gather his people, and then (as we were informed in Psalm 47) “go up” with them. This gathering is described here as being “caught up.” That’s the Greek verb *harpazo* (“to seize, carry off by force, claim for oneself eagerly, snatch out or away”—Strong’s), a word translated in the Latin Vulgate as *rapiemur*. (“*Deinde nos qui vivimus qui relinquimur simul rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Domino in aera et sic semper cum Domino erimus,*” if you must know.) That’s where we get the common term for this momentous event: the “rapture.” Don’t let anybody tell you the word can’t be found in the Bible, just because it doesn’t show up as an English noun.

Is that all there is to *teruah*? I’m afraid not. Following in its wake (for those who failed to “know the joyful sound”) is pain, war, and destruction: in a word, Tribulation. **“O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm (*teruah*) of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is plundered.”** (Jeremiah 4:19-20) The prophet is lamenting for Jerusalem (see verse 14). The whole extended passage is predicting the crushing of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon, a process that began in 605 B.C. and culminated in the destruction of the Temple in 586. But it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see that this prophecy still has some life left in it. It’s also a perfect description of the coming invasion of Israel by the Islamic federation of “Magog,” prophesied so unambiguously in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Of particular interest to our present inquiry, we should note that (according to Daniel) one of the major participants in this “War of Magog” is the European leader commonly referred to as “the Antichrist.” And Paul tells us (in II Thessalonians 2:7-8) that this fellow won’t be “revealed”

(that is, he won't begin doing things that prophetically identify him as the Antichrist) until after "the Restrainer" (that is, the Holy Spirit who now indwells the *ekklesia*) is "taken out of the way." There is only one way to take the Spirit "out of the way." Catch up—*rapture*—the people in whom the Spirit dwells—on *Yom Teruah*.

So here's what Jeremiah is being shown: the "soul" of Israel is in deep distress because they have "heard the sound of the trumpet." But because they have not heeded their Messiah, this trumpet heralds not a joyful rapture—their own transformation to a glorious immortal state—but rather "the alarm of war," the other side of *teruah*. Though Israel has "heard the trumpet," they (as a nation) have not participated in the rapture: they've been left behind to face the music. Their only real ally on this earth—the believers in Yahshua—have departed: we have been "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." This argues forcefully that the Tribulation (a.k.a. "the Time of Jacob's Trouble") will follow on the very heels of the rapture—within the space of a few years, not decades or centuries. Indeed, *Yom Teruah* seems to be the very event that precipitates the destruction and plunder of the land.

Jeremiah is not alone in this assessment, nor is Israel alone in their plight. **"The great day of Yahweh is near. It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of Yahweh is bitter. There the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm (*teruah*) against the fortified cities and against the high towers. I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Yahweh. Their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung."** (Zephaniah 1:14-17) *Yom Teruah's* coming will signal bad news for the whole world left behind at the departure of the *ekklesia*. Again we see (if we are willing to open our eyes) that one man's rapture is another man's call to war. One man's transformation into immortality is another's ticket to a day of wrath, trouble, distress, devastation, desolation, darkness, and death. Yet at its core, the only difference between these two people is their respective relationships with Yahshua the Messiah. It either exists, or it doesn't.

- (844) *Observe the Feast of Trumpets on the day specified by Yahweh. "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets."* (Numbers 29:1) As with all seven *mo'edim-miqrym*, the exact calendar date is specified, leading us to the inevitable conclusion that this very day will mark the fulfillment of the prophecy. In this case, the date is the first day of Tishri—the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar, and the final

month in which anything on Yahweh's agenda is scheduled. Tishri falls in September or October on our Gregorian calendars.

For those who are fuzzy on how the two calendar systems vary, let me offer a short explanation. Our Gregorian calendar is solar based: it records one revolution of the earth around the sun per year—approximately 365¼ days (the one-quarter day being accommodated by a “leap year day” once ever four years). It is broken, quite arbitrarily, into twelve months. The Hebrew calendar, by contrast, is lunar based. Each month (or “moonth”) begins at the sighting of the first sliver of the new moon. Since the synodic lunar month lasts only about 29½ days, a twelve-month cycle is only 354 days long. So seven years out of every nineteen, a “leap month” (called Veadar, or Adar II) is added just before the first month (i.e., Nisan, in March or April) to keep the seasons from drifting. There are advantages and disadvantages to each system, but the lunar was far more user-friendly in a pre-industrial world. Anyway, that's why Hebrew dates don't correspond to the same Gregorian dates from one year to the next, but vary by as much as several weeks.

Anyway, *Yom Teruah*, or the Feast of Trumpets, falls on the first day of Tishri. This makes it unique among the seven *miqrym*, for it falls during a period of lunar darkness, when the moon is reflecting practically none of the sun's light to earth. (*Every* lunar month begins and ends this way.) By contrast, the spring *miqrym* all hover around the middle of the month, the brightest part (the full moon), as does the final one, the Feast of Tabernacles. The two remaining days both occur when the moon is “waxing,” i.e., when its reflection is in the process of increasing in brightness. I don't know how significant that is, but it strikes me that none of this is accidental: Yahweh has planned every detail. He seems to be telling us that the *ekklesia* will be raptured from the earth during a period of maximum spiritual darkness. The days in which we live certainly seem to moving in that direction. I mean, how much darker can the world get?

There's another issue that needs to be addressed. As we saw in Mitzvot #130 and #131 (Leviticus 23:24-25), and again in our present text, the Feast of Trumpets is to be celebrated as a Sabbath. No one's customary work is to be performed on this day. The bottom-line spiritual principle, of course, is that in the end, we can't earn or work for what God is proposing to do for us on this day—transform us from frail mortals to incorruptible eternal beings capable of standing in His very presence. Rather, we must accept it as Yahweh's gift to us, resting in His finished work, if we are to receive it at all. But there is a literal side to this as well. It appears (though it's by no means certain) that the definitive *Yom Teruah*

should take place in a year in which the first day of Tishri falls on a natural Sabbath. In the next few decades, there are only a handful of such dates left: 2009, 2020, 2023, and 2026 (this last one about two months before the Tribulation is scheduled to begin, if my observations are correct—see *Future History* for my thoughts on prophetic chronology).

Why am I not certain? The word used to describe the Sabbath-ness of this *miqra* (in Leviticus 23:24) is *sabbaton*, meaning “Sabbath observance.” There is a far more commonly used term for Sabbath—*Sabbat*, but it is never used in scripture to describe the Feast of Trumpets. Both words are based on the verb *sabat*, meaning to cease, desist, or rest. The *-on* suffix of *sabbaton* and other Hebrew nouns indicates their abstract or conceptual nature—the observance of Sabbath rest as opposed to the Sabbath day itself (i.e., Saturday). *Sabbaton* is used only eleven times in scripture, four times referring to the weekly Sabbath, twice to the Sabbatical year, once to *Yom Teruah*, twice referring to *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement), and twice to *Sukkot* (the Feast of Tabernacles). Two things about this list give me pause, so I’ll just lay my cards on the table. First, the word *Sabbaton* was not used of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the actual instructions concerning it, though *Bikkurim* did fall on a natural Sabbath in the year of its definitive fulfillment, 33 A.D. (It was only described: “You shall do no work.”) *Bikkurim* was, however, referred to as the *Sabbat* in the Feast of Weeks instructions: “Count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath...” This is the linguistic converse of what we see with *Yom Teruah*—which is called *Sabbaton* but not *Sabbat*.

Second, the Day of Atonement is twice called a *Sabbaton*, but my research for *Future History* led me to the firm conviction that the definitive *Yom Kippur* and the definitive *Sukkot* will occur in the same year, which, according to the rules of the Torah, means they can’t both fall on natural Sabbaths, because they’re five days apart (see Precept #861). If the Day of Atonement (called a *Sabbaton*) is a Sabbath observance that will *not* fall on a natural Sabbath (since the evidence tells me that the Feast of Tabernacles *will*), could the same thing be true of the Feast of Trumpets? You can see why I’m reluctant to positively predict a Sabbath (Saturday) fulfillment for *Yom Teruah*.

The bottom line is that for us who are called out of the world by Yahshua (i.e., the *ekklesia*—the “church”), the transformation of our mortal bodies into immortal, incorruptible, spiritual beings will occur on *Yom Teruah*, the Feast of Trumpets. All the evidence I’ve seen points toward a fulfillment of this *miqra* (in an event popularly known as “the rapture”) on the first day of Tishri some year between now and 2026. And

whether or not it will fall on a natural Sabbath, no one can achieve what the day portends through his own efforts.

