

45 – Yom Kippur 2023 - Outline

The Basics

- the reading: Leviticus 16, the details of the High Priestly Yom Kippur service
- begins: “The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died” (Leviticus 16:1)”
 - this context is important; the context is death
 - sin leads to separation, and He has provided a means to re-connect, to come back to life
 - the High Priest has to be atoned for, and the Levites, and the sanctuary, and finally the people
 - everything that comes before the holy God must be painstakingly cleansed
 - this is a holy moment in the calendar, and though we maintain a sense of joy for all the mo’edim, this is not a moment for the common and for idle chatter
 - Yeshua is the heavenly High Priest, and if we are in Him and He in us, there’s some sense that WE ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES WITH HIM on Yom Kippur
- the Torah’s own summary verses regarding the day:
 - “And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments. He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.” (Leviticus 16:29-34)
 - the purpose is atonement, cleansing of sin
 - atonement = kippor – covering
 - not so much dealing with the root yet, but covering
 - 10th day of the 7th month
 - no work
 - only yearly mo’ed called “Shabbat Shabbaton,” like the weekly Sabbath, which may be a way to emphasize the extreme rest on this day, sometimes translated: “a Sabbath of complete rest”
 - the High Priest is to make atonement

- and the people are to support him in doing that; the people provide the two goats, for one thing
 - the sins of the people are placed on one of these goats, and it bears them away to the wilderness
 - afflict yourselves (afflict your souls, your nephesh)
 - this is understood to mean that we don't coddle ourselves on Yom Kippur – we can coddle ourselves and comfort our bodies on any other day in the year, but not on this one
- Traditions
 - one of the two matchmaking days in the year when maidens would wear white and go out to dance
 - therefore, considered one of the two most joyous days in the year, along with Tu B'Av, the full moon of Av, likewise a matchmaking day
 - regarded as the day that Moses came down the mountain the last time with the 2nd set of tablets, that tablets that weren't broken
 - tradition is based on Moses' 3 40-day trips up Mt. Sinai starting at Shavuot; 40-40-40 with a few extra days brings us exactly to Yom Kippur
 - reading of Jonah
 - themes of repentance and God's reversal of judgment
 - both Jonah and Nineveh repent
 - God relents
 - it's also important that there is an evangelical element to Jonah, with Israel taking the Word of truth to the nations
 - the light going out from Israel is an important theme of the second half of the year
 - Nineveh is in modern Iraq (N. Iraq)
 - why would God relent if He knows they will eventually drift away again and later remove the 10 northern tribes?
 - God accepts our teshuvah in the moment; let the future be what it will be; focus on repentance now
 - R'Trugman: during the 10 days, a voice will come along and say, "Who do you think you are? Who do you think you're fooling? You've tried things like this before and failed repeatedly." Jonah comes along to say that God accepts our repentance in the moment, and that we should ignore such a voice. If everyone listened to that voice, no one would repent!

Calendar Review

- what we're building here is not a small thing; it's a structure for understanding the whole Bible and all of creation - far beyond the calendar
 - a study of salvation, Yeshua
- Overall Calendar Review
 - Passover: birth

- a nation emerges from another nation
 - Omer: learning to walk with God
 - first commandments as a nation on way to Mt. Sinai
 - Shavuot: bar or bat mitzvah; also an engagement
 - old enough to take on the Torah personally
 - old enough to agree to the marriage, but not yet old enough for the fullness of marriage
 - 3 Weeks: a period of struggle with the Torah
 - God turns His face – He destroys His temple (Tisha B’Av)
 - Elul: month of repentance (6th month)
 - 40-day cycle of repentance includes. 10 days of Tishrei (7th month)
 - Tishrei: reconnection; marriage consummation
 - not just reconnection but the deepening of the relationship, reaching a level that is higher than where it first started
 - the result of intimacy is pregnancy
 - the Bride must be FAITHFUL through the journey of the dark side of the year to bring forth the body for the spiritual seed through much trial
- 2 Journeys in the Year
 - the walk in the light
 - months 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
 - journey of youth
 - less free will
 - associated with Mosaic Covenant
 - receiving the light (truth)
 - the walk in the dark
 - months 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1
 - journey of maturity
 - much free will
 - many months absent of God-given mo’edim, so mankind has stepped up to add Hanukkah and Purim
 - associated with New Covenant
 - applying the light to our own situations; becoming the light
- Tishrei Mo’edim
 - Rosh Hashanah
 - reconnecting to God
 - crowning God King
 - hearing the shofar’s call to complete the 40-day period of repentance
 - expressing our free will
 - little instruction provided; we have to develop a tradition
 - only mo’ed on a new moon – very dark

- our first chance to express adult free will because we are very young at Passover and Shavuot and God is very obvious at those times
- we reach back up to Him after He first reached down to us at Passover and Shavuot
 - our reaching up to Him gets the ball rolling for the other 2 Tishrei mo'edim; He responds through Yeshua
- Yom Kippur
 - before reconnecting, there's a problem to deal with first, a sin problem
 - through Yeshua, our sin is covered
 - not rooted out yet, but covered, which is enough to reestablish the relationship so that the deeper cleansing work can begin
 - Hanukkah is about cleansing the vessel (Temple)
- Sukkot
 - Sukkot is like the physical capstone in the 3-step progression:
 - spirit: Rosh Hashanah
 - soul: Yom Kippur
 - body: Sukkot
 - the Incarnation (body for Yeshua)
 - God sends Yeshua to not only be King but also Husband!

