

## Chapter 22

### The Great Awakening

It is a bitter moment for Israel. It had taken decades of sacrifice and joyful labor to build their tiny nation. They had seen it preserved through miracle upon miracle—from the very first day of its existence. The prosperous homeland the Jews had forged from rocky soil and immigrant blood had been fueled by hope—no, *desperation*—for this was understood to be their race’s last and only chance for long-term survival in a world that irrationally and universally hated them. Less than a year before, their historic foe, *dar al-Islam*, had been slain by the tens of millions upon their hills in a deliverance that only a fool or a blind man could have attributed to the hand of chance or the arm of man. But now, only now when they as a nation are awakening as from a coma to the reality of their God, a horrible alternate reality is coming into focus: they must flee.

Their greatest king, David, had seen it all—three millennia before this. But no one understood his words until now. **“I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. Destroy, O Yahweh, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls; Iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it. Destruction is in its midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets....”** David prays that as in the days of the tower of Babel, no one would comprehend the sinister speech of those who now trouble Jerusalem. Israelis have weathered storms before, but this tempest is different. It has been conjured up by Satan’s minion and his false prophet, all the more destructive because they had pretended to be Israel’s friends. **“For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng....”** Yes, the Antichrist and his prophet had played the part of Israel’s protectors; they supported the reinstatement of the temple worship (or seemed to) when the weight of the world’s opinion would have gladly let the Jews go to hell. Like Judas Iscariot before them, their betrayal is all the harder to bear because of their close but feigned relationship with God’s chosen.

But their true colors have now been raised. With friends like this, who needs enemies? The Antichrist has demanded to be worshiped in Yahweh’s stead, sitting in the holy of holies as if he were God himself—the ultimate blasphemy, the abomination that causes desolation. **“Let death seize them; let them go down alive into sheol, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them....”** Death, he says, is too good for them (i.e., the Antichrist and the False Prophet). It seems a strange thing to pray for, but as we shall see (in Revelation 19:20), David’s request will be

granted—literally—even though few in history have ever suffered this horrible fate. There *was* one guy, Korah, back in Moses’ day (see Numbers 16) who went out the same way—and not surprisingly, it was for roughly the same reason: challenging God’s anointed and attempting to usurp his authority.

The deceitful nature of the Antichrist’s charade was not hidden from David: **“He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”** (Psalm 55:8-15, 20-21)

Lest you come to the conclusion that the Jews are overreacting to a simple “broken covenant,” one among thousands that have been breached by nations large and small since the dawn of diplomacy, listen to the words of Yahshua: **“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened....”** As bad as things have gotten in the past, they are nothing compared to what’s coming. And it’s all because Satan wanted to be “like God,” and because Satan’s man wanted to be accepted as the Messiah. Well has Yahweh commanded: *You shall not covet.* **“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. [Luke reports it like this: “They will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them.” Luke 17:23] For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”** (Matthew 24:21-27) Nobody will be able to say they weren’t warned. When the Tribulation gets under way (trust me, you’ll know) then it doesn’t matter how slick a performance the wannabe Messiah puts on: don’t believe him. Even if he’s got a statue that miraculously comes to life and demands your obedience, tell him to go to...well, his final destination is already determined, but don’t follow him. The real Messiah won’t be found preaching in the wilderness like John the Baptist, nor will he be seen planning his world-conquering strategies in a palace in Jerusalem. His arrival will be so sudden you won’t even be able to see it. *Ready or not....*

This same period of time was described to Daniel: **“At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.”** (Daniel 12:1) Good news, bad news again. The worst period of trouble in the history of man is predicted, a time so bad that the archangel himself has to be brought in to save Israel’s bacon (so to speak). Michael is identified in Jude 9 as the angel who had to “contend” with Satan over the body of Moses. He’s also the

one seen in command of the angelic armies that threw Satan and his demonic host out of heaven in Revelation 12:7-8. In other words, Michael is no lightweight—he’s probably the mightiest angel there is, which explains why Yahweh has him “standing watch over the sons of [Daniel’s] people,” the Jews.