- (845) *Present an offering to Yahweh on the Feast of Trumpets. “You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to Yahweh: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. Their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh.”* (Numbers 29:2-6) In Precept #837 (Numbers 28:19-23) we looked at a similar list of burnt offerings to be made at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The same thing is true of the Feasts of Firstfruits and Weeks. But the lists weren’t identical—there were subtle differences that help us understand the significance of each individual “appointment” with Yahweh. To recap (focusing solely on the animals to be sacrificed):

Unleavened Bread: *Olah* (burnt offering): 2 bulls; 1 ram; 7 lambs.

*Chata’t* (sin offering): 1 goat.

Firstfruits: *Olah*: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

*Chata’t* (sin offering): 1 goat.

Feast of Weeks: *Olah*: 1 bull, 2 rams, 7 lambs.

*Chata’t*: 1 goat.

*Selem* (peace offering): 2 lambs.

Feast of Trumpets: *Olah*: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

*Chata’t*: 1 goat.

In the interests of seeing the whole picture, let’s also analyze the sacrificial requirements of the two final *miqrym*, which we’ll cover later in this chapter:

Day of Atonement: *Olah*: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

*Chata’t*: 1 goat (that is, only one of the two “sin offering” goats was to be sacrificed; the other was set free).

Tabernacles:            *Olah*: 13 bulls (first day), 2 rams, 14 lambs.  
(The number of bulls decreases by 1 each day of the feast, down to 7 on the seventh day, and then to 1 on the eighth day, when the number of rams drops to 1 and lambs to 7.)  
*Chata't*: 1 goat.

We're thus faced with a dizzying variety of combinations, and we're forced to ask ourselves just what Yahweh is up to here. Forget for a moment that without a temple or priesthood these sacrifices can't be made at all. Even if they could be, one of two conflicting propositions has to be true: either God enjoys making His people jump through hoops like trained poodles for His own amusement, or He's giving us subtle hints as to the nature of His plan for our redemption—clues that can only be understood through the application of careful scriptural forensics.

Let's start with what remains constant—the sin offering, or *chata't*, that's slain. It's always one goat, never more, never less. This tells us that an underlying theme of all of Yahweh's holy convocations is that sin—as a concept, our falling short of His perfect standard—is being dealt with throughout the entire process.

Next let's consider lambs. A lamb is a picture of innocence, which when offered as a sacrifice indicates the innocence of Yahshua the Messiah—Yahweh's "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Seven is the number of completion or perfection, so we are not surprised to see seven lambs required for each *miqra*—until we get to Tabernacles, when we're presented with a puzzle. What is the significance of fourteen lambs—seven *doubled*? To me, this seems to be a clue as to precisely who each *miqra* is addressed to, and it's not always the same. Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits both speak to believers generally: Israel, including the "mixed multitude" of gentile believers with them. But the next two, Weeks and Trumpets, address the *ekklesia*, the church, which is neither Jewish nor gentile in composition but is a new creation, a "mystery." On the Day of Atonement, however, Yahweh's focus is (as we shall see) strictly upon Israel, for the *ekklesia* will have been removed from the earthly scene (at the Feast of Trumpets) when its promise comes to fruition. Up until this point, one complete picture of the Messiah's innocence was appropriate for each spiritual group, so seven lambs are specified each time. But when we get to Tabernacles, the doubled seven tells us something remarkable: Yahweh will be dealing with both the

raptured (now immortal) *ekklesia* and the still-mortal but spiritually restored Israel (again seen leading a mixed multitude of mortal believers worldwide)—as separate, coexisting populations! Having already done my homework for this class (see the resulting thesis: *Future History*), I can assure you that every shred of prophecy supports this view.

We see the same sort of shifting of the prophetic object when studying the variation in the number of rams. The ram (a mature male “lamb” with horns), if you’ll recall, is symbolic of the Messiah’s authority. Here we see exactly the same shifts going on, but with one exception. As before, Israel and its mixed multitude are seen anticipating One ruling Messiah, the *ekklesia* is seen following One (who of course is the *same* One, though the two groups perceive Him differently), and the Feast of Tabernacles witnesses a split between the called-out immortals and the redeemed mortals of the Millennial kingdom. After all, though their Messiah is the same, their relationship with Him—their response to His authority—is necessarily somewhat different. But what about the exception of which I spoke? The Feast of Weeks calls for *two* rams. Why is this so, if it concerns only the church? It’s because when the *ekklesia* began on the Feast of Weeks with the Spirit of God indwelling His followers, Israel had not yet systematically rejected the authority of Yahshua as Messiah. Only its leadership had declared, “We will not have this man to rule over us.” The fact is, virtually every participant in the Pentecost epiphany was Jewish. Israel’s total rejection took place a hundred years later when, following Rabbi Akiba’s endorsement, they chose to follow a false Messiah—the brutal but charismatic Bar Kochba—one whom they *still* prefer to Yahshua, even though He brought the nation to utter ruin.

Note, by the way, that on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, prophetic of the inauguration of the eternal state, Israel and the *ekklesia* are addressed as one entity. The indicator is that we’re again instructed to sacrifice a single ram (not two) and seven lambs (not fourteen). Then, as in the mortal church today, there will be no functional difference between Israelite and gentile believers: at this point we all will have been transformed into immortal, incorruptible, spiritual beings, relating to our Messiah and God in exactly the same way.

And what about bulls? They represent false worship, a trust in the world’s power, however it manifests itself. *Young* bulls are always specified—the epitome of temporal strength, capability, and volition, something to be seen in contrast to Yahweh’s counterintuitive means of redemption—the frail, vulnerable, innocent lamb. Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits each call for two bulls, because Israel and the mixed multitude

each brought with them different kinds of baggage—the Jews (being sons of Jacob) had a propensity to rely on themselves, their intellect and industry, while the gentiles among them fell prey with great alacrity to pagan religions and human demigods. (Some things never change.) But Weeks and Trumpets, in which one bull is specified, focus on the heresies peculiar to the *ekklesia*, while the bull of the Day of Atonement represents the errors specifically endemic in Orthodox Judaism. The eye opener is the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles, in which gradually, over the course of the week (prophetic of Yahshua’s Millennial Kingdom), every possible permutation of false worship and error will be gradually rooted out and eliminated, one by one, from among the mortal population. When it’s all over, there will be nothing left but Yahweh’s truth.

### THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

One of the most surprising things about the research for my book on prophecy, *Future History*, was the sheer volume of scripture promising the spiritual—followed by the physical—restoration of the nation of Israel. I mean, I knew it was going to happen, but I had no idea God had told us about it in so many places and in so many ways. This is easily the most oft-repeated theme in prophetic scripture, and taken all together, the evidence clearly precludes transference of the promises to the church—a pipe dream promulgated by ambitious Christian clergy ever since Constantine’s day. Nor will it fit the requirements of scripture to simply re-define all who come to faith as “Israel,” ignoring inconvenient biological reality. No, the “restored Israel” of the Bible is *Israel*—a literal remnant of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all twelve tribes, redeemed, reunited, and regathered into the Land of promise under the reign of Yahshua their Messiah. I know it sounds somewhere between unlikely and impossible. But that’s where God does his best work. We should not be surprised, then, to find this fundamental truth reflected in Yahweh’s schedule of annual *mo’edim*.

These appointments with God not only predict the seven most important milestones in His plan of redemption, they also indicate their order of chronological fulfillment. The first four, now history, prophesied the death, burial, and resurrection of Yahshua, and then the calling-out of His followers from the world through the personal indwelling of His Spirit. The next one in line, as we have seen, comprises God’s “exit strategy” for these believers in Yahshua—the *ekklesia*—who were defined by the events of the fourth *miqra*. *Yom Teruah*, this fifth appointment with God, will bring about the transformation of the saints, living and dead alike, into immortal beings, inhabiting bodies not unlike Christ’s manifestation as He appeared to His disciples for forty days after His resurrection.