Circumcision and the Calendar

- the yearly calendar contains the entire picture of salvation, the entire picture of development
 - it's a circle, a whole growth cycle that starts with birth in the spring; each year is a miniature picture of a whole lifetime
 - every part of creation has the whole picture of salvation in it, in fact
 - each piece of salvation must not only be there, but it should be there in the right order, the same order we see everywhere else in creation
- covenants: an important part of the salvation journey is covenants
 - God establishes and develops His relationship with humanity through covenants
 - the topic of Spiritual Seasons is the development of our relationship with God
 - therefore covenants are very important to this study
- simple chronological mapping of the covenants
 - Abrahamic aligns with Passover
 - Mosaic aligns with Shavuot
 - New aligns with Fall mo'edim
- more support connecting the New Covenant to the fall
 - although Yeshua mentions the New Covenant at His last Passover seder, Passover is outside of time; His death is from the foundation of the world
 - His death affects all points in time; for the New Covenant, we're looking for where this covenant of intimacy is 1) needed and 2) clearly coming into play

- the New Covenant is not associated with birth as much as it is with maturity, the fall
 - Tishrei connection in Yeshua's mention of the New Covenant:
 - "And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS'" (Matthew 26:27-28)
 - Yeshua's very words make a connection to not only Tishrei but Yom Kippur, specifically; He connects the New Covenant to forgiveness of sins, which we associate with Yom Kippur
 - forgiveness of sins is not needed until after you become personally responsible to the Torah, which happens in the 3rd month; we aren't held accountable before we accept upon ourselves the Torah
 - aside: notice that Yeshua emphasizes "all of you," as if He is purposefully reaching out to include Judas in the forgiveness of this cup – forgiveness is for everyone
 - Moses comes down the mountain on Yom Kippur with the unbroken tablets
 - the unbroken tablets are emblematic of the covenant that is not broken, the New Covenant
 - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, MY COVENANT THAT THEY BROKE, though I was their Husband, declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:31-32)
 - entering the dark at Tishrei
 - crossing the fall equinox at Rosh Hashanah means the nights are now dominating the days
 - Yeshua, Who mediates the New Covenant, enters the darkness in the same way that Joshua leads the people after Moses into the comparative darkness of the Land
 - John 1: Yeshua is the "Light that shines in the darkness"
- what does it mean that the New Covenant is connected to Tishrei?
 - after a time of stumbling (3 Weeks), God is pouring out His grace in the form a New Covenant with us
 - our repentance, our confessing to seeing our lack, is the open door to this pouring out of grace
 - the New Covenant is the writing of the Torah inwardly, on the heart – same Torah, different location
 - if we are to be faithful, our emotions must be engaged because the emotions (centered in the heart) are the key to action – we need passion to be consistent in our walk – especially love for God and others

- the Bride needs the Torah on the heart to be faithful to her Groom
- where we see covenant, we also see a sign of the covenant
 - most prominent sign: circumcision
 - given to Abraham and his descendants as a sign that one is in covenantal relationship with God
 - perfect sign for the New Covenant: circumcision of the heart
 - the New Covenant is inward – the writing of the Torah on the heart
 - what is circumcision of the heart?
 - there is nothing inhibiting the flow of love out of a person’s heart; if the Torah is written on the heart, and the core of the Torah is love for God and others, that means love is written on the heart, and a circumcised heart means there’s no flesh blockage to keep the love from flowing outward
 - we can sometimes sense this heart circumcision when we meet someone who we can sense has love flowing through them – the sign of a person in the New Covenant
- R’Yitzchak Ginsburgh circumcision teaching, as brought down by R’Trugman
 - (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h7b0SOsq40> from beginning, esp. starting 11m)
 - R’Ginsburgh regarded as one of the greatest living rabbis, particularly in this field of making these kinds of deeper connections (here types of circumcision with specific points on the calendar)
 - the 4 circumcisions: reproductive organ, heart, ears, lips
 - male organ - 8th day of life for each boy
 - ears - Shemini Atzeret, the 8th day of Sukkot
 - the end of the Tishrei holiday cycle
 - hearing is about integration – right and left, and words over time that must be integrated to make meaning
 - a final day or final moment is regarded as the time when all that precedes it is integrated together
 - Shemini Atzeret is the day to integrate all of one’s service from Rosh Hashanah onward
 - lips - 8 days of Hanukkah
 - full Hallel all 8 days (rare – full Hallel (all 6 Psalms) are only recited on the first 2 days of Pesach, Shavuot, all days of Sukkot, and all days of Hanukkah (<https://www.ou.org/holidays/hallel/>))
 - the Hallel’s intention being to praise God – with the lips
 - heart - Yom Kippur – 8 days after the 2-day Rosh Hashanah
 - we’re literally hitting our heart all day on Yom Kippur while going through a long list of sins and asking for forgiveness and atonement and pardon
 - why this seems to work
 - the heart circumcision on Yom Kippur
 - fits for all the reasons above

