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The High Holidays or **Yameem Noraim** is an altogether awesome Period that, as we will discover, bears the hallmark of G-d's Fingerprint. It is the holiest time of the year on the Jewish calendar, and a time when the Church Body, although not understanding why, holds a continual string of Revivals worldwide. This special period of introspection and repentance is a time to re-assess our Spiritual walk; a time to explore how we fit into our Creator's Scheme of things here on earth, and a time for Jews and Christians to prayerfully stand together in non-proselytizing love and solidarity before our altogether sovereign and holy **G-d**, Whose Memorial Name (Sh'mot/Exodus:3:15) for all time is **Elohe Avraham, Elohe Yitz'khak, v'Elohe Ya'akov (The G-d of Abraham, The G-d of Isaac, and The G-d of Jacob)**.

The Holidays spanning this Period are **Yom T'ruah, Yom HaKippurim, Chag HaSukkot, and Yom HaShemini Atzeret**, or the **Day of Blowing of Shofars, The Day of Atonements, The Feast of Booths, and The Eighth Day Assembly**, respectively. These Festivals are not simply Jewish holidays, as they are commonly referred to, rather, they are Biblical Ordinances for all who cling to G-d's Word, His Law and His Commands to observe from generation to generation. Together with **Shabbat, Pesach, Chag HaMatzote, Bikkoreem, and Chag HaShavuot**, or the **Sabbath, Passover, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and The Feast of Weeks**, respectively, these Festivals map out the very Plan of G-d's Redemption of Man.

A CASE FOR KEEPING G-D'S LAW AND HIS FESTIVALS:

The Constantinian church has been persisting in its erroneous teaching that the Body of Christ is to ignore G-d's Law, and His Festivals, which are a part of that Law. Yet, Scripture tells us that the Church Body has been Divinely Grafted into the Commonwealth of **Yisra'el (Israel)**. Romans 11:17-18 clearly states: "*If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been Grafted in among the others, and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.*" Since the G-d of Yisra'el saw fit to Graft the Church Body into the rich Olive Root – that being **Am Yisra'el**, or the People of Israel: His Covenant People – it should be clear that when He Speaks to Am Yisra'el, His Words also apply to the Church Body.

Ephesians 2:11-19 also refers to this Grafting in, but this Passage, like so many others, has been taken out of context, and its original meaning has thus been distorted, with too few disciples of Christ questioning why. We will thus take some time to examine Ephesians 2:11-19 so that we can see it in a more accurate light, which will help us to draw out its correct meaning, and thus place the matter at hand – that being the keeping of G-d's Festivals – into its proper perspective and context.

It is my hope that this exercise will help those who are seekers of Truth to be more aware of the damage that mistranslations of such Biblical Passages have done to Judeo-Christian relations; to our Christian Witness in the world, and to the Church Body's ability to move on from the milk of the Word to the meat the Word, and thus on to a more – Dare I say? – disciplined collective walk before our Holy G-d. It is my hope that this approach to examining this particular Scriptural Passage will serve in the future as a cautionary reminder – a red flag – to you whenever you encounter other difficult, and seemingly contradictory, Passages so that you will be motivated to seek the Truth out for yourself, rather than accepting the overly simplistic, extra-Biblical, doctrinally-based explanations that have been developed for mass consumption and are totally inappropriate for those seeking a personal relationship with our Father and His Son.

Ephesians 2:11-19 reads, according to the highly respected New International Version of the Holy Scriptures: "*Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision (that done in the body by the hands of men)' – remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the Covenants of the Promise, without hope and without G-d in the world. **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the Blood of Christ.** For He Himself is our Peace, Who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His Flesh the Law with its Commandments and Regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making Peace, and in this one Body to reconcile both of them to G-d through the Cross, by which He put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. **Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with G-d's People and members of G-d's Household.**"*

If taken merely at face value; if regarded without an accurate understanding of the historical settings in which our Messiah, **Yahu'Shua (Jesus' Hebrew Name, meaning: G-d, He is Salvation)**, and our Apostles ministered here on earth; if read without considering the spoken and written languages of the day, and without a grasp of the key sects of Judaism, and the prevailing Hebrew mindsets, and the religious traditions, all of which influenced our mainly Jewish authors of the continuing (so-called "new") Testament as the early Church was being formed; if understood without looking at the harmony of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures as a whole Book that reveals the very Heart of our One G-d, and without key Passages from both Sections that would help

to provide a G-dly balance, then the underlined portion of Ephesians 2 quoted above becomes the overriding theme, and it appears to be asserting that since Yahu'Shua laid His Life down for all mankind, G-d just scrapped His Law.

Kefa (Peter), the Apostle who was closest to Yahu'Shua and the one who was Divinely Ordained as the first Messianic Pastor Commissioned to bring G-d's Word and His Covenant Promises to righteous Gentiles, cautions us that **Rabbi Sha'ul of Tarsus (Paul)** wrote Letters – such as his Letter, Ephesians, to the Church in Ephesus – that contain some Passages that are difficult to understand. These Scriptures, Kefa warns, are distorted by ignorant and unstable people to their own destruction (2 Kefa/2 Peter 3:16). Unfortunately, such people ignore Kefa's admonishment that we examine the things that we say, for when we speak, he instructs, we should do so as if we are speaking the very Words of G-d (1 Kefa/1 Peter 4:11). This brings an awesome responsibility to all of G-d's Children, and especially to their Spiritual leaders, to correctly handle G-d's Word, as Sha'ul, in his second Letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15), teaches: *“Do your best to present yourself to G-d as one Approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth.”*

Understanding this, then, any serious disciple of Yahu'Shua must conclude that if we, as Christians, are to properly mature as His disciples, we must read Rabbi Sha'ul's letters in light of both the so-called “old” and “new” Testaments: since they are one continuing Revelation, they are really one continuing Testament. Moreover, we must take into consideration the many examples that Yahu'Shua, and even the Apostles, set forth for the Church to pattern itself after if the Body is to be a true collective reflection of **HaMoshiach (The Messiah or The Christ)** to G-d's Elect, Am Yisra'el, and to a dying world. Thus, when reading such difficult Passages, we would do well to remember that G-d is not Man that He should Change His Mind (B'midbar/Numbers 23:19). His Law is eternal (Tehillim/Psalms 119:160). Therefore, it is up to us to seek out, and even dig up the Truth, so we could attain that G-dly balance that we so desperately need as we study His Scriptures to learn His Will.

Cohen HaGadol (The High Priest), Yahu'Shua, Who heads the Church and Who taught our Apostles, warned in no uncertain terms, as recorded in Matte'Yahu/Matthew 5:17-18: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the Truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

Neither heaven nor earth has passed away, nor has everything been accomplished.

Yahu'Shua continues in Verse 19: *“Anyone who breaks one of the least of these Commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these Commands will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”*

May it be that we as G-d's servants and as disciples of Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach strive for that greater goal.

Since the continuing Testament was written primarily by Jews, it is reasonable to examine Ephesians 2 from a Jewish point of view. We begin by reading the same Passage, as recorded in the Complete Jewish Bible, which was written by a Jewish scholar who came to know Yahu'Shua as HaMoshiach. This commentator/translator has an understanding of both the Hebrew and Greek languages, as well as an understanding of the Masoretic text (the Hebrew Scriptures accepted by Judaism) and other early, well-respected translations of the Bible.

Ephesians 2:11-19, according to the Complete Jewish Bible, reads: *“Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth – called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised – at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el.*

*You were foreigners to the Covenants embodying G-d's Promise. You were in this world without hope and without G-d. **But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's Blood.** For He Himself is our shalom – he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us by destroying in His own Body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its Commands set forth in the form of Ordinances. He did this in order to create in union within Himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom, and in order to reconcile to G-d both in a single Body being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in Himself killing that enmity. Also, when He came, He announced as Good News shalom to you far off and shalom to those nearby, news that through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. **So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with G-d's People and members of G-d's family.**”*

Since Yahu'Shua was Divinely Sent in the likeness of sinful man to become our Sin Offering by shedding His Blood for all mankind, the **righteous requirements of the Law** are fully met in all of those who look to Him as their Mediator and High Priest, and who submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for Yahu'Shua has once and for all time made Atonement for us before G-d (Romans 8:3-4). Thus, this Passage in Ephesians is telling us that through the Cross only the *hostility* between the two Camps – Yisra'el and the Church – has been abolished because faith in the Vessel of Redemption that G-d Elected to Provide for both Jews and Gentiles alike has now made it possible to cleanse us of our sins so that we are in right standing with G-d's Law, which makes it possible for us to approach our altogether holy G-d with circumcised hearts so that we could commune with Him.

If it were saying instead that the Law was abolished, then G-d did an about-face and in so doing, He Declared a healthy half of the Bible a moot point. If it were a declaration of the abolition of G-d's Law, then Ephesians 2:11-19 is in contradiction with itself because wiping the Law off the Tablets would only guarantee that the hostility between the two camps would remain firmly intact forever.

In order to justify such a declaration, we would have to throw out both “old” and “new” Testament Scriptures, such as D'varim/Deuteronomy 6:25 and 30:11-17, and Romans 3:31 and 7:14-25, and many of the Tehillim/Psalms, all of which admonish us to uphold G-d's Law, for His Law, His Torah, is the very fabric that defines our actions and girds our faith.

In order to uphold the idea that G-d's Law is no longer applicable, we would have to do away with the Prophets, for we would have to ignore Passages like Yekhezqel/Ezekiel 37:24, which Prophetically speaks of a period of Restoration after the Re-Gathering of Am Yisra'el from amidst the goyim/nations: *“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one Shepherd. They will follow my Laws and be careful to keep My Decrees.”*

And Zekharya/Zechariah 14:16-17, which Prophetically speaks of a period of Restoration after the Battle of Har Meggido (Armageddon): *“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) will go up year after year to worship the King, the L-rd Almighty, and to celebrate Chag HaSukkot. The L-rd will bring on them the plague He inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate Chag HaSukkot.”*

And Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 56:6–7, which Prophetically speaks of the upcoming climax of the Redemption: *“And foreigners who bind themselves to the L-rd to serve Him, to love the Name of the L-rd, and to worship Him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My Covenant – these I will bring to My holy Mountain and give them joy in My House of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My Altar; for My House will be called a House of prayer for all nations.”*

And the entire Chapters of Yekhezqel/Ezekiel 40-44, which address in detail the Prophet Yekhezqel's Vision of

the upcoming Third Temple with its Law and its Altar for the sacrifices that we just read about in Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 56:6-7.

And Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 66:23, which Prophetically speaks about the upcoming true New World Order, whereby G-d's Law indeed boldly goes forth: *"From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before Me, says the L-rd."*

And the Church Body would have to disregard Her own Head, Yahu'Shua, the genuine Jewish Moshiach, Who was brought up in an Observant household where G-d's Law, His Torah, was indeed upheld:

As a babe, Yahu'Shua underwent His Br'it Milah (Circumcision and naming ceremony, Luke 2:21) and His Pidyon Ha-ben (Redemption of the Firstborn Son, or consecration, ceremony, Luke 2:22-24).

As a child, Yahu'Shua went through His Bar Mitzva (Coming of Age, Luke 2:46-49).

As an adult; while preparing Himself for Ministry, Yahu'Shua was immersed in a mikveh by **Yochan'an (John the Baptist)** (Luke 3: 21-22; Mark 1:9-11; Yochan'an/John 1:29-34) – and at this time His Father Declared that He was well Pleased with Him.

During His Ministry, Yahu'Shua instructed a man that He healed to present himself to the priest along with the prescribed gift and sacrifices as a testimony (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 8:4, Luke 5:14).

Throughout the duration of His life here on earth, Scripture demonstrates that Yahu'Shua remained Biblically kosher.

Yahu'Shua faithfully and joyfully observed the Festivals, as set forth in the following Scriptures: **Pesach/Passover** as a child in Luke 2:41-43, the **Sabbath** in Mark 6:1 and in other Scriptures, a **Pesach Seder** with His disciples in Mark 14:12-26 and Matte'Yahu/Matthew 26:27-29 and in other Scriptures; teaching during **Chag HaSukkot** in Yochan'an/John 5:1; 7:16-38; and telling His disciples just prior to His Ascension that Ruach HaKodesh (The Holy Spirit) would fall upon them during the arrival of **Shavuot/Pentecost** in Acts 1:5.

Finally, but by no means comprehensively, the Church would have to discount its own Apostles, who themselves assembled in Yerushalayim for **Shavuot** after Yahu'Shua's Ascension, and at this time received the Promised Ruach HaKodesh, as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. And Rabbi Sha'ul, in particular, would have to be deemed a hypocrite, for he demonstrated on several occasions that he upheld the law: He circumcised Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess and father a Greek, in Acts 16:3; took a Nazirite vow in Acts 18:18; joined in the purification rites with some of his Messianic Jewish brethren in Acts 21:20-26, and even used **Pesach** as an example when addressing Church matters in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, indicating that Gentile "believers" were already well familiar with the Apostles teachings on the Biblical Festivals.

In summation, in order to hold fast to the argument that somehow when Yahu'Shua came to minister here on earth there was a hiccup in the Law and it suddenly dropped out of existence, there would have to be a good amount of picking and choosing what Scriptures should be followed and what Scriptures ought to be discounted. To guide others along this path is to incorrectly handle the Word of Truth, and in doing so, to misrepresent HaMoshiach's Work, first and foremost to our Jewish brethren, and then to a decaying Gentile world, and furthermore to do a disservice to the outworking of G-d's Redemptive Plan. To adhere to such dispensational teachings, which have been handed down by a largely anti-Semitic Constantinian church to its adherents, is to avoid being held to any real standard of accountability in matters pertaining to G-d's Law.

If the church turns a deaf ear to the Law, how can its flock ever reach a point of comprehensively disciplining its walk so that it could properly mature in G-d's Word, develop a deeper understanding of His Will – most especially as it pertains to ministering to the Apple of His Eye – and, accordingly, be Pruned of its pagan ways? The L-rd Himself Assures us in Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:11: “*Now what I am Commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.*”

Brethren! We are Called to be Am Segula: a Peculiar People. We are Called to *separate* ourselves from the world; not to conform to it. Let us not allow our faith to become a license for lawlessness and paganism. Let us not serve G-d as Cain did: on our own terms.

Let us now move on to the meat of G-d's Word by turning our attention to the Biblical Festivals that make up this awesome High Holiday Period.

Yom T'ruah

This Levitical Festival is observed concurrently with Rosh haShana, which means Head of the Year. Since Rosh haShana is not a Levitical Festival that G-d has Commanded us to observe from generation to generation, and it is not the true head of the Jewish New Year, I will only briefly address this traditional holiday.

Rosh haShana is considered by Judaism to be the spiritual Jewish New Year. We first see the occasion celebrated in 445 B.C., during the month of Tishri, which is actually the seventh month on the ancient Jewish lunar calendar. The event is recorded in Nechemya/Nehemiah 8.

This was a time when the Jewish exiles from the Babylonian dispersion had settled back in their own towns in their Biblical Inheritance, Eretz Yisra'el (the Land of Israel). After many years of exile, these Jews were finally planted on their own soil and they now had the freedom to establish their own laws. They took this opportunity to have 'Ezra the Cohen (Priest) read from the Scroll of the Torah of Moshe (the Book of the Law of Moses), and upon hearing G-d's Words, the community was cut to its collective heart. Nechemya, who was governor of the newly rebuilt Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), along with the L'vi'im, or Levitical Priests, told the people not to mourn, but rather to celebrate the day as a joyous and sacred occasion unto the L-rd. The next day, the people willingly made a collective oath to bind themselves to the L-rd and to His Law.

Today, according to Jewish tradition, this spiritual New Year commemorates the day of the Creation of the world, and the time when G-d Compassionately Judges the actions of every man and woman to determine whether each individual is worthy of an earthly existence of life and shalom (peace) or death and affliction.

The actual physical Head of the New Year, however, is suppose to be celebrated during the month of Aviv – according to a Divine Directive given by G-d, which is recorded in Sh'mot/Exodus 12:2 and D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:1. The month of Aviv was when G-d Delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Sh'mot/Exodus 13:4), and this is the same month that the Levitical Festivals of **Pesach** or **Passover**, **Chag HaMatzote** or **Unleavened Bread** and **Bikkoreem** or **Firstfruits** are to be observed (Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:5-14; Numbers/B'midbar 28:16-26).

The Levitical Festival, **Yom T'ruah**, is commemorated by shofar blasts, which kick off a somber 10-day period of self-examination and repentance called the **Days of Awe** during the month of Tishri on the Hebrew calendar. Since this Festival features the sounding of the highly symbolic and Biblically significant shofar, we will take a close look at what the shofar is and what it symbolizes.

Some English translations of the Tenach/Hebrew Scriptures replace **Yom T'ruah** with the generic term “the Feast of Trumpets,” which actually does the Holiday some injustice:

The shofar, otherwise known as the ram's horn, is a proclamation of G-d's Sovereignty. The awe-inspiring long and short blasts from this instrument produce a sobering series of soulful wailing and sighing sounds that demand from those within its hearing a reverent respect for and fear of an Almighty G-d, Whose Presence is Approaching. Its penetrating teruah and tekiah sounds bring to mind the awesome Revelation at Har Sinai/Mount Sinai, when G-d Gave Moshe the Ten Commandments. Its reverberations prompt within the heart of the listener a vigilance as the forthcoming great Day of Judgment approaches, and with that Day, the arresting of sin, the Resurrection of the dead and the establishment of G-d's Kingdom here on earth.

In contrast, the sound from the silver trumpets that G-d told Moshe to make were exhilarating, and were used to summon the Israelite community, to sound an alarm during war time, and to commemorate joyous occasions.

We read about **Yom T'ruah** in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:23-25: “And the L-rd Spoke to Moshe, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall you have a Sabbath, **a memorial of blowing of horns**, a holy gathering. You shall do no servile work: but you shall offer **an offering made by fire to the L-rd.**’ ”

We will first examine the symbolism behind the shofar, and then we will explore the significance of the offering made by fire:

THE SHOFAR AS A SYMBOL OF SUBMISSION:

The horn of the ram is most commonly used as the shofar on **Yom T'ruah** because it is curved. The curve, according to Jewish tradition, represents Man's will bending to the Will of G-d, and his heart bowing to the King of the Universe.

We can grasp this concept more clearly upon examining the process of refining the ram's horn and then applying what we learn to Biblical Teachings:

The first step involves using heat to soften the shofar and then pressure to straighten the end of it. When we enable the L-rd to Work in our lives, we undergo a fire of purification, which softens our hearts toward Him. During this time of trial, when our faith is being tested, we experience His compelling Influence upon us, and the more we place our lives within His Hand, the more the Master Craftsman is able to Straighten that which is crooked within us. This brings to mind Ya'aqov/Jacob, whose Hebrew name means crooked or deceitful; yet who was later Re-Named Yisra'el (B'reshet/Genesis 32:28), which means “Straightened of G-d,” because he submitted to the L-rd's Will and to His Outworking in his life.

The second step involves pressing the shofar against the grinding wheel and turning it from side to side until the rough exterior is removed. Upon completion of this process, the beautiful texture and coloration of the shofar becomes evident. As we grow in our faith walk, and consequently in Spiritual maturity, our rough edges are, little by little, removed – a process Christians have come to know as “Pruning” (Yochan'an/John 15:2). As we allow ourselves to be Pruned of that which is undesirable to G-d, we become the beautiful creations He Intends us to be.

The third step involves boring a hole through the instrument to make a passageway for air to flow freely. As we

willingly permit G-d to Pierce our hearts, which we have stilled before Him, we become less of ourselves and He becomes Greater in our lives, and this factor enables us to become open vessels that can He can freely Use for His holy Purposes (Ephesians 2:10).

The fourth and final step is where a polishing compound is applied to remove minor imperfections in the shofar and to give it a glossy shine. As open vessels, we enable Ruach HaKodesh/The Holy Spirit, who searches out the deep things of G-d; to instruct us in the Ways of G-d (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Out of reverence for G-d, we strive to purify ourselves from all that would defile us (2 Corinthians 7:1), and we proclaim His Word of Life to every ear that would hear (Philippians 2:15), and thus the Light within us shines before men (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 5:14-16).