But alas, neither Israel (as a nation) nor the vast majority of gentile mankind will participate in the rapture, for it is an “off ramp” from a straight and narrow road that comparatively few choose to travel. That’s why Yahshua admonished us to **“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”** (Matthew 7:13-14)

So, because these days fall in chronological order, we can expect the sixth *miqra* of Yahweh to be fulfilled in a world from which the *ekklesia* of Yahshua has previously been removed. Further, based on what we learned of the downside of *teruah* in Jeremiah 4:19-20 and Zephaniah 1:14-17 above, it seems likely that this sixth *miqra*, the Day of Atonement, will take place within the period of time called the Tribulation (which will begin shortly—within a few years—after the rapture). The Tribulation is defined (in the Daniel 9 prophecy) as the time in which Yahweh will complete His program for Israel—the last of 70 “weeks” (seven “prophetic-year” periods, each 360 days in length). If the Day of Atonement concerns Israel exclusively (since the “church” is gone by this point), then its fulfillment must be linked to the spiritual restoration of the nation.

We discussed the Day of Atonement in Mitzvot #133-136 (Leviticus 23:27, 29, 31-32) and #505 (Leviticus 16:2-3), but unfortunately, Maimonides said only to rest, to fast (something that isn’t specifically commanded in scripture), and to keep the Torah’s rituals concerning the offerings, the scapegoat, etc. (something that can’t be observed, whether in his day or ours, for lack of a temple and priesthood). So the Rambam is only batting one for three here. But the core definition of the day is much more fundamental than he pictured it: **“It is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.”** (Leviticus 23:28-29)

As always, we need to define our terminology. “Day of Atonement” is the Hebrew *Yom Kippur*, or more literally, *Yom Kippurim*—the Day of Atonements: it’s always plural in the Torah. This noun is based on the Hebrew verb *kapar* (translated here as “make atonement”), which means “to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation, to cover over (as with pitch), to pacify, to propitiate.” (Strong’s) Baker and Carpenter explain further: “*Kapar* is a verb meaning to cover, to forgive, to expiate, to reconcile. This word is of supreme theological importance in the Old Testament as it is central to an Old Testament understanding of the remission of sin. At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature. It is therefore employed to signify the cancellation or “writing over” of a contract (Isaiah 28:18); the appeasing of anger (Genesis 32:20 and Proverbs 16:14); and the overlaying of wood with pitch so as to make it waterproof (Genesis 6:14). The

word also communicates God's covering of sin. . . . In the Old Testament, the blood of sacrifices was most notably imposed. By this imposition, sin was purged and forgiven. The offenses were removed, leaving the sinners clothed in righteousness." The ultimate *kapar* sacrifice was, of course, Yahshua.

The other word begging for illumination here is rendered "afflicted (in soul)," and while that's not incorrect, there's much more to it. '*Anah* is a Hebrew verb that carries two very different connotations, both relevant to *Yom Kippurim*. First, it means to be afflicted, humbled, or bowed down, to be occupied or busied with, or to be depressed, downcast, or in a state of oppression. This is how it's invariably handled in passages relating to *Yom Kippurim*. But in contrast to this, '*anah* also means to answer, respond, testify, speak, or to reply as a witness. I believe both definitions apply to the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement.

(846) *Be afflicted in soul and do no work on the Day of Atonement.* **"You shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people."** (Leviticus 23:28-30) We've seen the "Sabbath" concept many times before. The central lesson, as always, is that we cannot work to attain the salvation Yahweh has promised those who trust Him. Rather, we must rest in reliance upon His word: we must trust Yahweh to redeem us. Further, we have noted that Yahweh *Himself* rests on the Sabbath: whatever salvation He provides has been made available to us during His six-day (read: six-millennium) "work week," that is, between the fall of Adam and Yahshua's imminent return to earth in glory. That's why the scriptures say, **"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."** (Hebrews 11:6) What "pleases Yahweh" is our love, and love is by its nature voluntary: it can't be forced, bought, or stolen, or it would become something else. If Yahweh forced us to receive His gift of eternal life (by cramming incontrovertible *proof* down our throats, for example), our response couldn't be love—it would merely be surrender. He's not seeking a victory; He's looking for a friend. He doesn't desire our capitulation; He wants our trust.

But what does it mean to be "afflicted in soul" on the Day of Atonement? We've seen that '*anah*, the verb translated "afflicted," not only means "to be humbled or bowed down," but also "to answer or respond." Upon returning to Jerusalem from Babylon (457 B.C.), Ezra the priest learned that some of those who had preceded him had taken pagan

wives, doing precisely what had gotten their nation in trouble in the first place—blending the abominations of Canaanite paganism with the worship of Yahweh. Ezra’s reaction is the very picture of “affliction of soul.” **“When I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to Yahweh my God. And I said: ‘O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.’”** (Ezra 9:3-6) That’s the “affliction” part. But He also responded; he led his countrymen in answering the call of God upon their lives. **“Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath.... Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. Now therefore, make confession to Yahweh, God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives. Then all the assembly answered (‘*anah*) and said with a loud voice, ‘Yes! As you have said, so we must do.’”** (Ezra 10:5, 10-12)

Psalm 88 may also help us to understand this. The first few verses will set the scene: **“O Yahweh, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, adrift among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your hand. You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted (‘*anah*) me with all Your waves. Selah.”** (Psalm 88:1-7) The rest of the chapter goes on in the same vein: affliction, being brought down. On a national scale, it’s an experience that Daniel described (in 12:7) as “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered.” The affliction the Psalmist is describing will be like that imposed upon the newly redeemed remnant of Israel who find they must flee from the Antichrist into the mountain wilderness (see Matthew 24:15-21) after the abomination of desolation, just before the mid-point of the Tribulation. Why have they been humbled? Why are they oppressed? Because, having rejected Yahweh and His Messiah for the past two and a half millennia, they have now changed their mind. (Read what leads up to Ezekiel 39:22 if you want to know why.) Now they’re refusing to accept the *Antichrist’s* messianic claims

instead. They have finally *'anah*: “answered, responded, testified, spoken, and replied as a witness” that Yahweh alone is God—and for that, their mortal lives are forfeit under the Antichrist’s iron rule. (The Tribulation isn’t called the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble” for nothing.) But who are they crying out to? **“Yahweh, God of my salvation.”** *Who?* The word translated “salvation” here is *yashuw’ah*—phonetically indistinguishable from the Messiah’s name: Yahshua! Whether they know it or not, Yahweh was—and is about to be again—manifested as their Messiah, Yahshua. Yahweh explains what it will take for this to come about: **“I will return again to My place till they [Israel and Judah] acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face. In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”** (Hosea 5:15)

And when will that happen? On the Day of Atonement, of course. That is, five days before the end of the Tribulation, as the armies of the whole earth are closing in against Jerusalem under the genocidal banner of the Antichrist. Zechariah paints the scene. **“In that day Yahweh will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem... It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”** (Zechariah 12:8-10) This “defense” of Jerusalem is the “battle” of Armageddon, and Yahweh—that is, Yahshua the Messiah (see Revelation 19:11-21)—has returned to “destroy all the nations” that come against it—and against Him. They will see Him descend upon the Mount of Olives (compare Zechariah 14:4 to Acts 1:9-12) and they will do two things, both implied in the Word *'anah*: “mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son,” for their fathers’ part in his death and for their own subsequent national rejection of His grace; and answer, respond, and testify that Yahshua the Messiah is indeed the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It’s *Yom Kippurim*: if they don’t afflict their souls in humility now, in the Messiah’s glorious presence, if they don’t respond to Him and testify of His greatness when they see Him bodily returning to earth, then they must be, as the Torah demands, “cut off from their people.”

- (847) *Observe the Day of Atonement on the day specified by Yahweh. “This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.”* (Leviticus 16:29) As with all of Yahweh’s *mo’edim-miqrym*, the Day of Atonement will be fulfilled on the very day of its Levitical mandate—in this case the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishri. The Zechariah 12 passage we just looked at makes it pretty clear that the requirements of *Yom Kippurim* will be fulfilled only a few hours before

the “battle” of Armageddon commences—that final confrontation between the Antichrist’s armies and the returning King Yahshua. And unless the conflict proves to be an uphill battle for Yahshua (something that is flatly contradicted in scripture), we are led to the conclusion that the Day of Atonement’s fulfillment and that of the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Tishri—in which God “camps out” with mankind (see Precepts #861-864, below)—will occur in the same year, which means they’ll be only five days apart. My prophecy research has led me to believe that this auspicious year will be 2033—precisely two thousand years (or forty jubilee periods) after the passion of Yahshua. (Feel free to disagree with my chronological conclusion if you want, but *don’t* feel free to ignore the warning it implies.)