The good news here is easily missed. Yes, it says that Daniel’s people “**shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book,**” something every Christian counts on, though we all know that physical death is part of the journey. But the context here is earthly Tribulation, not heaven vs. hell. We’re talking about bodies, not souls. This seems to mean that the redeemed Jews will all (SF3) make it through the Tribulation and into the Millennium—despite the Antichrist’s efforts to kill them. We saw in a previous chapter how the “woman” (Israel) fled from the dragon into the wilderness, who sent a flood after her that was swallowed by the earth (Revelation 12:6, 13-17). This is a confirmation of the truth related there. John and Daniel often seem to see the same things from different angles. We also saw how the 144,000 Israelite messengers would be “sealed” from harm during this time. These Jews who are “found written in the book” are the very ones to whom the 144,000 have been ministering. Apparently, being “sealed” by Yahweh can be catching.

After a few words about resurrected souls (something we’ll get to in due time), Daniel goes on to write, “**Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?’ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’**” (Daniel 12:5-9) Daniel’s encounter with these angels (the vision starts back in chapter 10) was so terrifying he had to be resuscitated before he could receive the message, and even then he freely admits that he didn’t have a clue as to what it meant. But he was a faithful servant of God, and wrote down what he had seen and heard so that we living at “the time of the end”—for whom the message was intended—*could* understand. Here we see (again) that the last three and a half years will be a time when the power of “the set-apart people” will be “completely shattered.”

I believe that the angel is referring to Israel here, not the Church (i.e., the new Laodicean believers), because Christ promised that the “gates of hell” would not prevail against his Ekklesia. It’s true that the Antichrist will be making war with the “rest of [Israel’s] offspring” during this last three and a half years—with more than a little success. The Church, however, because she is empowered and

indwelled by the Holy Spirit, is never powerless to defend herself, although she must always be on guard against Satan's wiles. But the temporal power of Israel, that to which Daniel is referring here, is said to be "completely shattered." Were it not for the miraculous provision of Yahweh as she flees to the wilderness, the Antichrist would track down and kill every last Jew on the planet.

Why, we must ask ourselves, has Yahweh arranged it like this (or at the very least, allowed it to happen like this)? Why must Israel be rendered completely incapable of helping herself? It's something every Christian should know: that in reality, we are *all* completely incapable of helping ourselves. Israel (like the rest of us) must be broken completely of her self-reliance, her intrepid inbred stubbornness, her pride. Israelis are so used to taking on the world single handedly—and winning—that it's easy for them to miss the hand of God guiding their destiny. Now, because Yahweh loves them so much, He is going to go to the trouble of letting them see just how vulnerable they would really be without His protection.

They will be graphically reminded of Yahweh's sanctuary, of course, when He destroys the armies of Gog. His provision will be fragrantly obvious as they spend seven months cleaning up the rotting carnage: few bullet wounds, no shrapnel, just millions upon millions of dead soldiers struck by lightning, burned with brimstone, poisoned with the bio-chemical weapons they brought with them, crushed by hail, drowned in floods, and buried under the rubble of the biggest earthquake anybody could remember. But it's a significant leap from the surprise and relief that will inevitably flow from such an experience to relying on Yahweh the way a small child relies upon his father.

The crisis of conscience will occur with the grand unveiling of the Antichrist's satanic agenda, the abomination of desolation. At this time, precisely 1,230 days into the Tribulation, he will apparently (SF4) set a thirty-day deadline: within that window, all residents of Israel must pledge their loyalty to the Antichrist's one-world government, an act which openly aligns the inductee with Lucifer, by "bowing" to the image of the beast that the false prophet has erected (or installed or downloaded, as the case may be)—the image animated by Satan's spirit. They must also receive the Mark of the Beast in their right hands or their foreheads.

All of this will be presented in the most positive of lights, of course. *It's a privilege to be chosen to inaugurate System 666. The whole world is watching, because the Israeli program will serve as the prototype for every other nation. You are at the cutting edge of the brave new world—the first people on earth to step through the door to utopia!* I believe that the Antichrist and his false prophet will actually think that the Jews' acceptance is a *fait accompli*—especially since they've made it quite clear that they've got no qualms about using force and intimidation to get the job done. No one will be more surprised than they when

the Israelis stay away from the sign-up centers in droves. By the end of the first week, when roughly a quarter of the population should have been Marked, only two or three percent have shown up. Television commercials and radio spots are hastily thrown together urging the populace not to wait until the last minute—*avoid the crowds*.