THE SHOFAR AS A SYMBOL OF REVELATION:

Scripture speaks of the shofar ushering in the Sh'khinah – the Divine Presence of our holy G-d as He Manifests His Glory in the midst of men. In Sh'mot/Exodus 19:16-19 we read: *“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and the sound of a shofar exceedingly loud; so that all the people in the camp trembled. And Moshe brought the people out of the camp to meet with G-d; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And mount Sinay smoked in every part, because the L-rd Descended upon it in fire: and the smoke of it ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And then the voice of the shofar sounded louder and louder; Moshe speaks, and G-d Answers him by a Voice.”* From this Passage, we can see that the blast of the shofar grew increasingly louder as G-d's Divine Presence was being Revealed on Mount Sinai before His People.

Since this awesome event, and for centuries to come, the Jewish People have sounded the shofar to signalize or to accompany public events of the utmost importance.

Yochan'an/John, the author of Revelation, speaks prophetically regarding a series of shofar blasts that seven angels with seven shofars will sound in order to introduce G-d's Judgments upon the earth (Chapters 8-11). This will occur just before Yahu'Shua Returns with the Father to arrest all sin and to establish the true New World Order where the Law will go forth from Har Moriah/Mount Moriah and the Word of the L-rd from Yerushalayim.

THE SHOFAR AS A SYMBOL OF REDEMPTION:

The ram's horn is, by and large, the instrument of choice on **Yom T'ruah** because it is closely identified with the intended sacrifice of Yitzkhak/Isaac by his father Avraham, who was obediently carrying out a Directive from the L-rd. We read about the results of this Divine Testing in B'resheet/Genesis 22:11-14: *“And an angel of the L-rd called to him out of heaven, and said, ‘Avraham, Avraham:’ and he said, ‘Here I am.’ And he said, ‘Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do anything to him: for now I know that thou fearest G-d, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son from Me.’* And Avraham lifted up his eyes, and looked and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Avraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in place of his son. And Avraham called the name of that place Adonay-yir'e: as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount the L-rd will be seen.’

Avraham proved his loyalty to G-d through his unflinching obedience while binding his son on the altar and preparing him to be sacrificed. As a result of passing this Divine test, G-d Provided a ram to replace Avraham's “only” son, Yitzkhak, as the burnt offering. Thus, the ram was the object that facilitated Yitzkhak's Redemption from the throes of death.

It is especially fitting, and in a curious way, that the Sages would tie the symbolism of the ram's horn used during **Yom T'ruah** to the binding of Avraham's son, Yitzkhak. This important Biblical event foreshadowed an even more profound event of Biblical significance: our Heavenly Father Providing His "only" Son, Yahu'Shua, to become a living Sacrifice that would Redeem us from our sinful selves; and thus from eternal damnation. In G-d's Wisdom, then, through His servants, the Sages, He furnished the perfect focal point for the High Holidays – that being His ultimate Atonement:

Yahu'Shua, our altogether faithful High Priest and Mediator, walked out His sinless life in total consecration before His Father, and He was thus able to present Himself as the perfect Unblemished Burnt Offering and Sin Offering in order that He could bridge the gap, once and for all, between sinful Man and our holy G-d. This Son of G-d resolutely set His face toward Yerushalayim, where He would become the Sacrificial Lamb for His Father. In doing so, He obediently poured out His Life as a Drink Offering while the blind Spiritual guides of Judaism unjustly sentenced Him to death and as the sinful Gentile soldiers carrying out that sentence nailed Him to the Cross. Immediately upon Yahu'Shua passing this Divine Test, the parokhet/curtain of the Beit haMikdash/Temple tore in two and G-d's eternal Atonement was Made available for all who would call upon His Redemptive Vessel's Name and who would apply His Blood Sacrifice to the door posts of their hearts.

As we read on in B'reshet/Genesis 22, Verses 15-18, Avraham's faithfulness brought upon him and his posterity G-d's Blessing: *"And the angel of the L-rd called to Avraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I Sworn, Says the L-rd, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son: that I will exceedingly Bless thee, and I will exceedingly Multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of its enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be Blessed; because thou hast obeyed My Voice.'"*

In like manner, Yahu'Shua's faithfulness; even unto His own physical demise, enabled G-d to Pour out His Blessings and Covenant Promises upon those who would become His Son's talmidim or disciples.

It is interesting to note that one of the most famous synagogue prayers from the Rosh haShana Machzor or prayer book, recited during **Yom T'ruah** services contains the following declaration: *"The ram's horn will be sounded at the time of the coming of the Moshiach (Messiah) who will initiate G-d's Kingdom on earth."* It is evident that our Jewish brethren are looking forward to the same thing that the Church Body is anticipating – the coming of the genuine Jewish Messiah, the Resurrection of the dead, and the establishment of G-d's Kingdom here on earth.

AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE:

Regarding the requirement that we read about earlier in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:25 concerning an offering made by fire unto the L-rd – we see its further explanation in B'midbar/Numbers 29:1-6: Here, the Israelites are Instructed for **Yom T'ruah** to prepare a burnt offering without defect, along with a meal offering of flour and oil, and a sin offering for atonement.

In Vayyiqra/Leviticus 11:44, G-d Tells Yisra'el to consecrate Herself and be holy because He is Holy. He Knew that as human beings, the Jewish People would stumble occasionally as they tried to follow Him. In His Grace, He Provided for them a system of sacrifices that would enable them to, once again, get into right standing with Him. Of course, these sacrifices pointed to the ultimate Sacrifice, Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach.

For our purposes, we will discuss the burnt offering, meal offering and sin offering that G-d required for **Yom T'ruah**.

The **burnt offering** is discussed in Vayyiqra/Leviticus, Chapter 1: It signified absolute consecration of the worshiper to G-d. With this sacrifice, a prescribed animal without blemish was brought before the Cohanim/Priests. The worshiper would lay his hand upon the head of the animal and slaughter it. The Cohanim would then sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar. The animal would be cut up and placed on the altar and the pieces would completely burn in the flames. The entire sacrifice was considered G-d's portion, and it was Accepted on the worshiper's behalf to make atonement for his sins so that he could draw near to our holy G-d.

The **meal offering** is discussed in Vayyiqra/Leviticus, Chapter 2: Also referred to as the grain offering, this offering speaks of confessing service to G-d. This is the only offering that did not require a blood sacrifice. The worshiper was to present to the Cohanim an offering of fine flour and oil with frankincense on it. The flour was representative of Man's labors; the oil was symbolic of Ruach HaKodesh, and the incense was likened to prayers rising up to G-d. The offering was not allowed to contain any leaven, which was symbolic of sin. It also could not have any honey in it, which spoke of worldly delights. Rather, it was to be sprinkled with salt, a preservative, which was a reminder of G-d's everlasting Covenant with Am Yisra'el.

The **sin offering** is discussed in Vayyiqra/Leviticus, Chapters 4-5: The sin offering was made by a person who unintentionally sinned against G-d. There is no sin offering noted for intentional sins. Here, the worshiper brought an offering that was determined by the severity of the sin and by the level of authority of the sinner. The animal's entrails, kidneys and liver were burned upon the altar, and these parts were considered G-d's portion. The meat of the sacrifice was given to the Cohanim. If the sin was very severe in nature, the meat was taken outside of the camp and burned.

We can see clearly how the animal sacrifices vividly portray the cost of atonement. The sinner had to select a prescribed animal, bring it to the Cohanim, lay his hand upon it and confess his need for atonement. As the animal was slaughtered, the worshiper would watch its life ebb away.

Blood is always the price that must be paid to atone for a sinner's life (Vayyiqra/Leviticus 17:11).

OBSERVING THE CHAG IN THESE MODERN DAYS:

Today, without a Temple to sacrifice in, our Jewish brethren offer up prayers to G-d in the synagogues during **Yom T'ruah**. They study Torah, perform mitzvot – good deeds sanctioned by G-d – and give to charity. These are their services to G-d as they look forward to their Redemption and the coming of Moshiach. The Chag is celebrated for two days, even though the Bible ordains only one day. The two-day observance is derived from the period of the Prophets, when the sanctification of the months was contingent upon hearing the testimony of eyewitnesses that had spotted the new moon. In short, it was a way of eliminating doubt and confusion as to when the agents of the court in Yerushalayim had accepted the testimony of the sightings and resultantly had established the new month.

The Church Body has much to be thankful for during this Period, and can thus assemble humbly and joyfully before G-d on this Festival with praise offerings, for He has made known to us the genuine Jewish Moshiach, Who has become for us Wisdom from G-d – that is, our Righteousness, Holiness and Redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). The writer of Hebrews (9:12) proclaims that Yahu'Shua, our Cohen Gadol, entered the Most Holy Place once for all; not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own Blood, having obtained eternal

Redemption. Yahu'Shua's Blood has cleansed us and has Atoned for our sins, making it altogether possible for us to enter into the Holy of Holies to commune with our Most High G-d.

Yet, is this where it ends for the Body of Christ? There is no doubt that worshipping G-d in His Holy of Holies is, indeed, the sweetest of experiences, but there is a reason that we enjoy such Privileged Access. Have we not been instructed to make the most of every opportunity (Ephesians 5:16)? Here, in this holy Sanctuary, the Church Body begins Her real Work:

Just like Moshe stood in the gap on behalf of Am Yisra'el to qualify Her before G-d, and Yahu'Shua now stands in that same gap on Her behalf (as well as ours), so should Yahu'Shua's disciples follow suit – most especially during the High Holiday Period when our Jewish brethren stand as one before our Creator to seek His Mercy in these sobering times.

