



*"Whoever touches you, touches the apple of His eye" ( Zech 2:8)*

## **GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

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### **PART SIX**

#### **THE FALL FEASTS**

There is a great spiritual banquet that awaits those believers who delve into the Biblical Hebraic roots of their Christian faith. We must continue to recognize that in Leviticus 23, God set His (Festivals) Feast Times according to His calendar. These Feasts of The Lord are meant for all believers. When a follower of Yeshua, Jew or Gentile, observes the Feasts that person is exercising their rights of citizenship as well as following God's Word. Yeshua who is The Word, is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He does not change; neither does The Word of God. Celebration or non-celebration of The Feasts is not an issue of salvation. However, traditions, feelings, and fear continue keeping Christians blind to the deep spiritual significance to be found in The Feasts of The Lord. Every Appointed Time (Moadim) and Feast of The Lord brings us into a deeper revelation of the redemptive work of The Messiah, and points us either back to something He has already done for us, or forward to something He will do for us.



The following is a short synopsis of the three Fall Feasts: Yom Teruah (The Day of Blowing The Shofar or Feast of Trumpets, Lev. 23:23-25), more popularly known as Rosh Hashanah (Head of The Year), Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement, Lev. 23:26-32), and Sukkot (The Feast of Booths or The Feast of Tabernacles, Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43). These Fall Feasts take place in God's seventh month, Tishri, which is the time of the latter rain, and contain revelation on Messiah's second coming.

Judaism has maintained a distinction between the religious and the civil year. Today, the month of Nisan and the Feast of Passover begin the religious year of the Jews, yet Tishri and Rosh Hashanah (Head of the Year) begin the civil year. Tishri 1 was the new year of the Babylonian calendar. Many Jewish writers trace this system of two new years in the return of the Jewish people from Babylonian exile, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when Rosh Hashanah became part of the Yom Teruah celebration. The sounding of the shofar (ram's horn) on Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah ushers in ten sacred days that end on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). This ten-day period is known as the Yamim Nora'im (Days of Awe or High Holy Days). Traditional Jews believe that each year during this sacred time, one's final destiny in the Age to Come is sealed in the Book of Life. The Jewish people have approached the Yamim Nora'im with great reverence – getting right with God and man, forgiving and asking forgiveness, tying up the loose ends of life. As believers in Messiah we need to make our whole life Yamim Nora'im, our Days of Awe, preparing for eternity.

There are many important spiritual truths revealed celebrating Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah. The most graphic teaching tool of this season is the shofar (ram's horn), which is sounded with a blast called "teru'ah" in the services. It is a call for Israel to wake up and return to God as well as an alarm sound meant to wake believers up. All believers should be in preparation to meet The Lord, and the shape of the shofar shows us the preferred posture of God's people, curved. We are to take the humble appearance of the shofar, which is curved or bowed in submission to what God tells us to do. The only way to find God's best is to bend our will to His will.



This Feast is a time to take an honest look into our spirits to make sure we are aligned with our Father's plan for us. We must wake up, evaluate our spiritual condition, and if needed return to Father God through repentance. Repentance in Hebrew is called "teshuvah", it comes from a root word "shub", which means, "to turn around and come back". No matter how far Israel had wandered, return was always possible, and so it is for all believers through Yeshua. Teshuvah was also Yeshua's opening message: "*Turn from your sins to God [do teshuvah], for the Kingdom of Heaven is near*" (Matt. 4:17). Teshuvah is not so much a religious requirement as it is a restoration of relationship. The sound of the shofar for believers in Yeshua The Messiah is a mixture of seriousness and rejoicing. "*Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound...*" (Ps. 89:15) As believers in Messiah we do not merely hope that our sins are forgiven, we know our sins are forgiven, making the shofar a joyful sound.

Yom Kippur, (The Day of Atonement) has been the most holy day on the Jewish calendar since the days of Moses. This day focuses on atonement and forgiveness of sins. The word atonement means "to cover, to cancel". Atonement is a Jewish concept, and is found throughout the Old Testament. Atonement means that even though we should have to suffer the consequences of our sins, instead God has provided a way in which something or someone else pays the price for our wrongdoing. A key word that is not understood in the body of Messiah is sin. The Hebrew word for sin is "chet", which means, "to miss the mark". The mark that is missed is God's standard, God's way of doing things and being right. Everyone misses the mark. Sin is not a Christian concept, but a Jewish concept with roots going back deep into the Torah (first five books of the Bible). Our sins separate us from God and cause us to have a heart that is far from God, but God provided a way for us to be reconciled back to Him, and that is called atonement. There is only one way that God provided atonement, which was through the shedding of blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. (Lev. 17:11) Man-made religion hates this, and does not speak of the blood. God

gave us this method for the purpose of showing us the awfulness of sin. Before the Torah was given to Moses for the children of Israel, there were already animal sacrifices to God. In fact, the first sacrifice, the first shedding of blood was done by God Himself to atone for the sin of Adam and his wife (Gen. 3:21). God covered man with animal skins, and instituted the blood sacrifice Himself. Man wants to cover up his sin, and so it was with the first man and woman as they sowed fig leaves to cover themselves (Gen. 3:7). This is a picture of fig leaf religion that wants to cover up sin and never requires your heart.