For reasons I’ll explain in Precept #861, I don’t believe the definitive Day of Atonement will fall on a natural Sabbath (Saturday). But I’d love to be a fly on the Wailing Wall on *Yom Kippurim* in 2028, which *will* fall on a Saturday—September 30 that year. This (according to the Tribulation timeline worked out in *Future History*) has to be very near the date of the miraculous defeat of Gog’s Islamic forces by the hand of Yahweh, spoken of in Ezekiel 38 and 39. And the conclusion of *that* little skirmish will be: **“So the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh their God from that day forward.”** (Ezekiel 39:22)

By the way, notice that little phrase describing the participants of *Yom Kippurim*: **“whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.”** The same requirements are made of everyone, Jew and gentile alike: do no work, and *‘anah*—afflict your soul in repentance and respond to Yahweh. Though the *miqra* is structured in terms especially germane to Israel’s restoration, we should not be unaware that multitudes of gentiles will also come to faith during the Tribulation. And Yahweh’s means of atonement for them is the same as that for His people Israel (and for us, for that matter): the blood of His perfect sacrifice—Yahshua.

- (848) *Allow the High Priest to make atonement for you.* **“For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before Yahweh. It is a sabbath [*sabbaton*: Sabbath observance] of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.”** (Leviticus 16:30-31) The procedure of the annual atonement ritual was to be performed by one person, the High Priest—Aaron or one of his male descendants. But notice how Yahweh defines the High Priest: **“And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place....”** Yahweh’s wording is carefully crafted (as always) to describe this Priest as one who is anointed (Hebrew: *mashach*, the word from which

“Messiah is derived), is consecrated (*male'*, meaning to fill, consecrate, satisfy, accomplish, confirm, or complete), and, most significantly, ministers as priest (read: intercessor) “*in his father's place.*” The word translated “in place” deserves our attention as well. It's the Hebrew *tachath*, meaning “under, beneath, instead of, for, or in place of.” It's the very essence of a son's role as representative of his father in Hebrew society (see Psalm 127:5). Does the phrase “Son of God” ring any bells? The High Priest performing the atonement rite is clearly a type of Yahshua the Messiah.

This Priest “**shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.**” (Leviticus 16:32-34) We discussed the concept of atonement at length under Precept #787. To reprise my conclusion, “At its heart, atonement is an action, prompted by a gift, that brings two parties together who were formerly estranged. Both parties have to agree on the terms of the arrangement; otherwise reconciliation would not result.” That's what it *does*, but how does it relate to what it *means*? The word translated “atone” (*kapar*), as we've seen, actually means “to cover.”

Perhaps an illustration would help us to understand this. For ten years I lived at the end of a half-mile long gravel road up a hillside in Central Virginia. For ten years, my car was never clean; winter snows took *forever* to melt (meaning that if I wanted to go home in February, I had to have four wheel drive); Buick-sized potholes reappeared every spring, conspiring to steal the joy the daffodils brought to the party. Basically, I loved the house, but hated the road; I wanted the destination, but despised the journey. That road needed “atonement” in the worst way. So when I moved a couple of years ago—into a new house with a long gravel driveway—the first thing I did was to have it paved—covered over (*kapar*) with asphalt. As the Hebrew word implies, this covering of asphalt didn't merely conceal the driveway, but fundamentally altered its character—snow doesn't hang around, potholes don't form, and towering clouds of dust following my car are a thing of the past. The “atonement” of my driveway *reconciled* my home to the community in which I live. There's one thing I should add, however: there was a price to pay. Atonement doesn't come cheap, whether you're talking about driveways or human souls.

Here on the Day of Atonements (plural: *Yom Kippurim*) the High Priest is instructed to make atonement for seven distinct entities: (1) “You,” that is, Moses, the temporal leader of the people, who is specifically said to be in need of cleansing from all of his sins before Yahweh. Our leaders should never start to believe their own press: they not only sin, they should be first in line to seek forgiveness and cleansing. (2) The “Holy Sanctuary.” This is the whole Tabernacle enclosure, every detail of which reveals some facet of the Plan of Yahweh for our redemption. Please refer to Chapter 7 of this volume, “The Tabernacle of God,” for details. Atonement is needed because we—sinful people—are responsible for communicating to the world the truths that the Sanctuary represents. (3) The “Tabernacle of Meeting.” Though often spoken of as synonymous with the Sanctuary, this speaks specifically of the tent that stood within the courtyard, where the symbols concerning our Messiah’s role and what we’re supposed to do in light of them become most intense. (4) The Altar. This is where the blood of innocence was to be shed—the worst of crimes, but necessary in order to reconcile the worst of criminals—us—to the God who made us. (5) The priests. Those who ministered before Yahweh, whose role it was to intercede for the people, but who were themselves flawed and frail, in need of atonement. Finally, (6) “All the people of the assembly,” and (7) The Children of Israel. These last two, in context, sound identical, but they’re not, if you look at them in light of subsequent history. “Assembly” is the Hebrew *qahal*, usually translated *ekklesia* in the Greek Septuagint. Ultimately, the “church,” comprised of all post-resurrection believers regardless of genetic heritage, is specified here as needing atonement. In reality, it is our collective acceptance of the atonement provided by Yahweh and administered by Yahshua that *defines* us as members of this *qahal* or *ekklesia*. But the Children of Israel are listed separately as being in need of atonement. This is but one of hundreds of indicators in scripture that a remnant of *biological* Israel—outside the church (because they’ll come to faith after the *ekklesia* has been raptured) will also receive atonement under the ministry of the ultimate High Priest.

- (849) *The High Priest shall wear special linen clothing. “Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.”* (Leviticus 16:3-4) Throughout scripture, linen is a recurring symbol for grace or imputed righteousness—often contrasted with wool, a metaphor for work (something that would cause you to sweat). So we see

that the two fibers were not to be blended: **“You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.”**

(Leviticus 19:19) That is to say, work, though a necessary part of our mortal lives, has no part to play in God’s plan of redemption. Yahweh’s formula is “grace alone through Christ alone,” not “God’s grace plus our works.” The priests and Levites who will minister in the Millennial temple are given the same instruction: **“And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat.”** (Ezekiel 44:17-18)

The metaphor carries all the way through to the “marriage supper of the Lamb,” the wedding feast, so to speak, of Yahshua the Messiah and His bride, the *ekklesia*. **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”** (Revelation 19:7-8) Righteous *acts*? That sounds like “good works,” doesn’t it? Perhaps, but the fact is, these linen wedding garments were *granted* to her (i.e., us)—she didn’t labor to attain them. That’s why we’re to give *Him* (Yahshua the Messiah, a.k.a. “the Lord God Omnipotent (v.6) glory upon learning of the readiness of His bride. He is the One who *made* the bride’s acts righteous. All this is precisely the same picture we’re being given in Leviticus 16: the priest, like the bride, is “made ready” by being cleansed by washing with water (the Word of God), followed by donning the linen garments of grace—imputed righteousness.

- (850) *The High Priest shall offer a sin offering for himself and his house. “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.”* (Leviticus 16:6) **“And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself.”** (Leviticus 16:11) The High Priest may have *stood* for the Messiah-Redeemer in his metaphorical role, but in reality he was a sinful man in need of atonement just like everybody else. So before he could “make atonement” for the sins of the people, he had to make sure he himself was covered. The animal specified for the task was a bull, because a real danger in being the High Priest was pride of position, which could (and sometimes did) lead to false doctrine. The sin offering of a bull addressed that.

Leviticus 16 skips around a bit, introducing subjects but only implementing them later. The schedule of events for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement is apparently as follows: (1) He bathes and puts on the holy linen garments (Precept #849); (2) he slays the *chata't* bull for the atonement of his own sins (#850); (3) offers the incense (#851); (4) sprinkles the bull's blood on the mercy seat (#852); (5) casts lots to determine the fate of the two goats (#854); (6) kills one goat and sprinkles its blood upon the mercy seat (#855); (7) sprinkles blood from both the bull and the goat upon the altar (#855); (8) sends the scapegoat into the wilderness (#857); (9) removes the special linen garments and washes himself again (#858); (10) offers the ram upon the altar as a burnt offering (#858); and (11) directs the disposal outside the camp of the carcasses of the *chata't* bull and goat (#860). One notes that considering it's a "sabbath of solemn rest," the High Priest has to work awfully hard on behalf of his people on *Yom Kippurim*. That's the point, of course: Aaron, as the anointed Priest (a type of the Messiah) does his job so the people may rest in it. Doing what he does, in fact, would be *illegal* for anyone else.