In this Prophetic Day: where those with eyes to see are witnessing the Valley of Dry Bones coming to life as G-d is Re-Gathering His Dispersed People from among the goyim/nations and Planting them upon their Biblical Inheritance in Eretz Yisra'el/the Land of Israel (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 11:12, 43:5-7, Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 23:3-4, 31:10, Yehezqel/Ezekiel 11:17; 39:26-28, Mikha/Micah 2:12, Zefanya/Zephaniah 3:18-20, Tehillim/Psalms 147:2) where the desert is literally springing to life as the Land receives Her Children (Yesha'Yahu /Isaiah 35:1) ... In a time when powerful delusions abound (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12): where an angry world is expressing its outrage that G-d's City, Tziyon/Zion, is being speedily rebuilt (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 60) by those among His Elect who dare to anticipate the climax of the Redemption (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 35:8-10; 49:22-26, 62:12, Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 15:21, 31:9-10, Mikha/Micah 4:11-13, Zekharya/Zechariah 10:4, Revelation 14:3), and where HaSatan and his forces of darkness have come out in battle array against G-d's Covenant People (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 41:1, Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 25:31, Yehezqel/Ezekiel 38:18-23, Yo'el/Joel 4:1-2, Revelation 16:16,) to ravage their Body, demoralize their Spirit and divide their Land, and against these Prophetic wonders in a feeble attempt to thwart G-d's Purposes ... **In these times of Tribulation: may the Church Body become like Aharon and Chur/Hur, who held up Moshe's hands as he interceded on behalf of Am Yisra'el when the powerful 'Amalekites were fighting against our Jewish brethren in Refidim (Sh'mot/Exodus 17:8-13).** May we be for Am Yisra'el Her Spiritual strength, that She would return in wholehearted devotion to Her Husband (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 49:5-6). May we be to Her a material blessing (Romans 15:27) as She stands on G-d's Promises upon those ancient mountains of Y'hudah/Judah and Shomron/Samaria to the dismay of the United Nations, the "holy" See, the Islamic-Arab bloc, the European Union, and even those within our own U.S. government. May we be to Her a Servant on behalf of G-d's Truth in order to confirm every Covenant Promise that was Made to the Patriarchs (Romans 15:7-8) as She holds up Her weary hands and seeks Her Atonement during this holy and awesome Season.

And may we be counted among the watchmen on the walls who have been Commanded to blow the shofar as a warning to those who have stubbornly set their faces against G-d's Purposes (Yehezqel/Ezekiel 33:1-6), lest they forget that His Judgment is Approaching, along with His Wrath, and they resultantly die in their sins.

Indeed, brethren, our Work has just begun.

HOW THE CHAG IS CELEBRATED:

For Jews throughout the world, the feature of the **Yom T'ruah**, or Rosh haShana, service is the sounding of the shofar. The liturgy contains poems composed over the last two millennia; many of which are recited only during the High Holidays to distinctive melodies.

After the service, the Chag is celebrated with symbolic foods: The pomegranate, which some claim contain 613 seeds to correlate with the 613 Laws of Moshe in the Torah, is served as an expression of hope for a productive year. A variety of treats laden with honey symbolize hope for sweet days ahead. Challot – twisted egg bread, from which an offering of dough has been taken – are baked into different shapes, such as round to symbolize the hope that the “new year” will bring a well-rounded life undisturbed by tragedy, and bird-shaped to express hope that the prayers of the Jewish People will be carried to Heaven on the wings of a bird. Two loaves are placed on the Holiday table, as this symbolizes the two rows of challot that were always on the Table of Showbread in the Temple. It is customary to serve fish heads to the heads of the household, honoring the head, or priest, of the home, and reminding him of the responsibilities that go along with that role. The fish head is also an expression of hope that Yisra’el will be at the head of the nations, as Scripture states in D’varim/Deuteronomy 28:13: *“The L-rd will Make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the Commands of the L-rd your G-d that I Give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.”* Seasonal fruit not previously eaten that year, such as apples, figs and grapes are served. Apples are particularly popular because they symbolize G-d’s Divine Presence and Healing. Carrots are served because the Yiddish word for carrots is “meiren,” meaning “to increase.” Eating carrots during this Chag is an expression of hope that the Jewish People will increase greatly in numbers and in merit during the coming year. The Orthodox Chassidim also serve beets because the Hebrew word for beet is “selek.” Selek is the root of a key word used in the phrase, “May we rid ourselves (sheyishtalku) of our enemies.” Finally, wine is served, and Kiddush, a prayer of sanctification, is recited over it. The prayer recalls the Day for remembering the blowing of the shofar, G-d’s Loving Act of Creation, and Yisra’el’s liberation from slavery.

For Christians, the bread and the wine are especially significant, as the bread reminds us that Yahu’Shua is the Bread of Life, and the wine recalls His Atoning Blood Sacrifice, which He poured out before the Father as a Drink Offering on behalf of all men.

On the afternoon of the first day of the Chag, many Jews visit a body of moving water into which they empty their pockets of crumbs to symbolize that they are “casting their sins in the depths of the sea (Mikhah/Micah 7: 19).” This is referred to as the Tashlic ceremony. It is also customary during the day to engage in Torah study (from the first five books of Moshe), as well as to recite Tehillim/Psalms.

The traditional Chag greeting is: “L’shana tova tikatev (tikatevu in the plural) ve-sechasem l’alter l’chayim tovim.” This means, “May you be inscribed (in the Book of Life) and sealed for a good year, for good life immediately.”

Yom HaKippurim

One month before the most holiest day on the Hebrew calendar arrives, Jewish People throughout the world begin a period of self-examination. During this month, called Elul, special prayers are added to the services and the shofar is sounded each morning in the synagogues. It is a reminder to the Jewish community to prepare themselves for the most awesome Period of the Biblical Festivals.

Of the High Holiday Period, **Yom HaKippurim**, which begins at sundown at the closing of 9 Tishri and lasts until nightfall at the closing of 10 Tishri, is considered to be the most holy of the Festivals. The 25-hour Holiday is commonly referred to as Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, however, in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:27, this most solemn Day is referred to in its plural form – thus, the Day of Atonements. The Day marks the climax of Aseret Yemay Teshuva or the Ten Days of Repentance; otherwise known as the Days of Awe. This 10-day period begins during **Yom T’ruah** and is characterized by individual prayer and deep introspection. When **Yom HaKippurim** arrives, usually in late September or early October, each Jew assembles in his or her

local synagogue, or has journeyed to Eretz Yisra'el, to participate in collective penitence for all of Am Yisra'el.

We can recognize the concept of individual self-examination leading up to collective penitence dating back to the time of Solomon's Temple, around 922 B.C. Rites of purification were performed for the community as a body, yet each Israelite was to regard himself as part of that whole. Although, as recorded in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 16:17, G-d Instructed Cohen haGadol to make atonement for himself, his household and all of Am Yisra'el, in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:26-31, G-d also Commanded as a lasting Ordinance that all of Am Yisra'el afflict their souls, cease all work, and assemble before Him. This enabled everyone, from Cohen haGadol all the way down to the alien living amongst the Israelite community; from the Cohanim to the least of the households within each clan, to observe this solemn Day with reverence and awe; with both an individual and a collective humbleness of heart.

The Days of Awe, reaching its pivotal point during **Yom HaKippurim**, is an excellent time for the Church Body to examine itself. As disciples of Yahu'Shua; having been Grafted into the Commonwealth of Yisra'el, we should seriously reflect upon our individual Spiritual walks. Fasting and getting on our faces before our Almighty G-d to this end is an important part of maturing Spiritually. Wholehearted humility before G-d leads to a deeper understanding of and respect for our Maker: Who He is, and what He Expects from us, and as we show consistency in this type of walk, He Bares His very Heart to us. This G-dly Knowledge helps us to attain personal victories in the troubled areas of our lives, so that we could take our attention off ourselves and our personal problems and place our focus rightfully on His Purposes. **Getting our lives and our priorities in their proper G-dly order, and directing our attention to Him, enables us to become more fruitful; more effective vessels for His Kingdom.**

After each individual within the Church Body has thoroughly searched his or her heart during the Days of Awe, then the Body should assemble church by church, Messianic synagogue by Messianic synagogue, and for small prayer groups meeting in their homes, home by home, during **Yom HaKippurim** to engage in purposeful collective soul searching. This enables each church, Messianic synagogue, and home prayer group to examine itself soundly and to judge its walk accordingly.

Consider this: if we fail to soberly judge ourselves and where we are heading as the Body of Moshiach, then Yahu'Shua is fully prepared to do this Himself. A careful reading of Revelation, Chapters 2-3 should help us appreciate the need for engaging in meaningful group soul searching. In fact, our groups would do well to incorporate these two Chapters as part of our **Yom HaKippurim** Scriptural readings, paying particular attention to what Yahu'Shua has to say regarding the Church in Laodicea. In A.D. 337, the Constantinian church met in Laodicea and officially threw out the Biblical **Sabbath**, and replaced it with Sunday as the holy day of rest and worship.

A brief history is in order here: Constantine, who was the Roman Emperor from A.D. 306 to A.D. 337, decreed that Sunday was to be the official day of rest instead of Saturday. As a reported follower of the cult of Sol Invictus, the "invincible" sun deity considered by Rome to have taken on the attributes of the Persian pseudo god and savior Mithras, Constantine later converted to Christianity on the eve of a battle in A.D. 312. At that time the fabric of Roman society was unraveling, and in an effort to bring unity to his sphere of influence, he blurred the distinction among the competing belief systems of Christianity, Mithraism and Sol Invictus. During this period, Sunday was thought to be the day that the sun occupied the highest place on the ladder of ascent through the seven gates of the Mithraic ladder from Saturn to the sun, thus it was a special day that was revered by many, including Constantine, and some Christians who had been worshiping on Sunday since A.D. 100. **Constantine decreed that Sunday, "the venerable day of the sun," was to be the official day of rest. The decree was written into Roman Civil Law in A.D. 321. The church leaders placed their seal of approval on it at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 337, and in return for their compromise with Biblical Principles, they enjoyed**

prominent positions and prestige that previously had been unimaginable by members of the widely persecuted Church. Prior to this introduction of the traditions of men, the early Church celebrated its holy day on the Biblical Sabbath, which is from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown.

The High Holiday Period is a good time to examine how the Church Body has gotten to where it is. If we take an honest look at history, we will come to understand that the institutionalized Constantinian church, which many of us are members of, is steeped in the pagan traditions of men. Consider this, brethren, Yahu'Shua was not simply speaking out against the blind guides of Judaism when He quoted Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 29:13 to them (Mark 7:6-7). He was speaking Prophetically, addressing both the blind guides of Judaism of His day, and the blind guides of Christianity and Judaism today when He gave His rebuke: *“You have let go of the Commands of G-d and are holding on to the traditions of men. (Mark 7:8)”*

If after shedding Light on the dark areas within us, we then discover that we have committed “chatah” – the Hebrew word for sin, which literally means “missing the mark” – then we must be willing to change that which has unholy roots if we are to be the vibrant Vessel of G-d that we were Created to be. Ask yourself: Why does the church constantly find a need to hold Revivals? One does not revive something that is full of life. A Church Body that is truly flowing with the Living Waters of Moshiach enjoys a continual renewal – it has no need to be revived. Such a Body is in a position to revive others who are dying at the vine. **Yom HaKippurim** is the perfect time to re-align ourselves with G-d's Purposes. It is an excellent time for Spiritual growth – each church, each Messianic synagogue, each home-based prayer group humbly seeking G-dly Direction.