- the ears at Shemini Atzeret:
 - Yeshua tabernacles among us at Sukkot, and He speaks words; it's of first importance that be able to hear those words
 - He guides us through the darkness with His words
 - in John 10, Yeshua's words split the crowds, like a scalpel, some saying He has a demon, others saying "These are not the words of a demon."
 - the lips at Hanukkah
 - when the vessel is cleansed, now the light can start going out in an evangelical way, as the hanukkiah placed in the window does – one little light that grows to two, and onward
 - as we sow the seed of the gospel, we need a purified mouth, lips that are not hindered by the blockage of the flesh
 - a final point: a second calendar connection to heart circumcision
 - heart circumcision is also connected to the whole month of Elul
 - from the verse in Deuteronomy 30: And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6)
 - starting from the fourth word, the first letters of consecutive words spell E-L-U-L
 - Elul is the month of t'shuvah, repentance, and repentance cuts to the heart
 - a theory: heart circumcision is a 40-day process with 2 phases – 30 days of God circumcising the heart, and 10 days of us circumcising our own hearts
 - Tishrei is a time for the Bride to step up in maturity, to circumcise her own heart
 - yet God still gives us much help, even here, in the form of Yeshua
 - Yeshua is both God and man, and so through Him, man circumcises his own heart
 - and down below, we also reflect Him on Yom Kippur
 - in the same way, in Temple times, the Jews would gather to catch glimpses of the High Priest on Yom Kippur, following in his footsteps, even falling on their faces when they would hear the Holy Name pronounced
 - taken together, it's a breathtaking picture that is not just cute or curious; the underlying salvation foundation of the Word and the world that He is revealing in these days is literally the foundation everywhere we look; all glory to Him

45 – Yom Kippur - Script

Hello and welcome to Beth Tikkun and this special Spiritual Seasons teaching on Yom Kippur. I'm separately posting a teaching on the parsha of the week, Ha'azinu, for those interested. In that teaching, we dive into how it is that music can so transport us, and we find some wonderful hidden layers in the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

But for this teaching, we focus now on this pinnacle in the yearly calendar, this especially holy day of Yom Kippur.

The Basics

Let's start by briefly dipping into the Torah reading for Yom Kippur and the basic commandments given for the day. The associated Torah reading is Leviticus 16, the first chapter of parsha Acharei Mot. The chapter details the High Priest's Yom Kippur service. It begins, "The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died" (Leviticus 16:1).

This beginning context is meaningful. The context is death, separation. Sin leads to separation from God, but He has provided a means of being re-connected, a way of coming back to life. The chapter goes on to lay out in a very detailed way how the High Priest is to approach the Lord through a very careful and holy process so that he won't die. The High Priest, himself, has to be atoned for, and all the Levites, and the sanctuary, and all the people. Not only can you not just approach God willy nilly, however you want, but everything has to be painstakingly cleansed before it can appear before the Holy God.

Let's pause right here and make a quick side point. This is a holy moment in the calendar, and though we maintain a sense of joy within all the mo'edim, this is not a moment for the common and for idle chatter, which is such a temptation every time we gather together, and I'm speaking first to myself in this. We know that the earthly High Priest pictures Yeshua as our heavenly High Priest. If Yeshua is in us and we are in Him, then there is some sense that WE ARE ENTERING INTO THE HEAVENLY HOLY OF HOLIES WITH HIM, and we take that very seriously on Yom Kippur with hearts and minds prepared for the day and with the seriousness of the moment at the forefront of our minds. It certainly is a joyful day because at the end the result is atonement. But as the High Priest approaches God, it's also a moment of grave sobriety with the people outside in deep and earnest prayer for him.

Well, let's continue now with a summary of the commandments for the day by reading the Torah's own summary that comes after its detailed description of the High Priest's service. Listen for the purpose of the day and the commandments in these verses. In Leviticus 16 starting in verse 29, it says,

"And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall

be clean before the LORD from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments. He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." (Leviticus 16:29-34)

The purpose is atonement of sin. The word "kippor" means to "cover." So the idea is focused more on the covering of sin than it is dealing with the root of the sin in this moment. We told the day, which is the 10th day of the 7th month. We are told to do no work, and this is the only yearly mo'ed called a "Shabbat Shabbaton." Only the weekly Sabbath, Yom Kippur, and the 7th year shmitah rest are called "Shabbat Shabbaton." It's not clear what this doubling of the word means, but many times the doubling provides emphasis, so some translate "Shabbat Shabbaton" as a "Sabbath of complete rest."