- (851) *The High Priest shall burn incense on the Day of Atonement. "Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before Yahweh, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before Yahweh, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die."* (Leviticus 16:12-13) If you'll recall, the altar of incense stood immediately in front of the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Normally (every morning and every evening, in fact), incense would be burned upon this small altar—a picture of constant and recurring prayer and intercession. But today, on *Yom Kippurim*, the incense was to be brought inside the veil—into the Most Holy Place—and burned in a censer. Why? Because Yahweh's Shekinah Glory was said to abide between the two cherubim atop the mercy seat on the ark of the Covenant. At this point, the blood of the bull (which would atone for the sins of the Priest) had not yet been sprinkled upon the mercy seat (see the following precept), so the process of atonement was not complete. This means that Aaron or his successor would have had to walk into the very presence of God in a sinful, unreconciled state—and that would be a fatal move. So Yahweh provided a way to insulate His glory from fallen man until the task of atonement could be performed.

In case you haven't caught the significance of all this, the incense, this insulating intercessor between God and man, is a picture of Yahshua's earthly life prior to Calvary: God Himself walking among us fallen mortals. How He did this without inadvertently killing us by His very

glorious presence is one of the great theological conundrums of the ages. Moses reports that the cloud of incense was to “cover” the mercy seat, where the Shekinah dwelt. This is not *kapar* (the verb from which we get “atonement), but *kasah*, which denotes “to cover, conceal, hide, or clothe.” (S) In Yahshua, Yahweh’s awesome deity was concealed, hidden, and covered by being clothed in mortal flesh. Like the smoke of incense, it wasn’t made to last, but this condition persisted long enough for Him to make atonement for mankind. Hallelujah!

- (852) *The High Priest shall sprinkle the blood of his sin offering on the mercy seat. “He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.”* (Leviticus 16:14) Now protected by the cloud of incense, the High Priest could begin the process of symbolic atonement—starting with his own needs. The blood of the bull (see Precept #850) was to be applied with his finger onto the east side of the mercy seat—that is, the side that was closest to the east-facing veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. I get the impression that he wasn’t to loiter, walk around, and make himself at home in the Holy of Holies, but was rather to pull the veil aside, do as Yahweh had directed, and then respectfully withdraw—immediately. This was where God “dwelled.” The Priest was just visiting—he wasn’t in the process of becoming a god himself.

After applying the blood to the mercy seat, he was to sprinkle the bull’s blood seven times upon the ground in front of the ark of the covenant and its mercy seat. The number seven denotes completion or perfection, signifying that the act was perfectly efficacious in achieving its purpose—atonement for the High Priest and his household. But why was the blood to be sprinkled on the mercy seat *and* on the ground? The mercy seat sat atop the ark of the covenant, where the two tablets upon which Yahweh had written the Ten Commandments were kept, telling us, I believe, that the blood so applied would satisfy the requirements of the Law. The earth before the ark was sprinkled with blood for the same reason: what *it* contained—namely, us—would also be perfectly and completely reconciled to Yahweh through the atonement process—if only we’d accept the gift.

The Priest was to use his own finger as the tool of application (not some neutral implement like a sprig of hyssop). That is, the One represented by the anointed High Priest—Yahshua the Messiah—would personally (not vicariously) apply the blood of atonement. Moreover, He

would do it—it wouldn't be done to Him. He would be the subject of atonement, not the object; our Savior, not our victim.

- (853) *Present a burnt offering and sin offering to Yahweh on the Day of Atonement. “He shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.”* (Leviticus 16:5) The burnt offering (*olah*) of a ram symbolically indicated the priest's recognition of, and homage to, the authority of the Lamb of God. But the really unique feature of the *Yom Kippurim* was the use of two goats in the atonement process. Although both goats were considered *chata't*, or sin offerings, only one was to be actually slain, as we shall see in the next couple of precepts.

We should note that the concept of “offering” is only *implied* in the noun *chata't*. Along with a number of other derivatives with various closely related shades of meaning, it is based on the verb *chata'*, meaning to miss, miss the way, sin, incur guilt, forfeit, or purify from uncleanness. Thus *chata't* (the most often used form) was used of both the offense and the means of purification from its consequences. *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* notes that although “sin was understood in the ancient near eastern religions as a violation of the status quo in cultic, political, and social life,” in theocratic Israel, “the people learned by revelation that sin was disobedience of God's will and exploitation or disregard of the rights of other people. Sin was declared to be an extremely serious matter and could only be taken care of by a creative and gracious act of merciful forgiveness by God. And the cure was effective, bringing about a new life of joy and fruitfulness.” So we see that the concept of shedding blood is incidental, but not essential, to the concept of *chata't*. (In contrast, the verb *zabach*, translated “to sacrifice,” actually means to slaughter.) Thus sacrificing only one of the two *chata't* goats isn't self-contradictory.

- (854) *Cast lots to decide the fate of the two goats. “He shall take the two goats and present them before Yahweh at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which Yahweh's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before Yahweh, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.”* (Leviticus 16:7-10) This instruction is unique in the entire Law of Moses: two goats, both called *chata't*, or sin offerings, are to be brought before Yahweh, but only one of them is to die (Precept #855) while the other one lives (#857). God is telling us that both death and life are involved, and indeed required, in the atonement process. We'll

discuss what the ramifications are in the coming precepts, but for now let us examine the means by which the goats' relative fates are decided: by "casting lots." Although the goats were to be as similar as possible—both young, male, and without blemish—Yahweh is *not* telling us (like Allah would have) that whoever lives and whoever dies is a coin toss. Rather, the goats are to be seen as a set, a unit, two sides of the same coin: each of them plays a part in explaining Yahweh's procedure for our reconciliation with Him, and both of them are said to provide atonement for the people, each in his own way. Neither goat tells the whole story or does the whole job. Therefore, for God's purpose, it doesn't really matter which goat does which job.

- (855) *Make atonement for the people.* "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness." (Leviticus 16:15-16) We discussed how (and why) the blood of the bull was to be applied (atoning for the Priest) in Precept #852. Here we see the process being repeated, this time with the blood of the slain goat—the *chata't* required for the sin of the people. Three things made it necessary for blood to be shed: (1) The "uncleanness" of the people. This is the Hebrew *tum'ah*: impurity, uncleanness, dross, or foreign particulate matter. The goal, then, would be to purify them, to separate them from their sin. (2) "Transgression" or *pasha*, is an act of rebellion, crime, or revolt—that which is contrary to God's standard—emphasizing not the error but the rebellion. And (3) "sin" is *chata'ah*, a violation of a standard, in the sense of missing a mark.

Surprisingly perhaps, making atonement for the people in this way was also said to atone for the Holy Place and the tabernacle of meeting. Because of their nature, these things obviously didn't sin, rebel, or become impure by their own behavior. Nevertheless, they were detailed symbols describing Yahweh's plan of redemption for mankind, and more to the point, they were to be used by God's chosen people to communicate the story to the rest of the world. So if Israel rebelled, if they became impure or missed the mark, the message of the Tabernacle would be obscured. Unfortunately, that very thing has become historical fact: Israel's sin has made the lessons of the Sanctuary opaque to the world, not to mention themselves. *Yom Kippurim* will correct that.

(856) *The High Priest must do his work alone.* “There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. And he shall go out to the altar that is before Yahweh, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” (Leviticus 16:17-19) The activities of the Day of Atonement were centered in one man, the High Priest. He was the only one allowed in the Tabernacle sprinkling blood or burning incense. We’ve seen before that the High Priest is a type of the coming Messiah, and this bears out that fact: Yahshua accomplished our atonement single-handedly. No one else’s sacrifice—the ultimate “good deed”—would have any part to play in the reconciliation of man to God. Not even martyrdom can secure one’s place in the Kingdom. Only Christ’s innocent blood can do that.

I may be reading too much into this, but when we’re told that the High Priest made atonement for “his household, *and* for all the assembly of Israel,” I see a theological distinction between the two things. “The assembly of Israel” is easy enough to figure out, of course. But what precisely is the High Priest’s “household” (beyond the obvious literal context—his immediate family)? After all, his wife and children were in no physical danger when he strode into the Holy of Holies with his incense and the blood of the bull, so why were they not simply included in “the assembly of Israel?” I believe the answer is prophetic: the “household” of the ultimate High Priest, Yahshua the Messiah—the temple and dwelling place of His Holy Spirit—would not be confined to biological Israel, but would find realization in every nation, tribe, and tongue. I’m speaking, of course, of the church, the *ekklesia*, the called-out assembly of Yahshua’s followers. We too, even if we’re not of Israelite ancestry, receive the gift of atonement if we “afflict our souls” in repentance, answer Yahweh’s call (we are, after all, the *ekklesia*—the “called-out”), and rest in His finished work.

