

Day of Atonement
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
October 6, 2003

During our Spring Holy Days a few years ago, I was asked if we could spend a little time comparing our beliefs to the current Jewish beliefs. As the basis for a comparison, I am using a book named *The Jewish Primer*.

The Jewish Primer is a book published under the name of Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Himelstein. It uses a question and answer format to address basic Jewish theology, holy days, dietary laws, business and social matters and more. I have had my copy for over 10 years and use it often for Bible Study material. I have also compared it with other sources and find it quite consistent.

Here are a few findings about the Day of Atonement, which, of course, the Jews refer to as Yom Kippur:

- There are 6 fast days in the Jewish calendar.
- The fast days have one common aim: to bring people to introspection and to repentance. Without this, the fast has not achieved its purpose.
- Yom Kippur is the only Torah-decreed fast day; the Sages in memory of specific historic events instituted all the others.
- Yom Kippur is the day upon which the fate of the entire world fate is decreed for the coming year.
- By Jewish law, every adult, both male (13 and older) and female (12 and older) is required to fast. Where there are medical contraindications, eating may be permitted. Understandably, Yom Kippur, as the only fast day ordained by the Torah, is the one where there is the least leniency in this regard. Nevertheless, where a person's health may be in jeopardy if he or she fasts, the person may be permitted to eat. Such a decision should only be made after consultation with one's rabbi and physician.
- On Yom Kippur ... there are five prohibitions: 1. Eating and drinking; 2. Applying lotions to the body; 3. Washing (except for the minimum needed by Jewish law, as when one wakes and after going to the bathroom; 4. wearing shoes that contain leather; and 5. sexual relations.
 - **Matthew 6**
 - 16 "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
 - 17 "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,
 - 18 "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
- Yom Kippur, the last of the Ten Days of Repentance that begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, is the most solemn day of the Jewish year. It is on this day that every human being is judged and his or her fate decreed. As the day on which we are all judged, it is a time for prayer and repentance. In regard to Yom Kippur, the Torah states, "On the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict

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your souls” (Lev. 16.29). This “affliction,” as explained by the Talmud, consists of five prohibitions, one of these being to fast. The fast begins just before sunset on the day before Yom Kippur, and extends to nightfall on the night following Yom Kippur, for a total of about 25 hours. Yom Kippur is so much part of Jewish life that even avowedly non-religious Jews often fast and consider it as a day of introspection.

- The Hebrew word translated “afflict” is Strong’s 6031 (anah (aw-naw) – abase self, humble self, hurt)
 - Hebrew Lexicon = be occupied by or concerned with; be bowed down, afflicted, humble oneself in fasting

- **Ezra 8**

- 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble (6031) ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.
- 22 For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."
- 23 So we fasted (6684 – *Tsuwm (tsoom)* – to cover one’s mouth; to fast) and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

- **Daniel 10**

- 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.
- 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.
- 4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris,
- 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!
- 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.
- 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great

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terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

- 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.
- 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.
- 10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.
- 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.
- 12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble (6031) yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

- **Isaiah 58**

- 3 'Why have we fasted (6684),' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls (6031), and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast (6685 from 6684) you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers.
- 4 Indeed you fast (6684) for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast (6685) as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high.
- 5 Is it a fast (6685) that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict (6031) his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD?
- 6 "Is this not the fast (6685) that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?
- 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast

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out; When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