If all of our groups would be faithful to this Divinely Established Time of introspection, the Body of Moshiach as a whole would be able to perceive more clearly the entirety of its Great Commission, which encompasses not only that which Yahu'Shua spelled out in Matte'Yahu/Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15-16, but also that which He lived out. Remember that Moshiach has become a servant of our Jewish brethren: the very People that the Church Body has for the most part neglected to minister to in any meaningful way. **During this period of introspection, a prayerful reading of Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah, Chapters 52, 61 and 62 would help us see how we could better minister to our Jewish brethren, who are in such great need of non-proselytizing love right now. We have the ability to be ambassadors of Moshiach by simply expressing our love and correctly handling and living the Word of Truth.** Remember, brethren, in the name of Jesus and Christianity, many horrible things were perpetrated against our Jewish brethren. Some of the most avid church attendees were among those who ran the ovens during the Holocaust. The Crusades; the Spanish Inquisition; the burning at the stakes; the expulsions, and the forced conversions: these were all done in the name of Jesus Christ and Christianity. These sins were perpetrated by clanging symbols who had no love for our Jewish brethren, and who preached of hell-fire and damnation, all while holding out to G-d's Elect a paganized Jesus that was stripped of His Jewishness.

The truth be told, there is still nothing new under the sun. Today, the well-assimilated Constantinian church is still aligning itself with those who seek to destroy Am Yisra'el; it is still holding out that paganized Jesus, and it is still preaching that hell-fire and damnation message to our supposedly faithless Jewish brethren. Yet, I wonder: How many of us who identify ourselves as Christians, if G-d Called us to do so, would have the faith and fortitude to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish brethren upon those mountains of Y'udah and Shomron in Eretz Yisra'el to rear our families and to encourage His People in the midst of the glut of homicide bombers and other murderers who daily, with glee, perpetrate every unthinkable evil against His Elect? How many of us, instead, are willing to see our Jewish brethren spill their blood on those mountains, while we smugly await to be raptured out of the Tribulation, only to later occupy the Beautiful Land? **How many of us, do you suppose, would even recognize our Jewish Moshiach Who heads up our Church? Would we insist that He remove His talit before He came to worship in our sanctuaries? Would we show up on a Sabbath in our churches, or even in the synagogues, to hear Him preach the Word of our G-d? Would we rebuke Him and ostracize Him for upholding His Father's Law?**

The only thing that places a limit on what G-d Desires to do in the midst of the Body of Moshiach is our half-hearted, careless devotion to His holy Purposes.

ABOUT THE OFFERINGS:

G-d Commanded Yisra'el to offer up both sin and burnt offerings on **Yom HaKippurim**, along with their appropriate grain and drink offerings (B'midbar/Numbers 29:7-11). We have already learned that the burnt offering represents total consecration to G-d of the worshiper, and the sin offering deals with the unintentional sins of the offender.

Another aspect of the sin offerings on this particular Day was the goat of removal, otherwise known as the scapegoat (Vayyiqra/Leviticus: 16:7-22). The elders among the Israelites confessed the sins, and the iniquities – the *tendency* to sin – of Am Yisra'el while laying their hands upon the goat. The goat would then be banished to a solitary place, bearing the sins of G-d's People. This important ritual brought atonement to the entire community. There was also a second goat (Vayyiqra/Leviticus: 16:7-8; 27), which was slaughtered and its blood was brought into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for Am Yisra'el .

The goat of removal, as well as the second goat, are a foreshadowing of two very significant events: The first being how Yahu'Shua has borne the sins of Man; how His cleansing Blood has removed our transgressions, and how this act of obedience has brought Atonement for us before G-d. The second being how, upon Yahu'Shua's Second Coming, even our very *sin nature* will be obliterated (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). This latter event is what will enable us to have perfect and continual communion with G-d, for we know that G-d Intends to Dwell in the midst of Man (Revelation 21:3); yet He and sin cannot commune because there is no fellowship between Light and darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Thus, we see how our Scapegoat, Yahu'Shua, has taken on the sins of the world (Yochan'an/John 1:29); how our Lamb has completely paid our Redemption price, which brought us Atonement; and how through His Sacrifice we will be fully perfected upon His glorious Return. For it is Written: “...*For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of G-d, and are Justified freely by His Grace through the Redemption that came by Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach. G-d Presented Him as a Sacrifice of Atonement through faith in His Blood ... (Romans 3:23-25).*”

HOW YOM HAKIPPURIM IS OBSERVED:

The Divine requirement to afflict one's soul during **Yom HaKippurim** has been widely recognized to mean that a person should deny himself or herself the pleasures and comforts that are typically enjoyed on a daily basis. Food and drink tops the list of items that the Sages have decided would be necessary to abstain from during this period. Other bodily pleasures that are to be avoided during this time are washing or anointing the body, wearing leather shoes, and engaging in marital relations. The idea is to take our focus entirely off ourselves and place it completely on G-d and on the solemnity of the occasion

On **Erev Yom HaKippurim**, or the evening of Yom Kippur, every Jew is required to immerse himself or herself in the mikveh or ritual bath. This is out of respect for the sanctity of the Day and it serves to set one's disposition toward the act of repentance and the seeking out of purification from sin. Confession of one's sins is an overriding theme during this High Holiday. It is interesting to note that the Christian practice of baptism is derived from this ancient Jewish custom of immersing oneself in a mikveh. This is a practice that was observed by Yochan'an the Baptist, who immersed others, including Yahu'Shua, in mikvete.

On the afternoon before the **Yom HaKippurim** fast begins, Jews have a pre-fast meal at least one hour before leaving for the Kol Nidrei service. Although this service is based on B'midbar/Numbers 15:25, which provides for atonement should Am Yisra'el sin by violating G-d's Commandments out of ignorance, Kol Nidrei features a symbolic court, whose prayer leader chants a formula which is said to nullify future vows, and, according to many authorities, repeal vows assumed in the past. There is a pleading for Mercy during this period, and the Kol Nidrei is intensely recited with great fear and trembling. What a sad state of affairs, you may think to yourself.

Indeed it is. Especially considering that the opening declaration, **“We permit prayer with those who are transgressors,”** has its roots in the events that occurred during the forced conversions that the church imposed upon our Jewish brethren living in Spain. **The Spanish Jewry was subjected to harsh persecution in an attempt to coerce them into renouncing Judaism and accepting Christianity in its stead. Many of our Jewish brethren were unable to withstand the cruel treatment, and so they publicly embraced Christianity, but continued to practice Judaism privately and secretly.** These forced converts refrained from assembling for worship with other Jews for fear of being found out, and as such, they violated the assembly requirements of the Biblical Festivals. However, on **Yom HaKippurim**, these persecuted Jews risked their lives to gather in secret with their brethren in order to appear before G-d on this holy Day, which enabled them to plea for Mercy for having transgressed throughout the year. The declaration was inserted for these brethren, who were victims of their horrible circumstances, in order to enable them to come before G-d and worship without having to worry about whether or not they were detracting from the prayer service because their sinful state may have been obvious to others in the assembly. The opening declaration remains to this day because even now, the dirt from living in the Galute (Exile) follows our brethren into their houses of worship.

The Church Body would do well to remember that no amount of wheel spinning is going to open our Jewish brethren's eyes to their genuine Jewish Moshiach. Could someone have forced open your eyes to Moshiach before it was your Appointed time?

We have already learned that Yahu'Shua has not been represented in His proper Jewish context, and that He has been inappropriately associated with centuries of persecution of the Jewish People because of the actions of those who claimed to be Christians. Keeping these matters in mind, if we really trust G-d to Accomplish all that He has set out to do (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 55:9-11); if we believe that He is, indeed, a Covenant G-d (B'reshet/Genesis 17:7; D'varim/Deuteronomy 4:13; 7:9; Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 56:3-7; Yirme'Yahu/Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hoshea 2:16-20) Who Keeps His Irrevocable Promises (Romans 11:29); if we subscribe to Yahu'Shua's statement that no one comes to Him unless the Father Draws him (Yochan'an/John 6:44); if we trust Rav Sha'ul, who tells us that Yisra'el has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in to the Promise (Romans 11:25-27); and if we hold fast to the many Prophecies that speak about our Jewish brethren being Restored (Zekharya/Zechariah 8:18-23; 10:6; Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 35:8-10; 54; 60:10-16; 62:12; Yirme'Yahu/Jeremiah 33:23-26; 50:4-5, 'Amos 9:13-15, etc.) when the Fountain is opened to cleanse them from their sins (Zekharya/Zechariah 3:8-9; 13:1), and Ruach HaKodesh is poured out upon them (Yehezqel/Ezekiel 39:29; Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 32:15), and the Law is Written in their hearts (Yirme'Yahu/Jeremiah 31:33-40), and their eyes are sovereignly Opened to the Moshiach (Zekharya/Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:1), then we should arrive at the realization that we ought to be standing in the gap trying to qualify them before our G-d.

Do you realize that many of our Jewish brethren today are trying to do the very same thing for us? Yahu'Shua has taught us: *“Do not judge, or you too will be Judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be Judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 7:1-2).”*

Now here is some Wisdom from G-d: He has Permitted the authors of the Bible to leave some areas of Scripture deliberately obscure, and has Allowed the separation of the two camps to continue, and this is being done in order to Judge the hearts within both camps. **Are we looking at one another through the eyes of love, or are there boards in our eyes blocking our views? Are we doing all that we could do to responsibly encourage and help qualify each other for the Kingdom of G-d? Christians: While we are basking in the Grace that we are under, have we made ourselves odious to our Jewish brethren, to others, to G-d, by stubbornly adhering to our pagan ways?** To the Jew have we become like Jews (1 Corinthians 9:20)? Remember: he who receives us receives Moshiach, and he who receives Moshiach receives the One Who Sent Him (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 10:40)."

During the Kol Nidrei service, why not pray on behalf our Jewish brethren, that G-d would Grant them safe passage as He continues to Re-Gather them from the Galute in order to Plant them in their Promised Land? Why not pray for Divine Protection over those brethren who are already standing on their Biblical Inheritance in spite of a disapproving world? Why not seek Mercy on their behalf as they attend their Kol Nidrei services on this holy Day? Why not seek Mercy for the church by repenting on her behalf for these horrible forced conversions that soil our white robes?