(857) *The live goat shall bear the sin of the people into the wilderness.* “And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.” (Leviticus 16:20-22) *Yom Kippurim* not

only covers our sins; it also removes them. Yes, the innocent blood of the first goat was required to atone, to propitiate—to pay the penalty—for our sins. But the job is really only half done at this point. It is not enough to merely be dead to sin: we must at the same time become alive to God. This is where the second goat comes into the picture. Both death and life are required.

Both goats are a picture of what Christ accomplished for us on Calvary. Not only was He slain for our transgressions (prophesied by Passover), He also lives on our behalf (the point of the Feast of Firstfruits). What lies in between (the Feast of Unleavened Bread) is the task of the second goat, the living one. The sins of the people were to be symbolically laid upon his head, and he was to bear them to a place where they could no longer trouble God's people in any way: to the wilderness, an "uninhabited land."

The world's religions make a killing (sometimes literally) by fostering and nurturing the guilt that their adherents feel concerning their sin. They are in the business (again, literally) of providing ways to deal with the shame that sin inevitably leaves in its wake for people who perceive, deep within their souls, that there is a God who has standards of holiness they have violated. There is money to be made and power to be grasped selling indulgences, prescribing penance, and declaring oneself to be the sole doorkeeper to paradise. Guilt is a tar baby: it's best to leave it alone. I'm not suggesting that we should flippantly brush off the consequences of our sin, you understand. The "afflict-your-souls" connotation of *Yom Kippurim*'s 'anah requirement demonstrates that repentance and contrition is part of the atonement process. But if we are to embrace the other side of 'anah—to answer and respond to God—then we need to come to terms with the fact that our sins have been carried away to an uninhabited place. Yahweh has already dealt with them. They are gone, never to return. We can—we *must*—rest assured of that.

- (858) *The High Priest shall change clothes to present the burnt offering. "Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people."* (Leviticus 16:23-24) If we see the High Priest's special linen garments as the imputed righteousness of God's grace and nothing more, we'll miss part of the subtle picture Yahweh is painting. I mean, our knee jerk reaction is, "If linen garments indicate imputed righteousness, we should *all* wear them, not just the Priest, and

we should never take them off for any reason.” So we’re being told there’s more to it. Let’s analyze the instructions.

Aaron was told to bathe and don the linen garb before he did anything else on *Yom Kippurim*. Thus prepared, he proceeded with all of the sin offerings, slaying the bull and the first goat, sprinkling their blood, then pronouncing the sins of the people on the scapegoat and sending it off into the wilderness. Only now, with all of the *chata’t* sacrifices and offerings out of the way, is he to bathe again and put his regular clothing back on. But he’s not finished at the altar: he must now offer up the ram as an *olah*, a burnt offering. Why change clothes?

The most obvious factor is that when sprinkling the blood on the mercy seat, the High Priest was standing in the physical presence of Yahweh’s Shekinah Glory, and you can’t do that in your own righteousness if you want to survive. Moreover, Aaron was acting out a scene, playing the part of the Messiah Himself—the source of our righteousness. And later, when sending the scapegoat into the wilderness, he was playing God’s role before the people—for we in our own strength have no means to rid ourselves of our iniquity.

But the *olah* is a different matter. Here Aaron was back in the persona of a priest, and more to the point, a son of Israel—a mere man. An *olah*, if you’ll recall, is a voluntary act of homage to God. If I may quote myself (from Volume I, Chapter 12), “The *olah* was a voluntary sacrifice made for atonement, homage to Yahweh, and celebration before Him. Total dedication is implied, for the offering was to be completely consumed by fire. Abraham’s intended sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah was called an *olah*, making the messianic message evident. Through it we are reminded that Yahshua’s self sacrifice for our redemption was not something He *had* to do, but was something He *wanted* to do, because He loved us.” The burnt offering, then, is *not* part of the process whereby Yahshua’s righteousness is accounted to us. It is, rather, an expression of deep, humble gratitude for having already attained that amazing status. And that, to my mind, explains the High Priest’s change of apparel.

- (859) *The “suitable man” shall undergo cleansing. “He who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.”* (Leviticus 16:26) Here we are given instruction concerning one of the supporting cast—the “suitable” man (verse 21) who was assigned to take the goat out of the camp into the wilderness. The word translated “suitable” is *itiy*, meaning able, fit, ready—pertaining to one who is capable of accomplishing a task. The “task,” in this case, was to see to it that the sin-bearer reached his destination, i.e., the uninhabited

land, where the sin could no longer trouble God's people. God may be alluding to those rare individuals who serve as "moral compasses" for their communities, whose refusal to compromise with the world becomes a quiet beacon of truth and love, whether or not they purposely set out to become reformers or spokesmen for Yahweh's cause. A few Biblical examples: Job, Gideon, Ruth, Samuel, Abigail, Daniel, John the Baptist, and Nicodemus.

But "taking out the garbage" can be a dirty business. The lesson is not that these people are capable and willing to do what God has called them to do (though that's what defines them). It's that their willingness and ability to do God's work does not *in itself* qualify them to "come into the camp," that is, become a part of the congregation of the saints. What qualifies them, rather, is "washing their clothes and bath with water," that is, allowing their lives to be cleansed by the Word of God, which speaks of the sacrifice of Yahshua. No matter how "suitable" we are to do good works in this world, our position before God requires us to be clean—and only He can provide that.

(860) *The fat of the sin offerings shall be burned on the altar, but their flesh shall be burned outside the camp.* **"The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.... 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, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp."** (Leviticus 16:25, 27-28) In contrast to the burnt offering of the ram, which was to be completely consumed upon the altar, the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement were quite selective in what was burned on the altar. As always with *chata't* sacrifices, the fatty portions were removed and burned upon the altar in homage to Yahweh. On reflection, I think these might be—like the olive oil mixed with grain offerings—symbolic of the Spirit that indwells the worshipper, which is being declared to be God's in the sacrificial act.

Normally with a sin offering, the priest who performed the ceremony would receive the flesh of the sacrificed animal to eat, so long as the *chata't* wasn't being offered to cover *his* sins. But here, it was: the bull in very specific terms, and the goat in a general way—the High Priest was, after all, part of the congregation for whose sins the goat was being offered to atone. So the entire carcass, the flesh, the skin, and the inner organs—everything but the blood and the **"fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys,"** (Leviticus 4:8-

9) was taken outside the camp and burned. This once again is a Messianic prophecy. Yahshua, who had taken our sins upon Himself, was taken “outside the camp,” that is, outside Jerusalem’s city walls, to receive the sentence of judgment for our trespasses (which is what “burning” represents).

As with the “suitable man” who accompanied the scapegoat into the wilderness, the man who was tasked with the burning of the carcasses of the bull and the second goat was not allowed to enter the camp until he had “washed his clothes and bathed his body in water.” This is the flip side of the same coin. Metaphorically, the “carcass burner” is the one who inflicted judgment on God’s Messiah. This isn’t limited to a few Roman soldiers in Jerusalem. In reality, it means *all of us*: we’re all complicit in His crucifixion. In the end, then, our salvation doesn’t depend on whether we *meant* to do good or not. We have all fallen short of Yahweh’s perfect standard. But all of us—not only those who sincerely tried to keep the curse of sin from wandering freely among the people, but even those of us who in our ignorance and pride executed judgment upon God’s innocent Messiah—can be admitted into “the camp,” into fellowship with Yahweh and His people. The price of admission is cleanliness: we must be washed clean by the Word of God and in the blood that we have so blithely shed—the blood of Yahshua the Christ.

#### FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The seventh and final appointment with God on the Hebrew festival calendar is called *Sukkot*, or the Feast of Tabernacles. We’ve already explored aspects of this *miqra* under Mitzvot #137-142, #522, #543, and #838. This was structured as an end-of-summer “harvest party,” a week long celebration where the whole nation of Israel would gather where Yahweh had “chosen to make His name abide” (which, from David’s reign onward, was the city of Jerusalem) and “camp out” in temporary shelters for the duration of the feast.