As the second week wears on with the same pitiful turnout, it begins to dawn on the authorities that they may have a problem on their hands. They begin to put two and two together: low turnout at the sign-up centers; lots of reported absenteeism from work—people calling in sick but not seeing their doctors or buying medicine; much more traffic than usual, especially in the outlying areas; grocery stores experiencing shortages of canned goods and other imperishable foods. Gradually it becomes apparent to the hapless workers tasked to implement the Mark and the Oath: Israel is not buying it. Worse, they're not just staying away from the sign-up centers, they're running away, leaving their homes and businesses, packing up what they can in their little cars and scattering to the four winds. Soldiers are dispatched to direct them back to their homes, but this proves to be harder than herding cats. Civil disobedience is rampant, and the soldiers, whether IDF or U.N., are as likely as not to be in sympathy with the fleeing multitudes.

By the beginning of the third week, the Antichrist knows he has a full-scale civil meltdown on his hands. It's not an organized rebellion, though—he can't arrest the leaders; there *are* no leaders. Nobody's standing on street corners or gathering crowds at the Wailing Wall making fiery speeches and implanting the seeds of sedition. Nor is the Knesset fomenting this uprising—eighty percent of *them* are missing in action too, as it turns out. The Antichrist issues orders that people fleeing the cities are to be detained, and if they resist, they are to be shot.

What has happened? What would make millions of law-abiding Israeli citizens leave their homes and business and run away in panic? It's a warning that they've been hearing for the past several years from 144,000 young Jewish zealots. The warning is recorded in the Christian scriptures, in the New Testament, but the message is for *them*; the message is for *now*. The warning, they said, is from the Messiah Himself: **“When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.”** (Matthew 24:15-20) Now we know why all the haste is necessary.

When the Antichrist perceives that his plan isn't working, he will try to slam the door shut on all this do-it-yourself emigration. Those who know what to expect,

those who have heeded the words of Yahshua, will get out immediately. Those who hesitate like Lot's wife, those who wait for two or three weeks to make their move, will be far less likely to successfully escape.

And where will they go? I'm going to go way out on a limb here (I know; you think I live there). We have seen how the nation of Jordan (ancient Edom, Moab, and Ammon), is reduced to a severely depopulated pile of rubble during the War of Magog—probably due to a combination of factors—perhaps by VX nerve gas from Syrian missiles, redirected by hand of God (see chapter 17), then by Gog's armies devouring the land like locusts on their way to the killing fields of Israel, followed by nuclear devastation at the hands of the Antichrist. In the end, Israelis will end up exercising *de facto* control over Jordanian territory: **"They [Israel] shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them."** (Isaiah 11:14) Or how about this one? **"I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live,' says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them."** (Zephaniah 2:8-9) But perhaps the most compelling clue is this snippet: **"Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler."** (Isaiah 16:4)

Therefore I believe that many if not most of Israel's fleeing multitudes will hide out in Jordan, specifically in its more mountainous regions east and south of the Dead Sea. (Yahshua, after all, said to those in Judea, "flee to the *mountains*.") This would explain several things about the enigmatic Olivet discourse passage. The Jordan River (usually a trickle) is considerably easier to ford in the dry season, summer or fall, than when it's swollen with rain in the winter or spring. ('Course, it's *never* swollen these days because most of the water is drawn off for agricultural irrigation, but things might be different after the Jordanian and West Bank Palestinian farmers are dead.) And pregnant or nursing mothers? They'll be entering a land that has seen the ravages of nuclear and/or biochemical war. Between fallout, pollution, and famine, it won't be the ideal time to be faced with caring for little ones. And the Sabbath? In Israel, nothing much works on the Sabbath, and besides, if you're a Jew piously trying to keep the rabbinical law, you won't be able to flee very far within the confines of a Sabbath-day's journey (2,000 cubits, about half a mile).

Some, of course, won't flee at all. Some Jews will stay in Jerusalem, out of confusion, inertia, or fear of the unknown. Some will actually believe in the Antichrist. Others, atheists to the end, will remain in the city hoping to cash in on the financial opportunities that will surely arise in the capital of the new world

order. But Satan and the Antichrist are learning by experience what Yahweh has known from the beginning: the Jews are a stubborn and stiff-necked people.

