

Preparing for Yom Kippur

Some Thoughts on Repentance during the Days of Awe

notes by Tim Hegg

Preparing for Yom Kippur

- The days between Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur are traditionally referred to as *yamim nora'im*, “days of awe.”
 - For rabbinic Judaism, these days offer a person time to repent of past sins.
 - But only genuine repentance will be accepted by God, so there is a sense of anxiety as to whether a person has sufficiently repented so as to receive atonement on Yom Kippur.

“At this time, when the Temple no longer exists, and we have no atonement altar, there is nothing left but repentance. Repentance atones for all transgressions.... Yom Kippur itself atones for those who repent, as it is written: “Atonement shall be made for you on this day.” (Lev 16:30) – (Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah*, Laws of Repentance)

Does Repentance Atone for Sin?

- But what about Genesis 2:17 & Ezekiel 18:4?

but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die. (Gen 2:17)

Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die. (Ezek 18:4)

- Does repentance overturn the penalty of death prescribed by God for sinning?
 - Were Adam and Chavah offered repentance as a way to remain in the garden of Eden?
 - If repentance is all that God requires to forgive sin:
 - ~ what was the purpose of animal sacrifices?
 - ~ why do prophets foretell a suffering Messiah?

The Penalty for Sin is Eternal Death

- Death is separation:
 - Physical death is the separation of the soul/spirit from the body.
 - Spiritual death is separation from God.
 - ~ unbelievers are dead in sin = separated from God
 - ~ “having no hope and without God in this world” (Eph 2:12)
 - ~ An unbeliever who dies in his unbelief faces eternal separation from God.

Eternal Separation from God

Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth... Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;... These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt 25:30, 41, 46)

...when the Lord Yeshua will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Yeshua. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. (2Thess 1:7–9)

Then He said again to them, “I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:21–24)

The Gift of Eternal Life

“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:40)

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:27–28)

Initial and On-Going Repentance

- Repentance & Faith are the initial steps of salvation:
 - When a sinner comes to faith in Yeshua and confesses Him to be the one and only Savior, it involves two things
 - ~ saving faith: willing to accept that what God has said is true and commit oneself fully to this truth.
 - ~ repentance: a true sorrow for one’s sin and a true intention to turn from that life of sin.

saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mk 1:15)

Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Yeshua.” (Acts 19:4)

I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. (Acts 20:20–21)

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Messiah, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. (Heb 6:1)

This Repentance is a Gift of God

- In order for the unbeliever to repent of their sin, there must be a divine work within them.
- Thus, repentance that leads to salvation is a gift from God.

He [Yeshua] is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)

with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, (2Tim. 2:25)

Saving Faith is a Gift of God

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8–9)

Faith and Repentance Characterize the Life of a Believer

- Life in the Messiah is a life of faith:
 - We walk by faith, not by sight (2Cor 5:7)
 - The life of a child of God is a life of constant faith in God and a growing faithfulness to God.
 - The heart desire of a true believer is to be more and more like Yeshua.

I have been crucified with Messiah; and it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 2:20)

Repentance is the Fruit of Being Forgiveness

- On-going repentance is seen in the life of a believer when he or she confesses their sin and turns from it.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn 1:9)

- Thus, one who is a true believer will grow in becoming more and more like Yeshua and less and less like the world.

the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1John 2:6)

Preparing for Yom Kippur

- As those who are in Messiah Yeshua, our preparation for Yom Kippur involves asking:
 - What things in my life do I need to turn from?
 - What have I been neglecting which God wants me to reclaim?
 - What changes in my life is God urging me to make?

*Therefore as you have received Messiah Yeshua the Lord,
so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and
now being built up in Him and established in your faith,
just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.*

Colossians 2:6–7