

## Day Ten

Psalm 145; Jonah; Exodus 20:17

*Yom Kippur* is a solemn day of reflection and self-examination. If you read Leviticus 23:26-32, a passage that specifically describes this day, you see that our Creator is very serious about His people remembering it. The Day of Atonement is detailed as a “perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places” (NASU). *Yom Kippur* is to be a time when we focus on our relationship with God. There are great spiritual benefits of taking one specific day every year for a time of deep remorse and repentance for our transgressions.

Remembering *Yom Kippur* by no means overrides our belief in the atoning work of Messiah Yeshua at Golgotha (Calvary), and that by His sacrifice our sins have been remitted. Likewise, we should always remember that through the confession of our transgressions that He “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NASU), something that can take place *on any day* of the year.

In observing *Yom Kippur*, what we have is the blessing of considering, for a twenty-four hour period, a focused amount of time on our current condition before the Creator God. Obviously, humbling our souls is something that requires us to put our attention upon His ability to forgive us, and our need of a Savior. I pray that your relationship with the Holy One would be improved as we each bow our knee and confess with our tongues, all that must be said individually and corporately.

For one last time I encourage you to read through Psalm 145. You can read that King David’s heart was constantly in awe of the Lord every day. So on this day, perhaps a final reading of this psalm will plough up your heart to receive seeds of mercy and love that will carry you through the year ahead.

### The Tenth Commandment

**“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:17, NASU).**

The final commandment of the Decalogue is, according to the Rabbis, the one sin from which all the others originate.<sup>1</sup> Covetousness of the heart often prompts a person to follow base desires, rather than the wishes of the Almighty. Covetousness is a major part of the motivation that generates disobedience.

In his instructions to the Romans, Paul discusses how the sin of covetousness can cause a person to die spiritually:

“What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COVET.’ But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Therefore did that which is good become a *cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful” (Romans 7:7-13, NASU).

Paul understood that covetousness in the human heart can cause a great number of other sins to manifest themselves. This is the one major command among the Ten Commandments that directly pertains to a person's ethics or morality, which is often not paralleled among the contemporary law codes of the Ancient Near East. While there were many law codes contemporary to the Ancient Israelites that forbade murder, theft, adultery, and even encouraged respect for one's family<sup>2</sup>—the Tenth Commandment is a Divine injunction to not covet after something that belongs to someone else. Wanting something else can lead to violation of other commandments.

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<sup>1</sup> Nosson Scherman, ed., et. al., *The ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2000), 413.

<sup>2</sup> For a further discussion and comparison, consult W.W. Davies, *The Codes of Hammurabi and Moses* (Berkeley, CA: Apocryphile Press, 2006).

## Day Ten Yom Teruah and the Ten Days of Awe

The commandment not to covet has always cast a profound shadow on the other nine, as breaking this command usually generates breaking more serious injunctions. Due to covetousness, a person can then: murder, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness, create idols to worship, and commit other gross sins. Interestingly, it is when humans form graven images to worship that the very idols they fashion become precious in their sight. People will covet things to protect them from harm, or give them pleasure. The Prophet Isaiah described this problem, and the ultimate result of it as being put to shame:

“Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame. Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit? Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame” (Isaiah 44:9-11, NASU).

Unfortunately, the pattern of Ancient Israel throughout much of the Tanakh was to produce vain idols that replaced the Holy One as their object of worship and devotion. Is this why it is beneficial to take a look at the Book of Jonah at this time of year? Is it possible that Jonah is, by his example, a good prophet to study as we see him running from the Lord, and not following the clear word of instruction that he received from Him?

Years ago, I remember receiving some instruction from Jonah that I thought communicated the essence of what we should *not do* as we seek to follow the Almighty. The teacher likened the concept of constructing “vain idols” to an umbrella. The mental image was of someone *standing in the rain of God’s faithfulness* being poured out continually around the globe. But, when the person who has adopted a vain idol lifts up his open umbrella—representing an idol—then all of the faithfulness that is being showered down from Heaven bounces off the umbrella and falls to the ground. As the Scriptures have explained it, those who worship idols disregard God, and He returns their disloyalty to Him in kind:

“Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, but I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD” (Jonah 2:8-9, NASU).

Jonah decided to proclaim, with a voice of thanksgiving, his loyalty and thankfulness to the Lord. He understood the importance of paying his vows to the Holy One. And then, in an interesting phrase that is read in Hebrew in most Jewish synagogues on this very day of *Yom Kippur*, he proclaims *yeshuatah l’ADONAI*, meaning “Salvation is from the LORD.” If you have ever heard a Jewish person, who may not believe in the Messiah Yeshua, say this, you may be startled that they do not see the connection—as Yeshua is our

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salvation! Yet that is not our problem. We can certainly pray, recognizing that at some previous point in time, we also have lifted up umbrellas of unbelief that have prevented the faithfulness of God from raining down on us. If you encounter a non-Believing Jewish person during this season, then simply let your example of obedience provoke him or her to jealousy (cf. Romans 11:11, 14).

On this Day of Atonement, let us drop whatever vain idols we might be harboring in our hearts, and instead raise holy hands, praising our Heavenly Father for His faithfulness to wash us from our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness! For He alone is worthy to be praised! He alone reigns from Heaven above—and indeed, Yeshua is our Salvation!