That's why Zechariah predicted: **"The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city."** (Zechariah 14:2) The Hebrew word *golah* doesn't necessarily mean "captivity." Its primary meaning is exile. Its root word, *galah*, means to denude (especially in a disgraceful sense), hence it is properly used of both being sent into captivity (captives were usually stripped) or of being driven into exile without one's worldly possessions (as when Muhammad drove the Banu Qaynuqa Jews out of Yathrib after stealing their possessions). The latter meaning is the precise description of the Jew's flight from the Antichrist following the abomination of desolation. Yahshua specifically told them not to go back to their homes and pack up their stuff. He didn't actually say they wouldn't have time, though that's what we all tend to think when we read the Matthew 24 passage we just quoted. But that's not exactly true—they've got a month to comply with the order. The real problem is that the Antichrist, knowing the Jewish propensity for rebellion, will be leaving nothing to chance (SF4). He could easily have their homes watched, with roving U.N. goon squads tasked to make sure the Israelis "volunteer" to take the Mark of the Beast. If they go back to their homes to gather their belongings, they'll run the risk of being caught.

So Zechariah is telling us that half the Jews in Jerusalem will escape with little more than the clothes on their backs, and the other half will stay—only to suffer a new pogrom: being robbed, beaten, and raped. The city will once again be "trodden down by the gentiles."

More evidence: **"Behold, the whirlwind of Yahweh goes forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind; it will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of Yahweh will not return until He has done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it."** Israel will indeed "consider" the furious whirlwind Yahweh has unleashed against the wicked Muslim invaders in their land. That is precisely why they must now flee: they know the Antichrist's claims are bogus. **"At the same time," says Yahweh, 'I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.'** Thus says Yahweh: **'The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness—Israel, when I went to give him rest.'** Yahweh has appeared of old to me, saying: **'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!'"** (Jeremiah 30:23-31:4) Beginning with a recap of the judgment meted out in World War III, Jeremiah reiterates Yahweh's promise that the Israel that sees and survives the War of Magog will return to Him, and will be sheltered **"in the wilderness."** He finishes by assuring His chosen people that He will rebuild their nation. I presume

He's talking about more than infrastructure, but also lives and relationships—especially their relationship with Him.

Hosea knew something about rocky relationships, for Yahweh had told him to marry an unfaithful woman, just so he'd know and communicate what it felt like to be the God who loved Israel. **“She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband.’”** (Hosea 2:7) He's talking about Israel. The Jews took pride in their Laws, their superior “chosen-people” status, their position and place. And even when it became gruesomely obvious that Yahweh had separated Himself from her because of her spiritual adulteries, Israel continued to chase gods of her own making, a god of intellect and reason or one of religious exactitude—hoping she would be able to either think or work her way back to Yahweh. But pride of intellect and true faith are like oil and water, substances that can enjoy no lasting relationship.

**“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt....”** The parallel between the rescue of Israel under Moses and that at the middle of the Tribulation will be lost on no one. As we have seen, the destruction of Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea will have its direct counterpart when the desert swallows the Antichrist's pursuing forces (Revelation 12:16). Will the Valley of Achor (which leads to the Dead Sea from the west) be the scene of this deliverance? Will archeologists a thousand years from now find the Antichrist's tanks and armored vehicles strewn like broken toys through the Valley of Achor, just as they have found Egyptian chariot parts scattered across the floor of the Gulf of Aqaba? One can only speculate. Perhaps it will happen some other place. But it *will* happen.

**“‘And it shall be, in that day,’ says Yahweh, ‘That you will call Me “My Husband,” and no longer call Me “My Master,” for I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more.’”** (Hosea 2:14-17) The relation Yahweh seeks is that of a husband to his wife, not that of a master to his slave. It is one of mutual companionship, love, and intimacy, not fear or intimidation—the mark of all satanic religious counterfeits. Note that for the umpteenth time He stresses the importance of names. Whereas they had purposely forgotten His (though “YHWH was referred to by name seven thousand times in their scriptures) they will at last know Him—*by name*—and conversely, the names of all the false gods they had ever worshiped will be lost through neglect.