The name of the *miqra* is derived from *sukkah* (as in Leviticus 23:34; *Sukkot* is the plural form), which means a dwelling place or shelter—a thicket or covert (when animals are being housed—e.g. Genesis 33:17) or a hut, booth, tent, pavilion or canopy (when referring to people). This is *not* the word translated “Tabernacle” when referring to the “tent of meeting” (Hebrew: *mishkan*), although the Tabernacle was occasionally referred to as a *sukkah*—most poignantly in the noble protest of Uriah the Hittite, husband of Bathsheba, who said to the desperate and deceitful king David, “**The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents (*sukkot*).... Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As I live and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.**” (II Samuel 11:11) But from

Yahweh's point of view, the *mishkan*-Tabernacle and the *sukkah*-tabernacle represent two very different truths, the first (as we saw in Chapter 4 of this volume) being a detailed treatise on the Plan of God for our redemption, and the second embodying Yahweh's incredible desire to enjoy personal fellowship, or stated more informally, to "hang out," with us. I wouldn't exactly call it "slumming," but the amazing fact is, in spite of our shortcomings and failures, Yahweh actually *likes* us. He enjoys our company. And if He has to leave His heavenly abode to spend "quality time" with us (until we're ready to inhabit His world), then that's what He'll do. The *mo'ed-miqra* of *Sukkot*, in the most graphic of terms, is a prophecy of Yahweh coming to "camp out" among men.

We can get a more focused view of *sukkah/Sukkot* by examining some other instances of the word's usage. In a clearly Millennial passage, the prophet Amos reports, **"On that day I will raise up the tabernacle (*sukkah*) of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old."** (Amos 9:11) The "tabernacle of David" is his earthly kingdom, which "fell down" only one generation after his death, with the division of Israel from Judah. It will be restored, however—all twelve tribes together again, with Yahshua on the throne—during the thousand-year reign, the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Speaking of the same glorious time, Isaiah writes, **"And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, then Yahweh will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. And there will be a tabernacle (*sukkah*) for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain."** (Isaiah 4:3-6) What is this *sukkah* of which he speaks? What is this "covering" that will provide "refuge" and "shelter from storm and rain?" Why, it's the Shekinah of Yahweh—His glorious presence that will once again fill the Temple on Moriah (see Ezekiel 43:4)—the very presence of God dwelling among men.

(861) *Observe the Feast of Tabernacles on the day specified by Yahweh. "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of Yahweh for seven days."* (Leviticus 23:39) As always, Yahweh was very specific about when the children of Israel were to observe the *miqra*. Considering the history of the festivals' fulfillments so far, we can only conclude that we're being told the very date of the year upon which Yahweh will bring about whatever it is that the *miqra* is designed to teach us. In this case, it's the ascension to the throne of earth

by Yahshua the Messiah (the bodily manifestation of Yahweh's Shekinah Glory, as we saw above). He will rule His people in perfect peace for a thousand years—and beyond. As Isaiah told us, **“The government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** (Isaiah 9:6)

I find it interesting that the names of the Hebrew months are seldom mentioned in scripture. They're usually just numbered, as here: the “seventh month.” (Days of the week aren't named either; they're merely numbered, one through seven.) The names we commonly assign to the months of the Jewish calendar are derived from those used by their Babylonian captors (the obvious tip-off being the fourth month, named after the prototypical sun-god counterfeit, Tammuz). In fact, we only have the original names of four of the twelve months. For the record: the first month, Nisan, was called Abib (which means “ripening of grain”). The second, Iyar, was originally named Zin (meaning “splendor, or radiance”); the seventh month, Tishri, was first called Ethanim (“everflowing streams”); and the eighth, Cheshvan, was originally called Bul (which means “to produce,” in the sense of providing rain). The rest of the names have been lost to posterity.

Anyway, the date specified for the Feast of Tabernacles is the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), which usually falls sometime within the Gregorian calendar's October. Of course, because the symbols Yahweh is using to communicate His truths are so well established by this time, we could perhaps paraphrase our current precept as follows: *“When the reflection of Yahweh's truth upon the earth has at last reached its brightest phase—that is, when God's plan has reached a climax of perfection, marked by the completion of His harvest of believing souls from every age into the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth—then it's time to celebrate with a joy that will never cease. But beware: one cannot work to attain a seat at Yahweh's banquet table, whether in the earthly kingdom, or in the eternal state that follows, for it is a gift from God that we may either accept with thanksgiving or reject with contempt. The choice is ours.”*

Or, we can try to joyfully discern when He will bring this most amazing event to pass. We've been told the day of the year, Tishri 15; can we determine which year? After all, He called this a *mo'ed*, an *appointment*. Even if we don't actually have to arrange to show up on time ('cause He's promised to send His limo for us, so to speak), an appointment presupposes that both parties know when to meet, does it not? Notwithstanding the prevailing Christian opinion that we can't know

anything at all about Yahweh's chronology (despite scores of scriptural clues and outright prophecies), I believe God *did* tell us the year of the definitive Feast of Tabernacles. (Everybody in this parade is out of step but me, right?) The Apostle Peter tells us, **"Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."** (II Peter 3:8; cf. Psalm 90:4) The reason so many of us think God's timing is all a big mystery is that we *have* forgotten "this one thing." In both the creation-week account and the institution of the six-day work week followed by a Sabbath rest, Yahweh was telling us what His schedule for mankind's redemption was going to be: six thousand years of "work" (laboring under a sin nature that separated us from direct fellowship with Him, making grace through faith necessary), followed by one day of "rest" in His finished work (the Millennial Kingdom of Yahshua). All this would be followed by the eternal state, in which all believers would relate to Yahweh directly, having at last received their immortal, "spiritual" bodies, as described in I Corinthians 15.

The only "innovation" I've brought to the theological table is the thought that *The Millennium* (the seventh) isn't the only one defined by a period of exactly one thousand years—they *all* are. (I know, it sounds slam-dunk obvious when you say it out loud.) But if this is true, then each of the seven millennia of Yahweh's plan will have begun with a spiritually significant "milestone," a millennial marker. Most of these markers are clearly apparent once you start looking for them, and I've discussed them all in *Future History*. At this juncture, I just want to reiterate that the *really* obvious one, the anchor by which all the others are firmly secured in history, is 33 AD, the year of Yahshua's passion, the year in which the first four *miqrym* of Yahweh were fulfilled. That fact leads me to the unshakable conclusion that Yahshua's Millennial Kingdom will begin in 2033—two thousand years after Christ's sacrifice. On the Feast of Tabernacles, the tenth day of Tishri, Yahshua will commence his earthly reign, fulfilling the requirements of the *miqra*'s prophecy.

For me, this chronological epiphany finally made sense of such esoteric statements as this: **"Come, and let us [in context, Ephraim and Judah—all of Israel] return to Yahweh; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us. On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight."** (Hosea 6:1-2) If a "day" is only a day, then this makes no sense that I can see (though it suggests that the timing of Christ's death and sojourn in the tomb—something Jews today refuse to acknowledge—may also be prophetic of Israel's plight). But if Peter's formula is applied, it means that Israel would be "torn" and "stricken" for *two thousand years*, beginning in 33. That much is historical

fact. But Hosea reports that they will also be “raised up” on the *third day*—that is, during the third millennium after the crucifixion, a period of time that will begin in 2033.

You’d like a little confirmation? Okay. King Hezekiah got sick and was told by Isaiah that death was near. When he protested, pouted and prayed, the prophet was told to go back and tell him this: **“Thus says Yahweh, the God of David your father: ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of Yahweh.’”** (II Kings 20:5) I believe Hezekiah’s illness was a picture of Israel’s impending “torn and stricken” condition. Isaiah has thus prophesied the same thing Hosea did: Israel would be restored, but not until *two thousand years* had passed. And not only restored politically. They would “go up to the house of Yahweh,” a euphemism for the Temple, which you and I now know to be a comprehensive metaphor for God’s plan of redemption: Israel’s restoration would be *spiritual!*

And what about the Sabbath issue? The Feast of Tabernacles is described as a Sabbath (*Sabbaton*), a day of rest. Although the “do-not-work-for-your-salvation” admonition is what we must primarily heed, it is not without significance that in the year 2033, *Sukkot* does fall on a natural Sabbath, Saturday, October 8. The reason I concluded that the Day of Atonement (also a *Sabbaton*) would *not* fall on a natural Sabbath is that if they are fulfilled in the same year (as scripture seems to indicate), they can’t both be on Saturdays, because they fall only five days apart.

