



Messianic Minutes

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Time for the Church to reach the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE HIGH HOLY DAYS ?

by Jeffrey D. Miller

Later this month the three Fall Feasts will be observed according to the Hebrew Calendar.

In Judaism, the first two, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, are known as the High Holy Days. While they are commanded by God in the Bible, and therefore are clearly sacred, there is no scripture identifying them as high, or as more important than any of the other biblical Feasts.

Feast Dates
Sundown to Sundown
Yom Teruah Yom Kippur
 9/29 - 9/30 10/8 - 10/9

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year . . . but it's not. That's because there's not a word about it as a New Year in the Bible. Leviticus 23:23, which announces the Feast, calls it, ". . . a memorial of blowing of trumpets." It is a day to sound the shofar, ram's horn. There's not much more instruction about it.

The fact that Leviticus sets this Feast on the first day of the seventh month on the Hebrew Calendar adds curiosity to the New Year designation. The religious explanation for that is the practice of different new years for different purposes. For example, there are school years and fiscal years, neither of which follows the calendar year.

In fact, the Jewish religion has four New Year's, each one for a different purpose. However, there is only one time God calls a New Year, and it is in the spring, not the fall, just before Passover. In Exodus 12:2, the Lord told Moses, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."

While Judaism accepts that time as one of the four New Years, it holds there are other references, though indirect, which explain the seventh month date. Among those are a belief that creation started on the 1st day of the 7th month.

The real issue is not whether Rosh Hashanah is actually the New Year, but why God commanded the whole day to be identified by the sounding of the shofar.

In traditional synagogues all across the world, there will be lots of shofar blasts on this day. But the primary meaning of the activity will simply be the sound. Although it is quite stirring, there's much more to God's plan than the sound itself. *Continued on Page 2*

TWO JEWISH MEN WHO LOVE YESHUA (JESUS)



RABBI TED SIMON AND JEFFREY D. MILLER

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My Memories of Yom Kippur

by Ted Simon

My earliest Yom Kippurs (Day of Atonement) were spent with my Grandparents in the Bronx. We would arrive and be caught in a swirl of preparation, mostly getting the food and house in order. Food? Yes, the meal on the evening of the Holiday was huge and had to be...for it needed to last us as we fasted for the next 26 hours. We weren't going to eat (or drink) anything again until well after dark the following day. So Grandma made chicken and matzoh ball soup and Gefilte Fish and we drank plenty of Pepsi before heading by foot the two miles to our Synagogue, Young Israel of Treemont. Carrying our Tallit (prayer shawl) bags, we were a small flock of Jewish men, weaving our way down the street to begin the holiest day of the year.

I noticed that not everyone in the Bronx was coming with us. I was surprised that shops were open, cars were driving, other children playing, not dressed in their finest new suits like us, but in everyday clothes doing everyday stuff. Didn't they know this was the Holiest Day, ever sober, somber and mystical?

After Kol Nidre, the traditional opening service, we walked back home to a darkened apartment, no lights were to be turned on. I was hungry and thirsty as soon as we got back, but knew that no food was allowed. It was a day of fasting. In the morning we went back to shul (synagogue), this time to sit for hours and hours, a full sanctuary of people chanting and turning pages.

Continued on Page 2

Hear the sounding of the Shofar

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Continued *My Memories of Yom Kippur*



It was like a very long Sabbath Service except it included long lists of prayers of confession, and as we recited each one we beat our chests. Many on the sin lists I had committed, some seemed beyond my ability, and others seemed enticing; but each one

required a chest banging, and ultimately a plea for forgiveness.

Since everyone was fasting, my father, a pharmacist, always had a bottle of lavender and ammonia smelling salts handy to revive those people who fainted.

The stifling shul, the repetitive service, the chest banging became boring to me. There were dramatic parts when the Cantor, the singer leading the worship, would accept the sins of the congregation and fall onto his knees weeping the melody, and then be lifted to his feet by the rabbi and an elder. All in all I'd prefer to escape, retreating outside down to the alley to play with the caterpillars making their way out of webby tents.

After I sensed twilight I'd get back upstairs for some final prayers before the long blast of the shofar and shots of orange juice signified the end to the Day of Atonement. Then we'd walk back to grandma's who always had a milk based meal ready and, if it were a weekend night, the adults would have a party.

The sky was bright with stars and street lamps, but I was still dark, knowing I hadn't changed inside, that I didn't sit quietly through the whole service and while I didn't eat, I had thought a lot about food. I felt separated from others and sad. Everyone else seemed in a great mood, and were catching up on the World Series scores and making plans.

Today, as I observe the Day of Atonement, I realize that I, like all other people, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of Adonai. The rituals I performed are not the ones prescribed in Scripture, there is no temple and no goats on which to lay the sins, iniquities and transgressions of us all. The rituals only remind me of my need to confess my sins, certain that now if I confess my sins, He is faithful and just to forgive my sins! I am certain that the truth of Scripture is: There is no forgiveness of Sin without the shedding of Blood.

No it's not the pounding of my chest, nor is it the blood of temple sacrifices which change my sin nature. It's the sinless Blood of Messiah Yeshua who leads me in paths of Righteousness for his name sake; it's His Blood that makes atonement for my sin. So today I still fast and pray and recount an extraordinarily long list of sins, but I do so with gratefulness for forgiveness and assurance of Salvation.

Today millions of my Jewish people will enter into Yom Kippur services, but few will leave with an assurance that they are clean and free. → →

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Continued *What's Wrong?*

While there is tremendous prophetic significance in the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant) surrounding the shofar, look at Zechariah 9:14. Referring to a future victory, it is written, *"Then the Lord will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet, And go with whirlwinds from the south."*

That victory is mirrored by several key shofar references in the New Covenant, including Matthew 24:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:52. But perhaps the most powerful is found in Revelation 11:15, *"Then the seventh angel sounded (the seventh trumpet): And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"*

My Jewish brethren don't know the truth about the shofar, and celebrating the New Year instead of Trumpets is helping to hide it from them.

The second of the so-called High Holy Days is Yom Kippur. It is properly named as the Day of Atonement, and is considered the most important day in the Jewish religion.

Scripturally, Israel's atonement was accomplished by blood and a scapegoat. Leviticus 17:11 explains God required blood for atonement, and Chapter 16 describes how God commanded the involvement of two goats - one had its blood shed, the other became the scapegoat.

Of course modern day Jewish people don't sacrifice animals anymore, and most would consider it barbaric. But God said there has to be blood for atonement.

It is the blood of Yeshua, perfect and sinless, that satisfied God once and for all. Messiah's sacrifice perfected the sin offering so it doesn't have to be done anymore.

The second goat of Yom Kippur was to be kept alive so the High Priest could confess into it all the sins of Israel. The goat then bore the sins and was taken out of the camp to never return.

Most modern day Jews don't follow this activity either. They will fast for 24 hours (Leviticus says to afflict our souls) and hope their sins are forgiven.

But again it was our Messiah Yeshua who, according to the Jewish Apostle Peter's first epistle (2:24), *"bore our sins in His own body."* He became the perfect scapegoat, bearing our sin, taking it into the depths, then returning in resurrection power leaving our sin behind.

Yeshua is the focus of the Jewish High Holy Days. What's wrong is the lost sheep of the House of Israel don't know it.

That assurance doesn't come from rituals but only from a relationship with Yeshua, our Messiah. To me, this is the best time of year to make conversation, and find common ground by talking about sin - missing the mark - and how our sin is forgiven, our sin is atoned for, and how Yeshua came to give us Freedom.