How Israel came to “lose” the use of Yahweh's name is telling. During their Babylonian captivity (imposed because of their infidelity to Yahweh), the Jews' captors called them by the name of their God: “Yahudim,” Yahweh's people. But

because they were conquered exiles—slaves—the name was naturally used not only as a national moniker but also as an epithet. This, of course, grated on the collective Jewish psyche. A generation or two of this and what should have been a blessing became a curse. Calling a Jew a “Yahudi” in Babylon would have been like calling an African American a “nigger” or a Mexican American a “wetback.” It was taken as an offensive slap in the face, an insult. Rather than acknowledge their guilt and return to Yahweh, however, these Yahudim simply retreated into a deeper state of denial. Though they left their scriptures more or less intact (for the moment), they refused to pronounce or write the name Yahweh. In time, it became illegal—a blasphemy punishable by stoning—to utter the name of God. When they came across it in oral scripture recitations, they substituted the word “Adonay,” meaning lord or master. This was precisely as Satan had planned it, for the name of the prototypical false god, Baal or Bel, meant that very thing. The priests and rabbis of Babylon had in their stubbornness been deceived into substituting a loving Husband for a cruel and capricious master. Hosea is saying that this fatal error will be undone in the end.

The prophet continues: **“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely. I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know Yahweh....”** Warfare of the sort described by the prophets—nuclear, chemical, and biological—is not only lethal to men. All living things suffer. But Yahweh here is making a promise to the beasts of the earth: when this is all over, He will abolish war forever as His people come to know him. It’s as if He’s giving this permanent peace to his beloved Israel as a wedding present. He *is* the Prince of Peace, after all.

**“‘It shall come to pass in that day that I will answer,’ says Yahweh; ‘I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; they shall answer ‘Jezreel.’ Then I will sow her [Israel] for Myself in the earth, and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’”** (Hosea 2:18-23) Jezreel (the name prophetically given Hosea’s eldest son) means “God sows.” We’re taking a peek at the conclusion of the matter here. We shall soon learn that rain will be withheld from the earth during the last three and a half years as the Jews flee from the Antichrist. But when Yahweh has fulfilled his purposes, He will again command the heavens to **“answer the earth”** by sending rain, which will in turn **“answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil.”** When God sows seed, the earth must yield its bounty—and the seed He is sowing here is Israel itself, who will flourish under His blessing like a fruitful vine.

But first, Israel must flee; she must become reliant on Yahweh, utterly powerless to help herself, for this is the day of which the prophet spoke: **“We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it. And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.”** (Jeremiah 30:5-7)

Like I said, good news, bad news.

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**“The time of Jacob’s trouble?”** If I were an Israeli Jew living in these days, I would be calling it the time of Jacob’s *confusion*. I’d be saying to myself, *Wait a minute. Less than a year ago, we finally figured out who Yahweh was. Gog and his armies came in here looking for blood, and when our backs were up against the wailing wall, our God saved us. And we all suddenly understood: His mercy endures forever, just like David said. He’s more than Laws and feasts and traditions—He’s the true God, the Creator of the Universe...*

*So what’s with that European imposter up there on the temple mount, telling the world that he’s responsible for our deliverance, that he’s our Messiah? He’s not even Jewish. He doesn’t fit the profile. There are hundreds of prophecies about the Messiah, and he doesn’t fit any of ’em. But if we don’t buy into his scheme and worship him, the penalty is death, and he’s just the guy to do it. So now we’re on the run. We’re being forced to abandon Jerusalem, to leave Israel. Everything we’ve worked for is gone—which begs the question: now that we finally know Yahweh, where is He? And where is His Messiah?*

This is one of the things I love about Biblical prophecy. Time and again it presents a seemingly insoluble conundrum, and then shows us how Yahweh will prove (or has proved) His glory with the solution. At the risk of wandering off the subject, that, in the end, is the whole purpose of prophecy—to demonstrate the power of Yahweh. For if we comprehend his glory, we are that much closer to understanding His love.

As if to make my point for me, Ezekiel provides this wrap-up for his revelation of the War of Magog: **“I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh their God from that day forward....”** The role of God in Magog’s defeat will be evident to all, not just Jews but also the gentile bystanders—especially the ones who have felt Yahweh’s “hand laid on them.” Denying the obvious truth will require willful defiance and purposeful suspension of logic (which is not to say it won’t happen).

**“The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them....”**

This, of course, is something pre-rapture Christians intuitively understand about the Jews, whether or not they understand Yahweh’s plans for their restoration. God’s protection of Israel will be the only logical explanation for the lopsided outcome of the Battle of Magog, but if Yahweh is providing refuge now, why has He been “hiding His face” from them for the past nineteen hundred years? Could it have something to do with their national rejection of Yahshua of Nazareth? Frankly, I don’t know if the Tribulation gentiles will be able to do the math on this, but the fact of prophecy remains: they will recognize that God’s mighty hand has everything to do with Israel’s fortunes.