- (862) *Build booths in which to “camp out” on the first day of the feast. “You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days.* (Leviticus 23:40) When I covered this under Mitzvah #141, I was so busy looking at the forest, I neglected to examine the trees—literally. For that I apologize, and will endeavor now to make amends by getting to the root of their meanings. If you’ll recall, our introduction to this section revealed that the *sukkah*, the booth or tabernacle each Israelite family was to build at “the place where Yahweh your God chooses to make His name abide” was a picture of the Shekinah Glory of Yahweh. *He* personifies the covering that provides refuge and shelter from the storms of our existence. Here, we’ll see the flip side of this coin. The four types of trees, the components from which the *Sukkot* are to be made, indicate who will populate Yahshua’s Kingdom: those who by definition are indwelled and empowered with the Spirit of Yahweh. As we shall see, this is not the random assemblage of building

materials as it first appears, but rather a comprehensive list—a detailed and multifaceted description—of those in whom the Holy Spirit abides.

(1) “Beautiful” is from the Hebrew verb *hadar*, meaning to honor, adorn, or make glorious. Not surprisingly, it is a word used of the return of Yahweh (in the persona of Yahshua) to the earth as He takes care of business a few days before the Feast of Tabernacles: **“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious (*hadar*) in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—‘I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’”** (Isaiah 63:1) Or how about this? **“His glory is great in your salvation [that’s *Yâshuw`ah* (ישׁוּעָה)—the Messiah’s given name]; honor and majesty (*hadar*) you have placed upon Him.”** (Psalm 21:5) The first “tree,” then, represents King Yahshua, the very personification of the Shekinah and Spirit of God, returning to earth to reign in glory. Note, however, that the people were instructed to use the “fruit” of beautiful trees to build their booths. That’s the Hebrew word *pariy*, meaning fruit, produce, offspring, children, or progeny. And who are the spiritual progeny of King Yahshua? We who trust Him. **“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!... Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”** (I John 3:1-2)

(2) “Palm trees” are the Hebrew noun *tamar*, the water-loving date palms that congregate in oasis settings. **“The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of Yahweh shall flourish in the courts of our God.”** (Psalm 92:12-13) Who are these “righteous ones?” Job’s friend Elihu explains that Yahweh **“does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.”** (Job 36:7) But righteousness (as you know) is not the result of our own efforts, but God’s on our behalf: **“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”** (James 2:23) The second tree, then, stands for those accounted righteous—we who believe God—who will populate the Kingdom under Yahshua’s sovereignty. We will be “planted in the house of Yahweh” and shall “flourish in the courts of our God,” for He does “not withdraw His eyes” from us. *Ever*.

(3) “Leafy” trees. The adjective *abot* means thick with leaves, dense with foliage. So, he’s saying we’re *dense*? Well, not exactly. The verb from which “leafy” is derived, *abat*, means “to weave together, to conspire, to wrap up, to intertwine something.” Who are these who conspire together, who are weaved or intertwined into one in the context

of the Millennium? Why, Israel and the *ekklesia*. I'll admit, I probably would have missed that one if I hadn't already studied the structure of the wilderness Tabernacle (see Precepts #712-#715, #720, and #722). If you look at the details, this concept is everywhere you look: the *ekklesia* and the nation of Israel are side by side, united but distinct, working shoulder to shoulder. The *ekklesia* has not absorbed—or replaced—Israel, nor have they become part of Israel. Rather, we are entwined like branches grafted into the same divine tree (see Romans 11), or woven together like the warp and woof of one magnificent tapestry, created by and for the glory of Yahweh. If you don't believe me, read on...

(4) “Willows of the brook” are designated by the Hebrew noun *ereb*, meaning a willow or poplar tree. A virtually identical noun, however (with the same consonant root), denotes “a mixture, a mixed company, interwoven. The primary meaning is a grouping of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It was use of the heterogeneous band associated with the nation of Israel as it departed from Egypt...” (Baker and Carpenter) The word also means “woof,” as in the threads that cross and interweave with the warp in a fabric. This, perhaps, sheds new light on the reason *ereb* is used in Exodus 12:38 to describe the “mixed” gentile multitude that believed in Yahweh and left Egypt along with the Israelites in the exodus. The two groups were interwoven, interdependent, and symbiotic, but their identities and heritage remained somewhat distinct.

Together, then, the four trees listed in Leviticus 23:40 signify the populace of the Millennial Kingdom of our Messiah, beginning with the glorious King, Yahshua himself, and including His “children,” the righteous who will flourish in His courts: those of Israel and every other nation who have “conspired” together to love and honor Yahweh in truth and trust—every believer from every age, from Adam until the last child born during the Millennium. Perhaps the most amazing fact of all is that these people are said to be the very *dwelling place* of the Glory of God.

Either that, or I'm just making this stuff up as I go along.

- (863) *Keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the place God has specified. “Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to Yahweh your God in the place which Yahweh chooses, because Yahweh your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.”* (Deuteronomy 16:15) The Israelites were never to formally gather for worship (at least when sacrifices were involved) anywhere except where the Tabernacle or Temple and the ark of the Covenant were. But they were *required* to make the short journey three times a year to wherever this was. The Feast of Tabernacles is one of those times. Once again, we observe that Yahweh

has, because of Israel's idolatry and the rejection of her Messiah, made it impossible to do what He's required them to do. Even if you're a Jew living in Jerusalem, you cannot literally "keep" *Sukkot* today, because there is no Temple and no priesthood. Symbolically, however, is another matter. "The place where Yahweh your God choose to make His name abide" is defined by what it means: the Tabernacle is a detailed picture of the Plan of God for our redemption, centered in Yahshua the Messiah. Therefore, if the Spirit of Yahweh dwells within you (as a result of your trusting belief in Yahshua's atoning work) then *you* are the place Yahweh chooses to be; *you* are the "fruit of the beautiful tree," *you* are the righteous one who "flourishes like the palm tree," the "leafy tree" intertwined in worship with Yahweh's other children, and the "willow" who's such a vital part of God's joyous mixed company. Yahweh has blessed us with life, love, and His very presence. We shall surely rejoice!

- (864) *Observe the seventh feast by dwelling in tabernacles for seven days during the seventh month. "You shall keep the feast of Yahweh for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest."* (Leviticus 23:39) *"You shall keep it as a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your God."* (Leviticus 23:41-43) The prevalence of the number seven in these instructions tells us that God intends to use what the *miqra* foreshadows to bring the affairs of mankind to a complete and perfect end. This is not the first week-long festival on Yahweh's calendar, however: the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the spring taught us that our sins could be removed from our lives—*completely*. This second and final seven-day appointment with God will at last reunite us (who had been estranged from Him by our sin) to perfect and intimate fellowship.

Note that the seventh month, though it marks the end of the story of our redemption as told through the seven *mo'edim-miqrym* of Yahweh, is not the end of the calendar year. There are many months yet to run. These months, I believe, are analogous to the eighth day of the feast: they represent the eternal state—that which comes after the Millennial Kingdom. The eighth day is a *sabbaton*, an observed Sabbath, so it's clear that the principle of grace will never be abrogated. The number of bulls sacrificed will have dropped from thirteen on the first day to one on the eighth (see Precept #845), leading me to the conclusion that error and falsehood will be a thing of the past.

During the eternal eighth day, however, the tabernacles or booths that we lived in during the festival week will no longer be inhabited. Why? Because the unique relationship we shared with Yahshua the Messiah (the “beautiful tree” in the metaphor) will no longer be precisely what it had been. Yahweh will no longer be “camping out” among men. He won’t have to. Since all of God’s children will at last be clothed in our immortal, spiritual bodies, it will no longer be necessary for Yahweh to diminish His glory by showing Himself to us in an assumed human form, as Yahshua the Messiah. At last we will see Him as He is; we will know as we are known—things that would have killed the most holy of mortal men.

In a sense, every created entity is as a metaphor designed to teach us about its Creator: light and sound, earth and sky, good and evil, life and death—they can exist in our understanding only because we ourselves have been given corporeal reality by our God. But on the eighth day, there will be no more need for these metaphors, symbols, and parables. Biology, chemistry, and physics were introduced by Yahweh for only one reason: to bring into being the mechanism by which He could love and be loved in return. But on the “eighth” day, the eternal day, the physical properties defining our *immortal* bodies will no longer be dependent on these things. Now that Yahweh’s little “science project”—the physical universe—will have finally served its purpose, He has something new planned, something that did not necessarily have its origins in the Big Bang (through which Yahweh Himself created our present physical existence). A new heaven and new earth await. This is what Paul was talking about in II Corinthians 5:16-17: **“Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**