Beyond these commandments, the High Priest is to make atonement, and that means that the nation has to do whatever it takes to support him in getting ready for this big day. The nation, itself, also is responsible for providing the two goats used in the ceremony for their atonement. Recall that one of these goats receives the confession of the sins of the people, and these sins are placed upon the goat, and it is sent out to the wilderness, bearing the sins away. Of course we know that this goat is a picture of Yeshua our Messiah.

We are also told to humble ourselves, or to "afflict our souls," our nephesh. By Jewish tradition, this afflicting of one's soul has been understood to be refraining from coddling the body with comforts, including food.

Moving on to a few Yom Kippur traditions, anciently Yom Kippur was also one of two days in the calendar when the young maidens would dress in white and go out and dance, so it was a day for matchmaking, which seems a bit odd to us now, I suppose. And so, anciently, Yom Kippur was called one of the two most joyous days of the year, along with the other such day for matchmaking, Tu B'Av, the full moon of the 5th month.

Yom Kippur is also regarded as the day that Moses came down the mountain the last time with the second set of tablets, the tablets that are not broken. This is a tradition, but the tradition is based on the Scripture. The rabbis see Moses' taking three 40-day trips up and down Mt. Sinai. The first of these begins on the 6th day of the third month, which is Shavuot. Counting forward 40, 40, 40 from that day, with a few days in between, brings us exactly to Yom Kippur and Moses' last descent of the mountain with the new tablets in hand.

Lastly here, let's say a few words about the haftarah reading for Yom Kippur afternoon, the book of Jonah. What does Jonah have to do with Yom Kippur? Jonah has themes of repentance and of God's reversal of judgment. Jonah repents. Nineveh repents. And God relents and reverses the decree against Nineveh. It's also important that there is an evangelical element to

Jonah, with Israel taking the Word of truth to the nations and the nations receiving it and changing. The light going out from Israel to the nations is an important element of the second half of the yearly journey that begins at Rosh Hashanah.

Let me add one last important point here. Nineveh's repentance eventually faded, and before long the Assyrians attacked and carried away the 10 northern tribes. And God knew about that ahead of time. Surely it was God Who orchestrated that, even. But if Nineveh's change wasn't going to last, why did God relent in the days of Jonah? R'Trugman says that God pays attention to what we are expressing to Him in the moment. Let the future be what it is. Right now we focus our hearts and minds toward Him in this moment, and God pays attention to that. R'Trugman says that a voice can come in the 10 Days that says, "What are you doing repenting? Who are you fooling? You've tried and failed many times now!" But the story of Jonah comes along to say God accepts our repentance in the moment. We need to follow up with changes in our lives, yes, but today we focus on today. Don't listen to that voice. If everyone listened to that voice, no one would repent. God accepted Nineveh's repentance in the moment, and He relented from the decree against them.

Calendar Review

With that review of the basics of the day, let's move on to some further important review. These teachings all build on each other. And particularly when that's the case, a decent teacher will review often, and a good student will actively engage with each review and even see if he or she can repeat it without the help of the teacher. Better yet, if the student can teach the material to someone else, they will solidify it in their own minds. What we're building here is not a small thing. It's a structure for understanding the whole Bible and all of creation; it goes far, far beyond the calendar. It's a study of salvation, and salvation is Yeshua, the One through Whom everything is created. Yeshua is the key for unlocking the hidden mysteries of God.

I'm going to pour out a bunch of detail here for the next few minutes. It will all be in the notes posted below the video, and it's all in previous teachings too, but the notes might be the best way to absorb this review.

So let's start with a quick overall calendar review. The sages associate Passover with birth. We find all kinds of birth imagery in the story of the Exodus, where we see one nation growing inside another until Egypt pushes Israel out. The baby learns to walk with the Father during the Counting of the Omer, when we find Israel on the way to Mt. Sinai learning to abide by its first commandments as a nation. Shavuot, in the 3rd month, is likened to a bar or bat mitzvah, the receiving the Torah, when the young person becomes personally responsible to the covenant with God and the Torah. Shavuot is also like an engagement ceremony, becoming engaged to God. We are old enough to say yes or no, but we aren't quite mature enough for the completion of the marriage yet. What follows in the calendar is the hot, dry summer, including the 3 Weeks. It's a period of struggle with the Torah, stumbling, and the result is God turning His face away as He destroys His own Temple. The 6th month which follows, the month of Elul, is a month of t'shuvah, repentance, return, and that repentance continues into the first ten days of Tishrei, making 40 complete days of repentance overall.

Tishrei, the 7th month that we find ourselves now, is all about renewal of the relationship. But more than renewal, Tishrei is a time for a great deepening of that relationship. At this point, we have reached adulthood, and so it's time for the consummation of the marriage. In the month of Tishrei, God specially provides the ability for opposites to unite, to form an echad. And this uniting results in fruitfulness. So it is that we not only have the intimacy of the sukkah in Tishrei, but we also have the beginning of a pregnancy, too, and it will be our task as the Bride to be FAITHFUL through the journey of the dark side of the year, faithful to form a body for the spiritual seed given to us and faithful to bring it forth through much pain and trial.