**“Therefore thus says Yahweh: ‘Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name—after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid. When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, then they shall know that I am Yahweh their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says Yahweh.”**

(Ezekiel 39:21-29) The prophet here gives us a snapshot of a work we see in process: the regathering of Israel. It has begun, but it is by no means complete, for Yahweh has not yet **“poured out His Spirit”** on them as a nation. Since the reign of David, rare have been the moments when Israel has been faithful to Yahweh; thus equally rare have been the times when **“they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid.”** And yet, for His own name’s sake, Yahweh in these last days will bring them back to Himself.

So it’s ironic in a way that David should have such a clear view of Israel’s predicament in these strange days: **“I will call upon Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies. The pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon Yahweh, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears....”** There’s nothing like having your back to the wall to give you a fresh perspective on your need for a close relationship with God. David, like the Jews of the last days, knew what it was like to have to leave town in a hurry because the authorities were trying to kill him.

But He also knew Yahweh's provision and protection: **"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire...."** Is it just me, or do you too hear echoes of the Battle of Magog in David's poetry? As a matter of fact, it sounds a whole lot more like Yahweh's dealing with Gog on the mountains of Israel than it does His protection of David from a delusional King Saul. I mean, **"hailstones and coals of fire?"**

In the prophetic context, yes. Read: brimstone (cf. Ezekiel 38:22). To make sure we'd get it, David said it again: **"Yahweh thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were uncovered at Your rebuke, O Yahweh, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils...."** We've heard something like this before (II Samuel 22—in chapter 17 of this volume). Again we are reminded of the scope of the devastation that will take place during World War III. And although it's a "man-made" war, passages like this make it abundantly clear that Yahweh is not a passive bystander but an active participant.

**"He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but Yahweh was my support."** (Psalm 18:3-18) David knew what it was to depend on Yahweh. Israel has forgotten, so their God is going to give them a three and a half year refresher course. What will that be like?

Jewish self-reliance (something we Americans naturally tend to admire) has been crafted and perfected over the years into a subtle form of idolatry. Yahweh intends to break the idolatrous pride that has emerged from being on the winning side of too many battles: **"In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel. He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands; he will not respect what his fingers have made, nor the wooden images nor the incense altars."** (Isaiah 17:7-8) Having to rely on Yahweh instead of upon their vaunted IDF (the Israeli Defense Force, many of whose superb weapons are manufactured right there in Israel) will no doubt be a hard lesson for the Jews. (And don't look so pious: many of us Christians never really learn to rely on Him either.) But though their pride may still be intact after the Battle of Magog (since they will participate with valor and achieve hard-won successes of their own), they will be

reduced (actually, *elevated*) to a place of complete dependence on Yahweh when the Antichrist implements his grand satanic scheme.

Isaiah foresaw the confusion of these times: **“They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of Yahweh they shall cry aloud from the sea. Therefore glorify Yahweh in the dawning light, the name of Yahweh, God of Israel, in the coastlands of the sea....”** Whether the prophet’s references to “the sea” are literal or metaphorical, it is clear that in the wake of World War III (the overall context of the passage) Israel once again finds itself in exile among the gentiles. And once again we see this unsettling dichotomy of Israel finally coming to know Yahweh, only to find themselves in the Antichrist’s gun sights as a result. **“From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: ‘Glory to the righteous!’ But I said, ‘I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously....”** What else would you call it when the one to whom you had virtually surrendered your national sovereignty in the interests of peace turns around and demands your submission, your worship, your very soul. It’s treachery, pure and simple.

Israel is not alone in their dilemma, however. The whole world is in the same basic pickle, and there’s nowhere left to hide. Isaiah continues: **“Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken. The earth is violently broken; the earth is split open; the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.”** (Isaiah 24:14-20) Throughout the scriptures, we see earthquakes playing a starring role in the last days. My impression (admittedly an extrapolation) is that they will continue gaining in frequency and intensity until a seismic climax at the very end of the Tribulation, as if the earth itself is groaning under the strain of our sin. Does “it will fall, and not rise again” mean that the earth’s crust will at some point (presumably upon Yahshua’s return in glory) reach a state of equilibrium? We have seen a spate of violent temblors that began gaining momentum in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Will Christ’s coming cause it to abate for a thousand years? We aren’t specifically told, so I can’t be dogmatic, but a peaceful geology seems to fit the Millennial picture the Bible gives us. However, I’m getting ahead of myself again. (Don’t blame me. It’s Isaiah’s fault.)