The Talmud

- In addition to The Torah, the Five Books of Moses, an oral law was given as well, which was handed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next, each father teaching his children. There are numerous verses in the Torah, which command the Jew to do certain things or refrain from doing others, but with no explanation of what is involved. For example, one is not permitted to “work” on the Sabbath. What is considered “work”? ...
 - **1 Corinthians 6**
 - 12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
 - **1 Corinthians 10**
 - 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.
- At first, the laws that were handed down were clearly defined. Later, over the course of centuries, doubts began to arise as to what the exact tradition had been. Furthermore, as different rabbis applied the rules of deduction, they might come up with different rulings. And all of these traditions and rulings and debates were handed down orally.
- Eventually, though, the amount of material became immense and various rabbis began writing down all that they had heard orally. This was done with great reluctance, because the oral law was meant to be exactly that. In fact, the rabbis consider the day when permission was given to commit the oral law to writing as one to be commemorated by mourning.
- In any event, various rabbis made their own collections and as a result different versions of the oral law came into existence. Rabbi Judah the Patriarch (2nd century C.E.) collected all the different versions, edited and collated them and arranged them into six sections, known as Orders. This collection was known as the Mishnah, a word that may be translated as “learning,” or “repetition,” in that it reviews all the laws of the Torah. This work was completed about 200 C.E.
- People began studying the Mishnah and made various deductions of its meaning. History repeated itself, and the Talmud was committed to writing, which consisted of the Mishnah, and, following each individual paragraph of the Mishnah, a kind of shorthand transcription of the discussions regarding that particular paragraph. The record of the different comments on the Mishnah was referred to as the Gemara, “the conclusion” ...
- There are two Talmuds, the Jerusalem Talmud, completed in about 400 C.E. in the Land of Israel, and the Babylonian Talmud, completed in Babylon in about 500 C.E.

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- *Deuteronomy 4*
 - 2 "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.
- *Deuteronomy 12*
 - 32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.
- The Torah is read at the afternoon service on Yom Kippur.
- Most Torah readings are in the morning service. The Yom Kippur reading, though, has a very specific message. The reading, from Leviticus 18, describes the different prohibitions in regard to sexual relations, such as incest, adultery and homosexuality. We are told that this passage was chosen deliberately for the Torah reading at this time because of the vital importance of the message and the fact the most people are in the synagogue to hear the reading. The *haftarah* – the prophetic reading which follows the Torah reading – is the Book of Jonah. This reading is singularly appropriate, relating how the entire city of Ninevah had been under threat of destruction by God because of its evil ways, and how everyone from the king down repented, as a result of which the city was saved. The message, of course, is that full repentance brings salvation.
- The word *ne'ilah* means “sealing” or “concluding,” and refers to the last prayer service of Yom Kippur, as the day is drawing to a close. This is the fifth prayer service of Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur, in fact, is the only day of the entire year in which there is a fifth prayer service.
- The prayer service itself recognizes the finality of the hour. For example, where throughout the Ten Days of Repentance God is asked to “write us” into the Book of Life, at *ne'ilah* He is begged to “seal us” into that book, this marking the final decision by God for the coming year. The service itself ends with a clarion call of “acceptance of the Yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.” It includes the cantor reading the first verse of the *Shema* aloud, this then being repeated by the congregation; the sentence “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever” three times responsively; and then “The Lord is God” seven times.

Atonement = purging, cleansing, expiation, purification, covering, wiping on or off; reconciliation

The two major rites of the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 were:

- (1) The purification of the sanctuary, priesthood, and people (Lev 16.16-19; 30, 33, 34), and
- (2) The expulsion of Azazel, the scapegoat, with all the sins of the Israel (Lev 16.10, 20-22).

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The name Azazel possibly means “angry god” or “the god who went away” or “a fallen angel” (from the Book of Enoch) - rather than “scapegoat” or “goat that escapes”. Most of my early exposure to the Day of Atonement, preachers seemed to focus on this ritual and there was great stress put on the identity of which goat represented Christ and which represented the Devil.