There are a total of five services throughout **Yom HaKippurim**. Special prayers are recited from the Machzor prayer book. Also, the Book of Yohan/Jonah is read. Tehillim/Psalms 126 is recited many times. Psalm 126 is a Passage that Christians might want to take up on behalf of our Jewish brethren on this Day.

Many Jews wear sneakers or soft slippers throughout the Day, even while attending the synagogue services, because they consider leather shoes to be a luxury, which is most inappropriate on The Day of Affliction. In traditional synagogues, many Jews wear white gowns called "kittels" as a symbol of purity. This practice stems from Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 1:18, which they understand to mean: *"Though your sins be as [red as] scarlet [hence, real and incontestable], they shall be as white as snow (after repentance)."*

During this 25-hour Sabbath, Jews throughout the world do not work or conduct any manner of business. This enables them to tune out the world and to focus on G-d and His Requirements for this Day. Thus, a break-the-fast meal has already been prepared in advance to be served at the end of the synagogue services. The festive meal features herring and other salty fish to help induce thirst, and all types of delicious kugels, fruits, and honey-laden pastries. Our Jewish brethren will tell you in no uncertain terms that it is a mitzvah to enjoy these Holiday treats!

Of the five synagogue services; the final one is the Ne'ila, or the "closing" of the Gates of Mercy. At the time this service is taking place, it is said that the Divine Decree is about to be Sealed; thus, prayers are fervently offered up in hopes of reinforcing Divine Mercy. The service concludes with a shofar blast, which marks the end of **Yom HaKippurim**. This blast is sounded for many reasons, including that it serves as an announcement of Am Yisra'el's victory over the Accuser of the brethren, haSatan.

After the blast is sounded, everyone cries out, "L'shanah ha-ba'ah bi-Yerushalayim!" or "Next year in Jerusalem!" Of course, that is unless they are already dwelling in Tziyon. Then their declaration is: "L'shanah ha-ba'ah bi-Yerushalayim ha-benuyah!" or "Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem (a forward-looking reference to the New Jerusalem)!"

There is a Prophecy that speaks of the notzreem crying out on mount Efrayim, "Arise, let us go up to Tziyon to the L-rd our G-d (Yirme'Yahu/Jeremiah 31:6)." The ancient Biblical Hebrew word for watchmen is "notzreem;" yet today, modern Hebrew uses the word "shomer." What then has Notzreem come to mean in modern Hebrew tongue? Christians!

.....Well, Christians.....What are we waiting for?.....Ha shanah *ha-zote* bi-Yerushalayim et-haKhadasha! *This year in the New Jerusalem!*

Chag HaSukkot

No sooner is **Yom HaKippurim** over, Jews throughout the Diaspora (their Dispersion throughout the nations) and in the Promised Land begin erecting makeshift booths in their yards, on their trellises, behind their synagogues, and even outside their Israeli hotels. This mitzvah is performed in preparation for the fall Holiday of Sukkot.

Vayyiqra/Leviticus tells us that on the 15th day of the seventh month (Tishri) the L-rd's **Sukkot** begins and lasts for seven days. The first day is set aside as an assembly day. No regular work is to be done on that day. Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:41-42 says that all native-born Israelites are to live in booths (temporary dwellings) during this seven-day Chag. The Chag and its Stipulations are a lasting Ordinance

D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:13-15 explains that this is an agricultural Festival, which is celebrated as one of the three Pilgrim Festivals. The Pilgrim Festivals comprise: **Chag HaMatzote** (a Feast within the Passover Season), **Chag HaShavuot** (also known as Pentecost) and **Chag HaSukkot**, or **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**, **The Feast of Weeks** and **The Feast of Booths**, respectively. During these Pilgrim Festivals, called "Shalosh Regalim" or the "Three Foot (Pilgrim) Festivals," Jews from Yisra'el and the nearby countries would come by foot to Yerushalayim to visit the Temple and to offer up sacrifices, as they were instructed to do in Sh'mot/Exodus 23:14-17 and D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:16.

Chag HaSukkot is notably the seventh Festival, celebrated in the seventh month; for seven days. The number seven is Biblically significant, as it speaks of a conclusion of some event. When you see three sevens in a row, G-d is Making a Statement. This Festival is referred to as **Chag HaAhsif**, or **The Feast of Ingathering**. Perhaps during this particular Festival Period we will witness the great Harvest at the end of the age, when sin is arrested, the righteous are rewarded, and G-d's Kingdom is firmly Established here on earth (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 13:39; Revelation 14:14-20).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OFFERINGS:

B'midbar/Numbers 29:12-40 describes the various offerings that were to be presented to the L-rd during this seven-day period. These offerings comprised the following: burnt, sin, drink, grain, fellowship, and freewill. Vows were also made during this time.

As previously discussed, the **burnt offering** represented absolute consecration to G-d. **Yahu'Shua**, our Unblemished Lamb (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Kefa/1 Peter 2:22), was fully consecrated to G-d and His Purposes, and thus became our ultimate **Burnt Offering**.

The **sin offering**, we have learned, dealt with sin against G-d. **Yahu'Shua**, our perfect High Priest, offered Himself up to the Father as the ultimate **Sin Offering**, which brought us Atonement for our sins.

The **drink offering** consisted of fermented wine (Sh'mot/Exodus 29:40-41; B'midbar/Numbers 28:7), and for this particular Chag, it was to accompany the burnt offering that comprised unblemished bullocks, rams, and lambs (B'midbar/Numbers 29:13-38). **Because of Yahu'Shua's unwavering obedience, He was able to pour out His precious Blood for many (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 26:27) as a Drink Offering before the Father. Yahu'Shua**

Prophesied that He would become the Ultimate Drink Offering in Yochanan/John 6:54, when He declared that whoever drinks His Blood would obtain eternal life. Tehillim/Psalms 22:14 also alludes to this event. It is interesting to note that the first mention of a drink offering in the Bible is found in B'reshet/Genesis 35:9-15. The occasion for this offering was the Divine Confirmation of Ya'qov's name change to Yisra'el, recorded in Verse 9. Here, G-d Reaffirmed the Covenant Promises to his descendants, Am Yisra'el. In response to this Reaffirmation, Ya'qov poured out a drink offering on an altar along with some oil, which is representative of Ruach HaKodesh. He named the place Beit El/Bethel, which means House of G-d, because G-d had Talked with him there. This event foreshadowed the Prophecies in Yehezqel/Ezekiel 39:27-29 and Zekharya/Zechariah 12:10-13:1-9, which promise that after G-d Re-gathers our Jewish brethren from the nations and Returns them to Eretz Yisra'el, that He will Pour out a Spirit of grace and supplication upon them. At this time, G-d will sovereignly Open their eyes as to the identity of the Moshiach. Yahu'Shua's Blood – the Fountain – will then be opened and it will Purify completely the Jewish Remnant in Yerushalayim, and the House of David, which would include the Church.

The **grain offering**, previously discussed, is also known as the meal offering or gift offering, and was to be offered up as a pleasing aroma to the L-rd. It was also Accepted by the L-rd as a grain offering of firstfruits, but in this case was not to be offered up as a pleasing aroma to Him. The various types of grain offerings did not involve blood, but they accompanied other offerings that did require blood. Grain offerings were made from items that were produced by Man's toil: flour and oil. These offerings also included salt, which, as a preservative, spoke of G-d's Covenant Promises, and incense, which represented the worshiper's prayers ascending to heaven. Yeast, representing sin, and honey, representing worldly delights, were prohibited ingredients in grain offerings. **Grain offerings spoke of consecration of Man's work to the service of G-d.** We can see a picture of Yahu'Shua in the grain offering of firstfruits: Having rejected sin and worldliness, Yahu'Shua fully consecrated Himself to His Father's service, and as such, toiled incessantly on behalf of the Kingdom. As noted in the explanation of the drink offering above, Yahu'Shua poured out His Blood unto death to become the ultimate Drink Offering on our behalf, and this Act of obedience enabled Him to Appear before His disciples as flesh and bone (Luke 24:39) prior to His Ascension, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of G-d (1 Corinthians 15:50). **As G-d Resurrected His altogether faithful Son, Yahu'Shua became for us a Grain Offering of Firstfruits from among the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20-23), for the grave could not hold Him (Tehillim/Psalms 16:10; Acts 29-32). Although the death of this Ultimate Grain Offering of Firstfruits was not at all a pleasing aroma to the Father, it fulfilled a necessary precondition for the Pouring Out of Ruach HaKodesh.** That is because when Yahu'Shua Ascended to heaven, He was Exalted to His Father's right Hand, where He was then Given, on behalf of Jew and Gentile alike, the Promised Ruach HaKodesh, which He now Pours out upon all who turn from their sins and are baptized in His Name (Acts 2:33-36).

The **fellowship offering**, described in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 3 and 7:11-21, was also known as the "peace" offering or "thank" offering. Here, a sacrifice was made in fulfillment of a vow, or in gratitude for G-d's Providence. A vow would denote a solemn promise to consecrate something to G-d or do something in His service or in His Honor. **Unlike the burnt offering, which was totally consumed by G-d, the fellowship offering enabled the individual to eat a portion of the sacrifice. Hence, the worshiper supped with, or communed with, G-d. This was the only offering in which the worshiper was permitted to share the sacrifice with G-d.** Yahu'Shua Prophesied that He would become the Ultimate **Fellowship Offering** in Yochan'an/John 6:53, when He declared that a person would have to eat of His flesh in order to have eternal life. That He became our Fellowship Offering enables us to be at peace with our Creator, and allows us to even sup with Him. The freewill offering was included in the category of fellowship offerings. This was an approved offering that an Israelite brought to G-d because his heart was moved to do so.