Beyond this human development picture we have been laying on top of the calendar, we have in recent teachings emphasized two journeys in the year, one we described as the walk in the light from the first month through the 7th month, and the second described as the walk in the darkness, which also includes the 7th month as its first month and continues forward to once again include the first month as its final month. So the two journeys overlap in the 1st and 7th months.

The first journey is the journey of youth and is associated with a lesser degree of free will and also with the Mosaic Covenant. The great fruit of this journey is repentance. The second journey is the journey of maturity. It begins with a finalization of the marriage to God in the 7th month and is associated with the New Covenant and much free will, the Bride stepping up to bring a sacrificial offering to God from her own heart of love for Him, not simply because she was commanded to do so. God left this winter side of the calendar with the main part of the second journey dark in terms of required mo'edim, giving the Bride the chance to step up and bring forth from her own heart; and what she has brought is Hanukkah and Purim. In the first journey, we receive the light, and in the second journey, we walk out that light in our own unique situations – we BECOME the light in the darkness.

Well, with that overall review of the basic framework in the year, let's do one more review of the smaller framework of the Tishrei mo'edim. Rosh Hashanah is focused on re-connecting to God after a period of disconnection. It's a day for crowning God King once again; it's also a day for hearing the shofar's call to completion of this 40-day period of repentance, t'shuvah. Rosh Hashanah is marked by our expression of our free will. In a way, God pushes us to reach within for what to do on Rosh Hashanah because He gives us so little specific direction for what we're supposed to do on that day – just rest from work and make a big noise. Rosh Hashanah is unique in that it occurs on a new moon, when there's very little light. And so we have had to develop a tradition to fill in the gaps and bring God a cohesive gift from our own hearts on that day. Again, as the first day of the 7-month journey of maturity, Rosh Hashanah needs to reflect the Bride stepping up to be the mature Bride. In fact, as we look at the calendar, Rosh Hashanah is, in a way, our first chance to reach back up to God from our own free will. God originally reaches down to us at Passover and again at Shavuot, but we have little free will at those times because we are young and God is so very big and obvious and right in front of our faces. Now that we are marking our point of adulthood in Tishrei and He takes a bit of a step

back, this is our first chance to reach back up to Him and say, “We accept. We want You to be our God, and we to be Your people.” And so we crown God King on Rosh Hashanah.

This reaching back up to Him gets the ball rolling for the other two great Tishrei mo’edim, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. At Rosh Hashanah, God sees our desire to enter into the relationship with Him of our own free will, and so He will act on this expression from our heart, but there’s a problem to deal with first; it’s a sin problem, the sin that has come between us since Shavuot. You see, we aren’t held responsible for sin until we agree to take on the Torah for ourselves, which we did at Shavuot. That is why our sin has such big consequences for us from that moment onward, resulting in the 9th of Av.

But here at Yom Kippur, God covers this problem through Yeshua. Yeshua takes His own blood into the heavenly Holy of Holies as an atonement for us, effecting the forgiveness of that sin. We read about Yeshua entering the heavenly Holy of Holies in Hebrews chapter 9. Again, it’s a COVERING at this point. The covering is what is needed to reestablish the relationship, and from that place of reconnection will come the actual dealing with the root of the sin, the rooting out of the sin and the thorough cleansing of the vessel. That’s partly what’s happening in the second journey of the year, this rooting out of the sin and the cleansing of the vessel. Remember that the whole context for the holiday of Hanukkah as winter sets in is the cleansing of the Temple, the cleansing of the vessel.

Moving forward to Sukkot, Sukkot is like the physical capstone on the three-step progression of Tishrei: spirit at Rosh Hashanah, soul at Yom Kippur, and body at Sukkot. We saw this same kind of spirit, soul, and body seed in Nissan with Pesach, Matzah, and Firstfruits. Sukkot is the mo’ed we particularly associate with Yeshua’s incarnation, His birth at Bethlehem. God accepts our reaching up to Him by covering our sin through Yeshua at Yom Kippur and then by sending Yeshua to not only be a King in the flesh but also a Husband! The King arrives in wedding clothes.

Circumcision and the Calendar

Well, that was a lot. But I think it’s appropriate that as we draw near to the end of the calendar, we have an overall picture recorded somewhere to go back to. Let’s move forward now to the exhilarating topic of...circumcision, which is an important theme in Scripture from beginning to end.

You know, it’s wonderful when you’ve seen something in the Word, and you’ve become convinced of it, but you don’t quite have clarity. Then God brings along someone with authority who can bring the clarity. I just love that. And that has been my recent experience with this topic of circumcision that, believe it or not, is very connected to Yom Kippur.