Atonement verses to study

- (Reference) **Exodus 30.1-16** = establishment of an annual day of atonement
 - 10 = “throughout their generations”
- **(Read) Leviticus 16** = The Day of Atonement rites
 - 29 "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.
 - 30 "For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.
 - 31 "It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.
 - Only the directives (observe, no manner of work, fast, atonement) are “forever”
- (Reference) **Leviticus 17** = The sanctity of blood = no blood = no atonement
 - 7 = the sacrifices are “throughout their generations”
- **(Read) Leviticus 23** = The Day of Atonement
 - 26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
 - 27 "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.
 - 28 "And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.
 - 29 "For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.
 - 30 "And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.
 - 31 "You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
 - 32 "It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."
 - **NO** manner of work; a day of **SOLEMN** rest
- **(Read) Romans 5** = Christ in Our Place – now we have the reconciliation
 - 6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

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- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.
- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
- 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
- (Reference) Hebrews 8-10 = the New Priestly Service; the New Covenant; the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries
 - **Read:**
 - 9.27-28
 - 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
 - 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.
 - 10.4
 - 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
 - 10.24-25
 - 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
 - 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Day of Atonement symbolizes the final judgment of man

- **Matthew 12**
 - 36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.
 - 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
- **Matthew 7**
 - 2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.
- **2 Corinthians 5**
 - 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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- **Hebrews 9**

- 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

References to fasting in the New Testament are translated from the Greek root word nesteia (nace-ti-ah) (3521) = abstinence from food.

The Day of Atonement also symbolizes the final judgment of Satan and the pain of a friend turned enemy

In Isaiah 14.12-21 and Ezekiel 28.11-19, the Bible tells us how Lucifer was created “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty”.

- **Isaiah 14**

- 12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!
- 13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'
- 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.
- 16 "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,
- 17 Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'
- 18 "All the kings of the nations, All of them, sleep in glory, Everyone in his own house;
- 19 But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
- 20 You will not be joined with them in burial, Because you have destroyed your land And slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
- 21 Prepare slaughter for his children Because of the iniquity of their fathers, Lest they rise up and possess the land, And fill the face of the world with cities."

- **Ezekiel 28**

- 11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
- 12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

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- 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.
- 14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
- 15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.
- 16 "By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.
- 17 "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.
- 18 "You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you.
- 19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever."''''

He was called “the seal of perfection”. The book of Job tells us that Satan was allowed to walk freely on the earth – “walking to and fro” – and he had ready access to the Lord. In the beginning, Lucifer was a trusted friend of God. But his pride overtook him and he became the Devil – the greatest deceiver of all time.

Have you ever had any extremely close friends or relatives who have betrayed you? It hurts very badly.

When we consider God’s pain over the final loss of a once dear friend and confidant who turned into a bitter enemy who He must punish severely, our minor discomfort experienced this day seems of little importance.

The roots of our Day of Atonement and the Jewish Yom Kippur are the same –

- Christians and Jew alike use the Bible as the basis for their beliefs.
- We all use the same “Torah” – the first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) as the basis for our beliefs.
- Many Christians have thrown out the majority of the Old Testament as a basis for their beliefs
- Jews have never accepted the New Testament as part of their belief structure

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- Even Christians who claim to believe the entire Bible have reservations about accepting it as totally true
- Many feel it is more history than prophecy and/or more fables than truth. Thus, none of these people can use the Bible to prove their points – they need other material to support their beliefs.
- The Catholics have their creeds; the Jews have their Mishnah and Talmud.

When we develop our Bible Studies, we look only to the Bible (and aids, of course, like Nave's Topical Bible, Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, Strong's Concordance, etc.) for explanations and clarification. We only use outside literature to compare what others believe.

By learning why others believe what they believe, we can strengthen our beliefs – IF they are correct. A main reason why human beings do not take this approach – they are afraid to find out they have been wrong.

Our belief structure is based upon our belief that the entire Bible, Old and New Testament alike, is coherent and is the true Word of God.

The Jewish Primer adds:

- The Yom Kippur service concludes with *Le-shanah ha-ba'ah bi-yerushalayim* – “This coming year [not, as is mistakenly translate, ‘next year’] in Jerusalem.” Many congregations break into joyful song or even dance to these words. According to the Sages, once Yom Kippur is over, all should go home happy, confident that the merciful God has forgiven them their sins.

It is significant that the Day of Atonement is preceded by the Feast of Trumpets and is followed by the rejoicing of the Feast of Tabernacles.