When God gave the Torah at Mount Sinai to Moses, He formalized the animal sacrifice system and wanted Israel to see that every time they sinned something had to die for it. What Messiah did for us can be seen and understood through Yom Kippur. In Temple times, Yom Kippur centered



around the sacrifice of the two goats described in Leviticus 16. The "chatat" (sin goat) was to be killed after the priest had confessed the sins of the nation over it. The second goat, the "azazel" (scapegoat), was also to have the sins of the people confessed over it. But instead of being slain as a sacrifice, this goat was to be set free in the wilderness. By so doing, the people of Israel were to realize that their sins were taken away from them as they trusted in God's way of atonement (Lev. 16; 23:26-32). This sacrifice had to be repeated each year. Yeshua is our "azazel", our scapegoat who bore our sins and brought us into a new covenant with God. The shedding of His blood was not a temporary atonement that would cover our sins; it was an atonement that removes and remits our sins and their penalty for eternity (Rom. 3:23-25). This means it renders invisible the ink of the note that was written against us in sin; and there is no evidence that the sin was ever there. As believers we know that we can ask and receive forgiveness of sin at any time according to 1 John 1:9. But, God has His appointed time that is special to Him, Yom Kippur is therefore a time to glorify Messiah and reflect on His priestly ministry in heaven, and rejoice in what He did for us. Consequently, this day is an appropriate time to deal with areas of sin in our lives that have resulted in a breach of relationship with God or man.

The Ten Days of Awe beginning with Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur also reveal to us the future. Some theologians believe that Yom Teruah points to the heavenly shofar that will be blown at the second coming of Messiah. When the shofar sounds The Lord will fight against all the nations of the earth who have attacked Israel. The dead in Messiah will rise, the righteous who are alive will meet Him in the clouds, and all of heaven will rejoice (Zech. 9:14-16; Matt 24:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 11:15-19). Another theory in looking to the future is that either Yom Teruah or Yom Kippur, also known as Yom haDin (Judgment Day), is a picture of the Day of The Lord when the gates of heaven are closed to all those who would not turn to God, repent and be forgiven of their sins. It is the day when the Shofar haGadol, the great trumpet blast (Is. 27:13; Matt. 24:31) is sounded and the Sefer Chaim (Book of Life) is sealed.



Sukkot (The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles), also known as the "Festival of our Joy", is a reminder of God's miraculous provision for the Israelites, as they wandered for forty years in the desert and lived in "succot" (booths). Their clothes and shoes never wore out; God provided manna for food each day, water to drink and protection from their enemies. The most obvious symbol of Sukkot is



the simple hut called the "sukkah" (booth or tabernacle). For seven days out of the year the Israelites are commanded to dwell in the sukkah as a reminder of their redemption out of the land of Egypt (Lev. 23:41-43). Yeshua is our Sukkot, our Tabernacle, *"The Word became flesh and lived among us"* (Jn. 1:14). The word lived means "tabernacled". When you receive Yeshua in your heart, He comes to live inside of you, and you now become a tabernacle. What you do with this tabernacle affects your entire life and future. The temporary quality of the "sukkah", reminds us that our earthly bodies are temporal, but as believers in Messiah we have a permanent dwelling place in Him. Yeshua's birth was in the late fall, and is perfectly pictured in the Sukkot Festival. This is the ideal time to celebrate that God, in The Messiah, was born to tabernacle among His people. This Feast is a time for great rejoicing, not just to remember the past, but also to thank The Lord for our salvation, daily provisions, and for bringing us into His Kingdom.

In Temple times, a special ceremony depicted a prophetic promise in the Sukkot festival, called "rejoicing in the place of water drawing". During the celebration, a priest would take a golden pitcher down to the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem. After dipping it into the water, he would lead a procession of praise back to the Temple. The highlight of the ceremony came when the priest dramatically poured the water onto the altar. This was based on the verse of Isaiah 12:3, *"With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation"*. The rabbis taught that this ceremony foreshadowed the time when God would pour out the Holy Spirit in the days of the Messianic redemption. An amazing thing happened during a first century Sukkot celebration in Jerusalem, Yeshua stood and cried out openly, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (Jn. 7:37-38) The Scripture He was referring to was Isaiah 12:3, declaring openly in the presence of thousands of people, that He was The Messiah, the fulfillment of this scripture and ceremony.

Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), is the end of the year harvest festival, and the last Feast mentioned in Leviticus 23. It has special prophetic emphasis in the scriptures. All the other Feasts will have already been fulfilled when Sukkot takes its rightful place in God's timetable. As a harvest festival, Sukkot points to the great harvest of souls from among the nations in the last days. In Temple days at Jerusalem seventy bulls were sacrificed during the week of Sukkot (Num. 29:13-34). The ancient Rabbis, who believed there were originally 70 Gentile nations, say this represents the future ingathering of the non-Jewish nations, who would one day become part of God's Messianic Kingdom. *"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Sukkot"* (Zech. 14:16). Sukkot can be seen as representative of the Kingdom of God coming to earth. God will complete His planned dwelling in the midst of His people through Messiah Yeshua. Both Jewish and Gentile believers will celebrate Sukkot together as One New Man. Why wait for the millennium to celebrate? Start now!



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