So, let’s start there. Why should circumcision be a topic of discussion here at Yom Kippur? As we dig into that question, we need to back up a couple steps. First, let’s recognize that the yearly calendar contains the entire picture of salvation, the entire picture of development. It’s a circle that takes us through a whole growth cycle, which is a miniature picture of a whole

lifetime that begins with birth in the spring and moves forward from there. In fact, it's not just the year, but every part of creation has the whole picture in it. An atom has particles orbiting the nucleus like the solar system has planets orbiting the sun. Everywhere we look, we see the same picture. So as we think about the year, we need to know that we should be able to see every aspect of salvation in the year. Each piece has to be there, and it has to be there in the right order, the same order that we see everywhere else in creation.

Now, an important part of this whole salvation journey is centered on covenants. God establishes His relationship with humanity through covenants. Our whole topic here with this study is the DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP with God. We've been tracking the development of our relationship with Him throughout the entire year. So covenants that define and grow that relationship are central to this study. So we want to find the connections between each of the covenants and the calendar. Now, it would be easy to just map the covenants chronologically onto the calendar: the Abrahamic Covenant is first and aligns with Passover; the Mosaic Covenant comes second and aligns with Shavuot, and the New Covenant comes third and aligns with the Fall. That's simple enough, and I believe it's true, but we can make a few more connections here.

First, let me say that we know Yeshua mentions the New Covenant at His last seder when He raises the cup after the meal, so that would seem to connect the New Covenant to Passover. But the truth is that Yeshua's crucifixion is outside of time, before time, foundational to the universe, and so although we see that event happening at Passover, it's going to express itself all throughout the calendar in different ways. So although we see Yeshua mentioning the New Covenant at Passover, we're looking for when that Covenant is really coming into play in the development process, and that's not at the moment of birth, at Passover. In fact, everything seems to point to the fall for the beginning of this deep engagement with the New Covenant.

Listen to what Matthew records Yeshua saying with that third cup at His last seder because it has a clue that leads us back to Tishrei: "And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS'" (Matthew 26:27-28). Did you catch that Yeshua mentions forgiveness of sins here in connection to the New Covenant? It's clearly called the New Covenant in Luke's version of the story, by the way. But in Matthew, Yeshua is connecting forgiveness of sins to the New Covenant. And what day in the calendar do we associate with forgiveness of sins? Yom Kippur. You see, forgiveness of sins doesn't come into play until AFTER WE ACCEPT THE TORAH PERSONALLY, becoming personally responsible to the Torah, which is connected in the calendar to Shavuot, in the 3rd month. We aren't held responsible for sin until we enter covenant with God through Torah, as we mentioned earlier. We become personally responsible to the Torah in the 3rd month, and it's only at that point that we are held responsible for our sins, and so it has to be after the 3rd month that we are reaching out for forgiveness of sins.

It's interesting, by the way, that Yeshua goes out of His way to say "all of you" drink this cup, "Drink of it, all of you," because He seems to be going out of His way to include Judas, which is

a way of extending forgiveness to even Judas before he betrays Yeshua. But we won't go down that bunny trail.

Now, as we continue looking for connections between Tishrei and the New Covenant, let me repeat that Moses comes down the mountain with the second set of tablets on Yom Kippur. The second set of tablets are emblematic of the covenant that is not broken, as we read in Jeremiah 31 of the New Covenant: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, MY COVENANT THAT THEY BROKE, though I was their Husband, declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:31-32). The second set of tablets are not broken, and this is like the New Covenant that will not be broken. We have other clues leading us to look for the New Covenant at Tishrei, too, including what's happening with the entrance into darkness as we cross the fall equinox at Rosh Hashanah. This entering the darkness is the context for Yeshua's coming, and it is Yeshua Who is the mediator of the New Covenant. John says of Yeshua that He is the "Light that shines in the darkness" (John 1).

This idea that the New Covenant is connected to the fall feasts is a very important one. What does it mean? Well, God has just taken us through a time of stumbling with the Torah and a time of inward introspection and repentance. He has shown us a lacking within. Through our repentance, we let Him know that WE SEE THAT LACK. And that's the open door, then, for God to pour out His grace on us. Tishrei is connected not only to God's judgment but also to God's mercy, His grace, His compassion, and this grace in Tishrei is understood by the rabbis to be a Divine response to our repentance. So what does He do to pour out His compassion and help us with our inability to keep the Torah? He makes with us a new covenant wherein the Torah is written inwardly on our hearts. It's the same Torah, different location, and that makes all the difference for us. Torah on the heart not only engages our mind in a more grounded way, but it also engages our emotions leading to a great ENERGY for action. If we want to be consistent in our Torah walk, we have to be PASSIONATE about it, and that passion comes when the Torah is written on our hearts. It's one thing to understand what we're supposed to do and to do that from duty, but it's something else when we see through experience the way of death and the way of life, and He grows within us a love for Himself and others, and He begins unlocking the deeper mysteries of the Torah, and the way of life and truth and love begins to take over our minds and our whole being. That's a very different experience of walking with Him, the empowered walk, and it's what the Bride NEEDS to be faithful to her Groom.