Hosea, as I have observed, was God’s designated prophetic expert in betrayal and forgiveness. Through him, Yahweh told Israel what would happen to them, and what it would take to undo the damage. **“For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their**

**offense...."** In response to their "offense," Yahweh would treat them like a lion treats supper—and then he would leave them alone without the comfort only He could provide. Why? So that **"Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."** (Hosea 5:14-15)

If I were a Jew searching for the answer to Yahweh's carrot-and-stick conundrum, I would be desperately trying to figure out what "offense" I was supposed to acknowledge. *Was it one of those 613 laws that we forgot to observe? Was it all of them? Or something else? This is hardly fair, Father. After all, we haven't been able to atone for our sins since the Romans tore down the temple—Your temple—and scattered us to the four winds. Oh, wait! That was when you "tore us," isn't it? So our "offense" was something we did, or did not do, before that. What could it have been?*

Hosea gives the searching Jews another tantalizing clue a bit later. **"Come, and let us return to Yahweh; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of Yahweh. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth."** (Hosea 6:1-3) Both the Old and New Testaments talk about a thousand years being as one day to Yahweh, and one day being like a thousand years. I have reason to believe that the truth will hit the Jewish people like a thunderbolt—all at once and with a great deal of noise. Read: "After two *thousand years* He will revive us...." Some sharp Israeli will be reading Hosea, and the timeline will jump up and bite him (or her): *It has been almost exactly two thousand years since we rejected the Messianic claims of Yahshua of Nazareth. We turned Him over to the Romans to be... Oh my God! We crucified the Messiah!*

As shocking a revelation as that will be, it will at least explain how Yahweh could have turned His back on his own chosen people for two millennia. *This is not about messing up the Rabbinical minutiae about how far we could walk on the Sabbath or somehow doing the wave offerings all wrong. This is about God coming to us in the flesh—and us killing Him. He wasn't what we expected, only what we needed.*

Jews today have a problem with Yahshua because He didn't fulfill *all* of the prophecies concerning the Messiah during His first-century advent. But Hosea clearly states that the Messiah's mission will be fulfilled in stages: **"He [once again, Yahweh and the Messiah are seen as identical] will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth."** The former rain fell in 33 A.D.; the latter is His return in glory—coming soon to a planet near you.

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This national epiphany is not an insignificant glitch in the course of Israel's long and turbulent history. It is, rather, the whole point. Yahweh commemorated the great awakening with the sixth of His seven designated *miqrym*, or "holy convocations." (They're normally called "feasts," but this one's different.)

The short version is this summary: **"And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: 'Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls and offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.'" Remember that last sentence. It's important. "And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."** (Leviticus 23:26-32)

The Day of Atonement, or "Yom Kippur," is considered by observant Jews to be the most sacred day on the calendar. Scheduled on the tenth day after the Feast of Trumpets (which, as you'll recall, is prophetic of the rapture of the Church), it is the second of the three autumn festivals, falling in September or October by our pagan reckoning. Though it lasts but one day (from sundown on the ninth of Tishri until three stars could be seen in the evening sky on the tenth), it is the culmination of the ten "days of awe" that began on the Feast of Trumpets. As we saw previously, the days between the Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*, also erroneously referred to as *Rosh Hashanah*) and Yom Kippur are a time of serious personal reflection (as most certainly will be the period of time between the rapture and the Yom Kippur near the end of the Tribulation, especially for the Jews). During the days of awe, pious Jews examine their lives and repent of the shortcomings they find. These days, that is considered the essence of being "afflicted in soul." Fasting has become part of the tradition as well (though it is not specified in the Torah), as is enduring all sorts of contrived personal discomforts for the day, such as forsaking any footwear that actually protects the feet. The typical Rabbinical minutiae obfuscate the meaning—as usual.