HOW THE CHAG RELATES TO A PERSON GROWING IN G-D'S PURPOSE:

Booths were designed to be temporary dwellings that the Israelites would take with them throughout their wilderness wanderings. As we reflect upon the various phases of Am Yisra'el's journey, we can begin to see our own personal Spiritual journeys. The way G-d Interacts with Am Yisra'el can be compared to how He Interacts with us in our individual lives. Let us compare the journeys:

Am Yisra'el's Bondage: When the Israelites settled in Goshen, Mizrayim/Egypt, they initially prospered quite well because of the favor Yosef/Joseph had found with the Pharaoh. When a new Pharaoh took over, however, Am Yisra'el was subjected to cruel bondage. Finding the situation worsening, and finally hopeless, these despairing Israelites cried out to G-d, their Redeemer, for Deliverance. G-d Heard their cries, and in fact had already Prepared a remedy for the situation – a deliverer named Moshe. **G-d, in all His Wisdom and Forethought, Knew before Am Yisra'el even realized it that their situation would become so grave that they would need Deliverance.**

Our Bondage: We, as individuals, also settle into what we believe are our places in this world, and for a while we prosper, depending upon our own efforts. Eventually, however, the snares of sin begin entangling us, and we find that lawlessness is making its way through the members of our bodies and wearing us down. We keep pressing in, though, thinking that we will somehow work our way through this misfortunate situation that we have found ourselves in. In spite of our best efforts, however, we continue to sink deeper into the mire. The situation becomes grave when we realize that we have actually become slaves to the sins that are now mastering us. We are captives in seemingly hopeless bondage. Much like the Jews of Goshen, we come to realize that we are incapable of delivering ourselves from the impossible situation, so we begin to cry out, and our cries reach the ears of G-d, our Redeemer. **In all of His great Wisdom and Forethought, we find that He has already Prepared His Perfect Remedy for our situation, His only Son, Yahu'Shua, in Whom He Declared He is well Pleased (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).** Our Merciful Father Discerned our needs long before our cries even reached His Ears.

Am Yisra'el's Deliverance: Sh'mot/Exodus, Chapter 12 describes Am Yisra'el's deliverance from Her bondage in Mizrayim: **Moshe instructed the Jewish community of Goshen to slaughter their Pascal lambs and to put the blood on the lintels and doorposts of their dwellings so that the Angel of Death that G-d would Send would pass over their homes and visit the Egyptians' homes instead.** Thus, the Passover lamb became an integral element for the deliverance of these Jews from Egyptian bondage; indeed from the very throes of death. These Israelites obeyed Moshe's instructions and were thus delivered out of their bondage and spared from death.

Our Deliverance: In like manner, G-d Deemed that Yahu'Shua would become for us the Unblemished Passover Lamb and that through His Selfless Sacrifice; His Atoning Blood would become an imperative part of the Deliverance and Redemptive Processes in the history of Mankind. This was foretold in the following Prophetic Hebrew Scriptures: B'eresheet/Genesis 22:12; 49:10-11; Sh'mot/Exodus 12:46; 16:4; B'midbar/Numbers 21:8-9; Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 7:14; 9:5-6; 40:3-5; 42:1-9; 53; 61:1-2; 63:1-6; Yirme'Yahu/Jeremiah 9:13; 31:5; Yehezqel/Ezekiel 34:23; Hoshea/Hosea 11:1; 'Amos 8:9; Zekharya/Zechariah 9:9; 10:3-4; 11:12-13; 12:10-12; 13:1&7; 14:3-5; Mikha/Mica 4:7; 5:1-3; Mal'akhi/Malachi 3:1 Tehillim/Psalms 2:7-12; 16:8-11; 22; 27:12; 35:11-12; 41:10; 69:9-10, 22, 26-27; 78:1-2; 80:16-18; 89:35-38; 110:1-4; 118:22-26; Daniyyel/Daniel 7:13-14; 9:25-26 (A cautionary note is in order here: There are English translations of the Tenach/Hebrew Scriptures – the so-called old Testament – where inappropriate omissions have been made. For example, in my particular translation, which is accompanied by the Hebrew text, in Psalm 80, the very important word "son" has been omitted from the English and replaced with the word "branch," even though the Hebrew for this word cannot be

mistaken for any other word; most especially when this same Tenach has been internally crossed-checked by way an examination of other Scriptures within it that use the same Hebrew word in similar applications. For the sake of fairness and accuracy, there are also areas within translations of the Greek Scriptures – the so-called new Testament – where inappropriate omissions have been made. Although it is true that there are perplexing areas of Scripture whereby our Jewish and Christian Bible translators must make judgment calls regarding how the original texts should be translated, it is a great injustice to G-d's Word, His Reality and His Program when omissions are made for the sake of promoting hidden agendas. Both our Jewish and Christian scholars, and our Spiritual guides, are guilty of this serious offence. Earnest Jewish disciples of G-d, and Christian disciples of G-d and Yahu'Shua, should take this inescapable and unfortunate fact into account as we study G-d's Word and seek out His Truth, for each one of us, individually, will stand before our G-d of Truth and give an account as to the personal judgment calls we have made during our Spiritual pilgrimage here on earth. We therefore should seriously consider what Spiritual authorities we are submitting ourselves to, who we are studying under, what doctrinal stances we are taking, why we are taking them, and where we are worshipping.). Since the wages of sin are death, and we have all fallen short of the Glory of G-d, we sinners have been Instructed through G-d's Word to apply the Blood from His Lamb (Mark 14:24; Yochan'an/John 1:36; 6:53-54; Romans 3:24-25; Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10) to the doorposts and lintels of our hearts. If we are obedient to the instructions in G-d's Word, we will be Delivered out of our bondage; escape the sting of death, and avert eternal separation from G-d (Yochan'an/John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 Kefa/1Peter 5:8-10).

The Stronghold from Yisra'el Captors Broken: Sh'mot/Exodus 14:13-31 describes the crossing of Yom Suf/the Red Sea. [This sea was the final barrier between Am Yisra'el and her former Egyptian captors, and between bondage and freedom.](#) Am Yisra'el trusted G-d and thus, under Moshe's guidance, passed safely through the Red Sea while her enemies plunged to their own death in this same body of water. Moshe declared to Am Yisra'el that she would never see her captors again.

The Stronghold from Our Captors Broken: [The scene of Am Yisra'el crossing the Red Sea can be compared to individuals experiencing water baptism or immersion in a mikveh, which Rav Sha'ul tells in Acts 19:4 is a baptism of repentance.](#) Rav Sha'ul explains in Romans 6 that we are symbolically burying our old fleshly pursuits and are being raised up as instruments of righteousness as we undergo baptism/immersion. The stronghold our captors – in this case, sin – once had on us is thus severed, and we are able to leave behind our bondage so that we could freely pursue righteousness.

G-d's Covenant with Am Yisra'el at Sinai: At Har Sinai/Mount Sinai, the Israelites encountered G-d close-up. [He Sealed a Covenant with them at this place, and Gave them the Ten Commandments.](#) Am Yisra'el, from that point forward, had contractual requirements and responsibilities to uphold. This Covenant is still effective today.

Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach's Covenant with the Church Body: Yochan'an 16:13-14 explains that G-d Sent Ruach HaKodesh to bring Glory to Yahu'Shua by revealing the Truth about Him to us. [As we accept this Truth and are baptized in Ruach HaKodesh, we enter into a Covenant relationship with Yahu'Shua \(Acts 2:1-12; Luke 22:20\).](#) As a result, Ruach HaKodesh teaches us about our own contractual requirements and responsibilities that we must uphold while we walk out our lives as disciples of HaMoshiach, Who, in turn, teaches us about the very Heart of G-d.

Yisra'el's Testing in the Wilderness: Am Yisra'el wandered through the wilderness with their guides Moshe and Aharon for 40 years. During this time, G-d was Disciplining and Testing His People so that they could collectively become a powerful Vessel of righteousness in His Hand before the pagan nations in their midst. There was continual grumbling and rebellion in the camp, however. B'midbar/Numbers 14 describes Am Yisra'el's rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. At this point in Am Yisra'el's wilderness wanderings, G-d had Intended to Lead them into the Promised Land so that He could Advance His Purposes. Am Yisra'el, however, responded in unbelief by choosing to ignore Yehoshua/Joshua and Calev's/Caleb's good report about the Promised Land, which the pair had spied out with some other Israelites. This faithlessness and rebellion

Angered G-d and He Decided that all of these stiff-necked Israelites, except Calev and Yehoshua who remained faithful to Him, would perish in the wilderness. This caused Am Yisra'el to make a last-ditch effort to enter the Promised Land in their own strength, which proved unfruitful because G-d was not in their endeavor. [It became clear that G-d was not going to Permit the Israelites to enter into His Purposes through unbelief, disobedience and fleshly pursuits.](#) All of those among Am Yisra'el who were disobedient and unfaithful to Him, indeed, died in the wilderness.

[Our Testing in the Wilderness:](#) [We, too, have our own wilderness wanderings where G-d Disciplines and Tests us.](#) During these wanderings, G-d Intends for us to work through our flesh issues so that we could emerge as vessels of His righteousness in a polluted world. If we permit it, Yahu'Shua and Ruach HaKodesh (The Holy Spirit) will guide us along the way and successfully lead us into G-d's Purposes. Some are stiff-necked right from the start of this journey, however, and they refuse to allow G-d to Prune them of the things within them that Displease Him. They rebel and their wills constantly clash with G-d's Will. Yahu'Shua and Ruach HaKodesh try to work with them, but they will have none of it. What is more, they ignore G-d's Discipline and Instruction, and continue to stubbornly pursue their own program, causing trouble for themselves and for others around them, until they perish in this wilderness. Others along this journey decide to go only so far with our guides because they believe they know a better way to G-d's Purposes. These people pick and choose when they will listen to Yahu'Shua and Ruach HaKodesh, and so they never mature Spiritually. They continue to grope about in this wilderness, fooling themselves and others into believing that they are walking in G-d's Purpose. They will do this until they perish; along with those who follow them. There are but a few, truly a few, however, who listen intently to our guides and who gladly submit to G-dly Discipline and Instruction. They faithfully and humbly allow themselves to be Pruned of that which is Displeasing to G-d, even when it is unpopular to do so or when it seemingly hurts. These are the ones who begin to Spiritually mature during these wanderings, and as such, Yahu'Shua is able to equip them to enter into G-d's Purposes. For this very reason, Rav Sha'ul teaches us to crucify our flesh (Romans 6:6) and become slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:18).

[Yisra'el Enters into the Promised Land:](#)

G-d Replaced that faithless generation of Israelites that died in the wilderness with a new generation of Jews. This new generation was faithful, and they were led by Yehoshua and his assistant, Calev, into the Promised Land. There was no room for disobedience. There was no picking and choosing what one wished to do or not do. Neither was there any time to pursue one's own program. [This generation pressed on toward the G-dly goal that was placed before them in the Promised Land. Along the way, they made a few mistakes, but their hearts were right and so G-d was with them.](#) They were obedient and held each other to G-dly accountability, and so this generation of Jews became effective vessels in G-d's Redemptive Program.