Ok, so we're being pointed to Yom Kippur as being a critical moment in the calendar connected to the New Covenant. We're coming back around to the circumcision question now. Where we see a covenant coming into force, we also see the sign of the covenant. Maybe the most prominent sign of covenant given in the Torah is circumcision. Circumcision is given to Abraham and his descendants as the sign of being in covenant with God. Well, if that's the case, then that sign is already taken, right? Well, not exactly. The Bible mentions several kinds of circumcision. The two most prominent are the circumcision in the flesh of a baby boy on the 8th day, and then there is the circumcision of the heart.

Circumcision of the heart is a perfect fit, in fact, as the sign of the New Covenant because the New Covenant is primarily spiritual. It is the writing of the Torah inwardly, on the heart. That's not firstly an external, physical thing. It's inward and spiritual. And the circumcision of the heart is, likewise, spiritual. Paul brings out some of these ideas in Romans 2.

What does it mean, though, that someone has a circumcised heart, which we're saying is a sign of being in the New Covenant? Ultimately it means that there is nothing inhibiting the flow of love out of a person's heart. If the Torah is written on the heart, and the core of the Torah is love for God and others, that means love is written on the heart, and a circumcised heart means that there is no flesh blockage to keep that love from flowing outward to the world around. If you come across a stranger, and even with very little contact with that person, you sense the love flowing through him or her, that's someone who has a circumcised heart that allows the Torah on the heart to flow outward. That's the sign of a person in the New Covenant.

Ok, so this is all just to say that if we're dealing with a kind of engaging of the New Covenant here at Yom Kippur, then we should be looking for a circumcision of the heart here, too.

All this background brings me to a recent teaching I heard from R'Trugman in which he repeats a teaching from R' Yitzchak Ginsburgh that links different types of circumcision to different points on the calendar. Now for me, that kind of teaching is like gold, especially coming from R'Ginsburgh, who is one of the most respected living rabbis particularly in this area of making these kinds of deeper connections ([Jewish mysticism](#)). In this case, once again, he is connecting together of the topics of circumcision and the calendar.

Just a couple notes about R'Ginsburgh: according to Wikipedia, he was born in St. Louis and was a child prodigy in both music and math. He ended up, by the way, spending a portion of his childhood in Cleveland until the age of 14. R'Trugman is a close student of R'Ginsburgh and also has a deep connection to Cleveland, though I don't think the two would have known each other when they lived in Ohio. Apparently R'Trugman grew up in Cleveland and went to school at Cleveland State and Ohio State, though he has lived in Israel for many years now. Here is R'Ginsburgh's teaching as given over by R'Trugman.

We find four types of circumcision in Scripture: circumcision of the reproductive organ, circumcision of the lips, and the ears, and the heart. Once again, we have circumcision of the reproductive organ, the lips, the ears, and the heart. R'Trugman connects three of these to specific dates in the calendar, each being connected to an "8th day" in the calendar.

For a baby boy, the date is based on his birthday, of course; he is circumcised on the 8th day of his life.

For the ears, R'Ginsburgh connects circumcision of the ears to Shemini Atzeret, the 8th day of Sukkot and the end of the revealed holiday cycle. Remember that the ears are about integration – bringing from the left and the right and synthesizing that into meaning. The idea

here is that since Shemini Atzeret is the last day of the procession of the fall mo'edim, it is the day of "final integration" of all the service that we've done since Rosh Hashanah.

R'Ginsburgh connects circumcision of the lips to the 8 days of Hanukkah. One point he brings forward here in connecting the lips to Hanukkah is that the rabbis have ordained that the full Hallel be recited every day of Hanukkah. This is rare in the calendar. The full Hallel, all 6 Psalms, is only done on a few other occasions (first 2 days of Pesach, Shavuot, all days of Sukkot, and all days of Hanukkah (<https://www.ou.org/holidays/hallel/>)). The purpose of reciting the Hallel is to praise God, to praise Him with the mouth, and thus the lips.

Finally we come to the heart. R'Ginsburgh connects circumcision of the heart to Yom Kippur. The connection to the number 8 here is that Yom Kippur is the 8th day after the second day of Rosh Hashanah. And here, R'Ginsburgh reminds us that we're hitting our heart all day on Yom Kippur while going through a long list of sins and asking for forgiveness and pardon.

Well, is R'Ginsburgh right? What I can say is that there are a lot of reasons this teaching makes sense. First, we have already gone into detail about the heart and Yom Kippur. The work of circumcision of the heart is foundational to the whole second journey in the year, the journey of maturity. When we do t'shuvah and reach up to God, He answers by pouring out His grace on us, and here that grace takes the form of the writing the Torah on the heart. The heart circumcision enables that Torah to flow outward.

