

# The Biblical Fall Festivals



## The Day of Atonement (5783)

By R. Baruch, PhD

# The Biblical Fall Festivals

## Focus: The Day of Atonement

### הימים הנוראים, הנושא: יום הכיפורים

The seventh month on the Biblical calendar is a special one, for in it are four different Festivals—The Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, The Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day Assembly. In this brief article, I would like to focus on the Day of Atonement and specifically the High Priest. The Day of Atonement is on the tenth day of the seventh month and its primary purpose is for the High Priest to secure atonement for the covenant people of G-d. It is solely the High Priest who does all that is required on behalf of the people. In the letter to the Hebrews, Yeshua is also called our High Priest. In fact, the author of this letter informs the reader concerning the uniqueness of Yeshua being our High Priest.

In chapter three of Hebrews, Yeshua is called the High Priest of our confession and is likened to Moses. What is the purpose of mentioning Moses within this context? Moses is understood as a redeemer; therefore, the work of Yeshua as High Priest is to bring redemption to His covenant people. In this same chapter, Moses is called a servant, Yeshua is called a Son. What is the significance of Yeshua being called a Son? The term son relates to an inheritance which one who is only a servant does not receive. Hence, those who receive His work of redemption will be inherited by Him for *“a hope which we should hold firm until the end”* (verse 6). This hope is in regard to one being made able to enter into the Kingdom. It is through Yeshua’s work as High Priest that grace becomes available, as it is written, *“Therefore, we should come before the Throne of grace with boldness, in order that we should receive mercy and grace, we should find in the time of need help.”* (Hebrews 4:16)

It is in chapter five that the reader learns an important difference between Yeshua’s Priesthood and a high priest that served through the Levitical covenant. Yeshua is not a High Priest from the same order. He is from the order of Melchi Tzedek (Hebrews 5:6,10). Although there are many important differences between these two orders, one is the direction of the blessing. The G-d of Israel is a Blessed G-d Who desires to bless His covenant people. Whereas the Levitical priests would take from the people and offer the sacrifice to G-d, one learns from Genesis 14:18-20 that within the context of victory, Melchi Tzedek blessed Abraham. This same truth is also stated in Hebrews,

*“For this Melchi Tzedek, King of Salem, priest of the Most High G-d, the one having met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him.”*

Hebrews 7:1

What is also most interesting concerning Melchi Tzedek is what is further stated in Hebrews chapter seven,

*“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, and not having a beginning of days nor an end of life; but, having been made like the Son of G-d, he remains a priest continuously.”*  
Hebrews 7:3

This verse reveals incredible things concerning Melchi Tzedek which speaks of his uniqueness. It is also very significant that it says that he, "...having been made like the Son of G-d..." I have heard many speculate that Melchi Tzedek is Yeshua. Such a view is highly problematic. The Greek word used in this verse is ἄφομοιόω and it denotes one who is "made like or rendered similar to". Yeshua was not made! He is the Eternal Son of G-d and there was never a time that He did not exist and He did not go through any process that affected Him in any way.

The reader must remember that our subject is the Day of Atonement; but we have already learned that Yeshua's High Priesthood is about redemption, rather than simply atonement. The author of Hebrews also states that the Levitical priesthood did not and could not secure perfection τελείωσις. It is because of the insufficiency of the Levitical priesthood there was a need for a greater and different priesthood. It was previously stated in Hebrews that Melchi Tzedek was the king of Salem, meaning king of peace. The Biblical word peace is connected to the "fulfillment of the will of G-d." Hence, the priesthood of Melchi Tzedek will bring about the fulfillment of the will of G-d, i.e. the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d.

Yeshua, by means of the incarnation, entered into human history and was not from the tribe of Levi; rather, He is from the lineage of Yehuda. This change in the priesthood is so what the Levitical high priest could not obtain, Yeshua did secure for His New Covenant people. It is recorded in Hebrews concerning Yeshua,

**"... You are a Priest forever (According to the order of Melchi Tzedek) Hebrews 7:21. That which appears within the parenthesis is included in the Textus Receptus, but not in Nestle- Aland.**

Furthermore, because of the need for a better covenant, one which could bring about the fulfillment of the will of G-d, there had to be a better High Priest. One Who could save to the uttermost, i.e. those who were lost in sin and formerly without hope. In the concluding verses of chapter seven, one learns concerning Yeshua that He is the guarantee of a better covenant and represents a priesthood that continues forever and is unchanging. He lives to make intercession for His people and is holy, undefiled and separate from sinners and is higher than the heavens. The work which He did as High Priest was perfect and because it achieves the will of G-d, it does not need to be repeated each year.

It is because of these reasons and more, that Yeshua is seated at the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens (Hebrews 8:1). He is the Minister of the sanctuary of the true tabernacle which the L-rd established and not man (Hebrews 8:2). One must also remember that the Temple in Jerusalem only was a copy of the true Temple in heaven (Hebrews 8:5). The good news for those who believe in Him and have entered into a better covenant, the New Covenant, is that Yeshua is High Priest of good things to come (Hebrews 9:11). These things are all related to the promise of the eternal inheritance. The Biblical word eternal αἰώνιος is an adjective which frequently describes the Kingdom of G-d. It should not only be understood as transcending time, but as describing the very character of the Kingdom and a quality that is perfect and without comparison.

Such a Kingdom is beyond the grasp of humanity left to ourselves. It is for this reason that the Eternal Son of G-d left heaven and the incarnation took place. The primary reason for the incarnation is for Messiah Yeshua to do the work of redemption. The focus of this article is the Day of Atonement; however, atonement is inadequate and relates to the Levitical priesthood. Atonement is only a covering up of the sin and only delays the judgment of G-d; whereas redemption removes the sin and also the necessity of any judgment from G-d. In other words, redemption is much better than atonement and the author of Hebrews

proclaims to us that the Messiah has obtained for His covenant people ETERNAL REDEMPTION.

*“But Messiah having arrived as High Priest of coming good things through a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, this is not of this creation. And not by blood of goats and calves, but by His Own blood, He entered once and for all into the Holy Places having obtained eternal redemption.”* Hebrews 9:11-12

Yeshua has completed the payment for redemption and has secured for His New Covenant people eternal salvation. However, the outcome of His High Priesthood has not yet been manifested. In regard to this, I am referring to the receiving of His Kingdom promises and all the eternal benefits of being one's Savior. It is to this issue that the author of Hebrews writes,

*“...He will be seen to the ones who are waiting for Him for salvation.”* Hebrews 9:28b

The salvation to which is being referred in this verse is not the forgiveness of sin, but the outcome of having one's sins being forgiven by faith in Him, i.e. the victory of departing this sin-stained world and being welcomed into the eternal Kingdom of G-d where we will be forever in His Presence and the eternal recipients of His goodness.

Therefore, on this Yom Kippur, as we read about the work of the high priest from Leviticus chapter sixteen, let us also remember our High Priest, Messiah Yeshua, Who obtained for us not an annual atonement, but eternal redemption.