[The Faithful Enter into Ministry:](#) [Those of us who proved ourselves faithful during the wilderness wanderings are led by Yahu'Shua and Ruach HaKodesh into G-d's Purposes. As we continue in our faithfulness and obedience, we grow in Spiritual maturity. We grow because our focus is no longer on ourselves, but rather on G-d, and our priorities are, thus, correctly placed.](#) The more we give ourselves over to this maturation process, the more we learn about G-d's Will and His Ways. As we grow in our understanding of Him, we learn to see things through His Eyes. As our hearts are still before Him, He Shares the burdens of His Own Heart with us. With this type of communion, we are able to grow in G-dly Knowledge, Wisdom, and Discernment, and as we exercise these Gifts, our eyes are Opened to many things that we could not perceive before because of our Spiritual immaturity. We find that there really is so much more to learn; that some things that we were so sure about are just not G-d's Reality. We become Equipped to perceive that which is superficial or counterfeit from that which is genuine; that which is Man's agenda from that which is G-d's Agenda, and we resultantly are able to make correct judgments and take appropriate G-dly actions concerning

these things (Hebrews 5:13-14). Here is where a real Separation takes place, where we lose our popularity with the world, and even with those we love who have the world still in them, because we truly have become Am Segula – a Peculiar People. This is the place we need to be in order to become truly fruitful vessels in G-d's Redemptive Plan.

The Spiritual journey to effectiveness in G-d's Redemptive Plan, then, is deliverance from bondage, the breaking down of strongholds, accepting our Covenant responsibilities, submitting to a thorough Pruning of the flesh, entering into G-d's Purposes and learning about and executing His Will. It is a rigorous journey that demands honest self-examination and wholehearted discipline. There is simply no short cut, quick-fix way into G-d's Program.

Rav Sha'ul, writing from prison where he was in chains for righteousness sake, encourages us with these words in Philippians 3:12-14: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the Goal to win the Prize for which G-d has Called me heavenward in Yahu'Shua HaMoshiach."

HOW CHAG HASUKKOT FITS INTO G-D'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN:

'Amos 9 and Zekharya/Zechariah 14 provide a picture of the ultimate **Chag HaSukkot**. It is in these Passages that we see the Ingathering in its finest hour. 'Amos 9 tells us that G-d will Cleanse Yisra'el from all of the unfaithful. He Promises to Restore David's fallen sukka (tabernacle) and to Rebuild it the way it use to be. During this time, our Exiled Jewish brethren will be brought back to the Promised Land and Tziyon will be Rebuilt. We see this Prophecy unfolding even today, with the Remnant being Re-gathered, the Land being Restored, and Tziyon being Rebuilt. Tehillim/Psalms 102:16 contains a promise that when the L-rd Rebuilds Tziyon, He will return in His Glory.

The reference to David's fallen sukka includes Am Yisra'el (2 Sh'mu'el/2 Samuel 7:10-16). The Jewish State is in a sorry state of affairs. Today, we can see how the world is seeking to make Yisra'el just like the nations, and many Jews within the Promised Land are only too happy to go along with this humanistic plan. Yet, G-d Declared that Yisra'el will be a holy nation, Set Apart from the other nations. Today, He is Re-Gathering His People and Planting them in their Biblical Inheritance. He has Dropped His holy Plumb Line in their midst and is Separating the unfaithful from those who remain steadfast in His Purposes. At this time, G-d is causing His People to pass under His Rod. Those faithful Jewish brethren – the "Gush Emunim" – who are upholding His Will and standing on His Promises in spite of the nations are undergoing a baptism of fire and are being Circumcised in their hearts. Those Jews who are trusting in the nations and in their own strength, however, are being cut down by the sword ('Amos 9:10). It is important to note here, however, that not every Jew who is cut down by the sword is unfaithful, for it rains on the just as well as the unjust. Emerging out of the modern Jewish State is the genuine Jewish Remnant with which G-d Will Rebuild David's fallen sukka.

The reference to David's fallen sukka includes the Church (Acts 15:14-18). Indeed, today the Constantinian church is in a sorry state of affairs. G-d's holy Plumb Line has been dropped within the Body of Moshiach, Separating those who have been straddling the fence from those who are pressing into G-d's Redemptive Plan; those who are embracing the world from those who are aligning themselves with G-d's Covenant and His Covenant People. Those disciples of Yahu'Shua who have bound themselves to the L-rd, keeping His **Sabbath** without desecrating it, and holding fast to His Covenant (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 56:6-8), are experiencing a distancing from the Constantinian church. Like the five wise virgins who remain in a state of readiness for

when the Bridegroom Comes (Matte'Yahu/Matthew 25:1-12), these bond-servants are keeping their lamps trimmed and continuously checking to ensure that they have enough oil to keep their flames consistently burning until the Wedding Banquet. In contrast, like the foolish virgins who neither see the need to trim their lamps nor check their oil, and, instead allow their flames to burn wildly, and in so doing spend their fuel, those who follow Yahu'Shua with half-hearted devotion by adhering to the doctrines of men remain unaware that their Spiritual growth has been hindered because they are keeping fellowship in extra-Biblical churches that are dying at the vine. **Emerging out of the institutionalized Constantinian church is the genuine Church Body with which G-d Will Rebuild David's fallen sukka.**

Out of all of this Shaking and Sifting, then, we are witnessing G-d Restoring His two Vessels – Yisra'el and the Church. Zekharya/Zechariah speaks Prophetically of a day when G-d's Spirit will be Poured out upon the House of David and the Inhabitants of Yerushalayim (12:10). This will be a time of thorough cleansing of both Vessels (13:1); when the Restoration Process is completed.

Sometime during this period the nations will gather against Yerushalayim and will attack Her. Today, we see such posturing taking place as Man seeks to manufacture peace in the Middle East at Yisra'el's expense. Those from among the nations who survive the resulting Judgment from this attack upon G-d's People will be Required to go up to Yerushalayim – the City of Festivals (Yesha'Yahu/Isaiah 33:20) – year after year to observe non other than **Chag HaSukkot** (Zekharya/Zechariah 14:16-19).

HOW THIS CHAG IS CELEBRATED:

This is a very joyous Chag and it is especially fun for the children, as there are many hands-on activities that they can participate in. There is an abundance of food served during this festive period, and usually guests are received under each family's sukka on each of the days of the Chag.

As we have learned, it is a Requirement for native born Israelis to build sukkot for this Festival. Jews throughout the world today, and even a few Christians, also build these temporary booths during the High Holiday Period. Typical sukkot are constructed of loosely assembled walls made from wood panels or canvas. Their walls are supported with posts. Their roofs usually consist of palm branches, shrubs, corn stalks, straw or wooden slats. Although the original sukkot during Am Yisrael's wilderness wanderings most assuredly had fully covered roofs, the rabbis have decreed that modern sukkot roof coverings are to be dense enough to provide more shade than sunlight inside; yet not so dense that the stars are not visible from inside the sukka at night. There are many homemade decorations that are placed throughout the sukka, as well as fruits and flowers. Families eat as many meals as they can under their sukkot during this time. Many also sleep inside them, which is what G-d Instructed the native born Israelites to do so that they would recall how G-d Delivered them from Egyptian bondage.

Our Jewish brethren also assemble, or buy pre-assembled, Lulav Bouquets. This bouquet contains the four plant species that are considered the primary symbols of the Holiday. The species are the etrog or citron; the lulav or the palm branch; hadas or myrtle, and arava or willow. Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:40 instructs: *“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of the tree hadar, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick leaved trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the L-rd your G-d seven days.”* Once the bouquet is assembled and is ready for use, the citron is held in the left hand and the other three species are held in the right hand, and after a blessing is pronounced over them, they are waved before the L-rd as a wave offering. The practice of waving dates back to the days of the Temple when sacrifices were brought to the altar. In synagogues today, congregants parade around with their Lulav Bouquets while their cantors sing a prayer with the refrain “Hosha na,” which means “Oh [G-d], please save us [in our Exile and from those who would

despoil and desecrate the site of the holy Temple].”

The seventh and final day of **Chag HaSukkot** is called “Hoshanna Raba,” meaning “Great Hoshanna.” This is the last day the bouquets are used. Many Sephardic Jews stay awake throughout the night studying Scripture, especially Psalms. Some synagogues sound the shofareem throughout the night.

Yom HaSemini Atzeret

The one-day Holiday directly after **Chag HaSukkot** is **Yom HaShemini Atzeret**, or **The Eighth Day Assembly**. It is Mandated in Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:36, which states: “...*On the eighth day shall be a holy gathering to you; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the L-rd; it is a solemn assembly; and you shall do no servile work.*” This was designed to be the closing assembly to the High Holiday Period.

The next day is Simchat Torah, which is a Jewish holiday; not a Biblically mandated Feast. This is a celebration of the completion of the annual cycle of Torah readings (the first five Books of Moshe). There is much celebration during this holiday, with Jews dancing with Torah scrolls in the synagogues, and in Yerushalayim, at the Kotel: an open-air synagogue where the ruins of Solomon’s Temple remain. There is dancing in the streets under talits (prayer shawls), and special foods and sweet wine are enjoyed by all.

CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER:

After discussing the Levitical Festivals in some detail, Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:37 recaps with: “*These are the Feasts of the L-rd...*” Another Hebrew rendering of this same Verse is: “*These are the Appointed Seasons of the L-rd...*” The Hebrew word used in this Verse for Feasts, or Appointed Seasons, is **מועדי** , which is pronounced: moe-a-dee.

A corresponding word, **מועדים** , is pronounced: moe-a-deem. This word is found in B’resheet/Genesis 1:14, and is translated in the English simply as “seasons.”

If we understand that G-d’s Feasts are fixed by the seasons, it becomes evident that in the beginning of His Creation, in one sweeping Act, He Appointed His Festivals even as He Established the seasons to fix them. Thus, even as the foundations of the earth were being Laid, G-d was Setting the foundation for the Redemption of Man. What is more, our Prophecies bear out that these Feasts will endure even when Man’s Redemption is complete and he is fully Reconciled to G-d, Who will again Dwell in his midst.

Revelation 22:11-12 admonishes: “...*Let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.*”

Will we be Found to be serving G-d as Cain did or as Abel did?

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