But the others make sense too. The idea of circumcision of the ears on the 8th day of Sukkot is perfect because Yeshua comes speaking words, words of truth. We need the flesh covering removed from our ears in order to hear Him as He shepherds us through the darkness. And what we see Yeshua doing in the gospel of John on Shemini Atzeret is that He divides the people with His words. His words are like a scalpel that cause some to side with Him and some to side against Him, as we see in John chapter 10.

And then we come to circumcision of the lips at Hanukkah. Again this fits with the overall pattern of the year. Hanukkah marks a point when we have cleaned up our own vessel like the Jews cleaned up the Temple, and at that point we can start going out, taking our light out into the gloom. It starts as a little point of light placed in the window on the first night of Hanukkah, and it grows and grows. There is an evangelical element to Hanukkah, and that's why circumcision of the lips fits so well there. As we sow the seed of the gospel, we need a purified mouth, lips that are not hindered by the blockage of the flesh.

But coming back to heart circumcision for one last point here, R'Trugman mentions another calendar connection to heart circumcision that I want to bring out as a final point here today because it's fascinating for one thing, and it also helps us to be even more specific about the process of heart circumcision and the work of the Bride in this season. In addition to this hitting of the heart at Yom Kippur and R'Ginsburgh's connecting that to heart circumcision on that day, R'Trugman talks about a connection between heart circumcision and the whole month of Elul, the 6th month. The connection comes from a verse that we just recently read in parsha

Nitzavim. In Deuteronomy 30, it says, “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deuteronomy 30:6). Well, what does that have to do with Elul? Fascinatingly, this verse is one of those that has the letters of ELUL spelled out as an acronym using first letters of words. You may have heard the famous “Ani l’dodi, v’dodi li” acronym for Elul, but there are others, including this verse that talks about God circumcising the heart. The acronym here doesn’t start with the first word of the verse, but starting from the fourth word, the first letters spell out aleph-lamed-vav-lamed. And this is a well-known and accepted connection to the month of Elul, this verse about God circumcising the heart.

Why would this verse be picked out, though, as being particularly appropriate for Elul? I think it’s because it’s the month of t’shuvah, and what cuts into the heart more than t’shuvah?

But we can ask, “Ok, so which is it?” Is the heart circumcision at Yom Kippur as R’Ginsburgh says, or is it in Elul, according to this verse? Well, as ever, the answer is it’s both. Heart circumcision occurs over time and in stages. Remember that Elul begins a 40-process of repentance that stretches into Tishrei. It’s a 40-day process of transformation, which is what the number 40 is about.

Recall that heart circumcision has two aspects – at times in Scripture, we are told that God circumcises the heart, and elsewhere in Scripture, we’re commanded to circumcise our own hearts. So let me posit the idea that, according to the verse “...the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring,” first God does an act of circumcision in the 6th month wherein He is giving us the gift of repentance, opening us up to repentance, and then as the journey of maturity begins in the month of Tishrei, God says, “Ok, now you do it on your own. This is your time to step up and be the Bride, and it begins here with these 10 days of repentance.” And there we are in the pews hitting our hearts on Yom Kippur. Now, in truth, God still gives us a lot of help even in this second aspect of heart circumcision because we are following and reflecting Yeshua on Yom Kippur. The real action on this day is centered on Yeshua in the heavenly Holy of Holies. What we’re doing below is a kind of reflection of that. But in terms of humanity stepping up, isn’t Yeshua one of us? He is the Son of God, but He is also a man, like us. And so, with His leadership and example, we finish the heart circumcision by circumcising our own hearts just as God is taking a step back and the darkness grows and the Bride is given the chance to step up to be the Bride.

Speaking of following Yeshua’s example on Yom Kippur, it’s fascinating that in Temple times, the people were allowed to gather and observe what they could of the High Priest’s movements during that long day. They would be eagerly watching from their vantage point outside the inner courtyard, virtually following in His footsteps, to the point that when they would hear him uttering the Holy Name, they would fall down on their faces. And when the High Priest would disappear into the Temple proper, surely they were fervently praying for him until he re-emerged. It’s a beautiful picture for us of how we are to follow in the footsteps of the true High Priest Who is above all earthly High Priests, Yeshua our Messiah.

Truly, the whole picture that begins to emerge here is just breathtaking. But it's not just cute or curious that we begin to see what's going on beneath the surface of the calendar and God's overall pattern of salvation. There is literally no page of Scripture where these understandings of the deeper structure aren't present. The foundation beneath is the foundation everywhere. As God has led me in this study, my eyes have just been popping out of my head almost every time I pick up the Bible. Truly in these darkening days God is lifting a veil. He's revealing secrets long hidden. We are so privileged to be living in these times. And all glory to Him.

Well, that's all for today. Thank you, once again, for listening. May God bless us on this Yom Kippur with an attitude of seriousness and reverence, but with joy also down deep inside, knowing that at Yom Kippur we focus on Yeshua's blood that covers our sins. May God grant us the ability to repent deeply. May He bless us to stand truly as one before Him. May He bless us all with a favorable judgment rooted in the work of His Son. And may we rise up to be the people He has made us to be. Shalom.