This monastic self-denial for a day is not exactly what Yahweh had in mind, however. The ritual that was prescribed for the Day of Atonement was a poignant and detailed picture of the salvation of mankind from the penalty of sin through the sacrifice of the Messiah. More than any of the seven holy convocations, the rehearsal of this Day's events depends upon the Tabernacle or Temple to tell its story. And as with all of the other holy days, its literal fulfillment in the person of Yahshua is essential to understanding its significance. Without the sacrifice of

Immanuel, none of this makes any sense. In the light of that sacrifice, however, Yahweh's plan emerges like a beautiful butterfly rising out of its cocoon. God does not institute ritual for ritual's sake. He does *nothing* on a pointless whim.

So while it's not strictly "prophecy," and though it's kind of a lengthy passage, let's take a closer look at the Day of Atonement. **"Yahweh said to Moses: 'Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering....'"** Note first that salvation is on God's terms and schedule, not ours: the High Priest could only enter the Holy of Holies on one day a year—this day, the tenth of Tishri. The normal priestly garb is insufficient for this day, for on this day the High Priest is to stand before Yahweh. He must therefore bathe and don special linen garments, signifying the righteousness provided by the Messiah; his own good works cannot bring him into the presence of a Holy God.

**"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before Yahweh at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which Yahweh's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before Yahweh, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness."** (Leviticus 16:2-10) Because he is not the sinless Messiah himself, the High Priest first offers a sacrifice, a bull, to atone for his own sins and those of his family. Then two goats are chosen: one of them is selected by lot to bear the sins of the people through his sacrificial death. He is slain to cover the sins of the people (for one year, anyway). That goat dies so the other one might live.

The second goat is set free. But it's not allowed to run around loose in the camp or the temple environs; the "scapegoat" is released in the wilderness, where it would surely die without Yahweh's provision. This same principle was acted out again at Yahshua's crucifixion. There, Barabbas—a man who clearly deserved his punishment (just like you and me)—was set free, while the Messiah was executed, quite literally, in his place. But was Barabbas free, really? His ultimate freedom depended wholly on what he did with the One who had died in his place, for until and unless his sins were covered by the blood of Yahweh's sacrifice, Barabbas would remain a "dead man walking." Thus on the Day of Atonement

the priest was to **“confess over [the scapegoat] all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning their sins, putting them on the head of the goat... The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land....”** Likewise, we have been set free because Yahweh chose to accept the sacrifice of Yahshua in our place, but we still bear our own sins until we choose to avail ourselves of God’s provision for us—in the goat’s case, it’s the food and water Yahweh provides for him in the wilderness; in our case, it’s the atoning sacrifice of the blood of Christ.

Is this ringing any bells? It should. It’s the exact picture of Israel being sent to the wilderness under God’s protection in the Last Days. They are an echo of the scapegoat—still bearing the sins of Israel on their head. What they do with God’s provision there in the wilderness will make all the difference between life and death.

**“Then [the High Priest] shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before Yahweh, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before Yahweh, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times....”** The incense represents our prayers, through which we may now enter into the very presence of Yahweh—via the agency of our final High Priest, Yahshua.

**“Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness....”** No atonement could be made for sins unless the blood of a suitable sacrifice was shed. This prescribed sacrifice would cover the people’s sins for one year. Furthermore, that blood had to be applied to the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant if it was to be efficacious. And it bears repeating: that fact continues to pose a tremendous problem for the Jews. The mercy seat has not been available for its proper annual service since Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. But as we discovered in chapter 13, Yahweh saw to it that the blood of His Perfect Sacrifice, the Messiah, *was* sprinkled upon the mercy seat as Yahshua bled and died at Calvary. That facet of the Day of Atonement has therefore been fulfilled. But it did not occur on the tenth day of Tishri, in the autumn; Yahweh has something else—something wonderful—planned for that day.

Moses goes on to describe in great detail how the ritual atonement is to be performed, and he ends by summarizing the when, where, why, and how of it:

**“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before Yahweh. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.”** (Leviticus 16:12-16, 21-22, 29-34) Now go back and read that again, but whenever the text refers to “the priest,” think of the ultimate High Priest, Yahshua our Messiah. And note that just as Aaron’s descendents were to perform these solemn rehearsals in his place throughout their generations, so Yahshua would be our perpetual High Priest, **“anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place.”**

This last section refers twice to the Sabbath aspects of the Day of Atonement, and twice it commands, **“you shall afflict your souls,”** an emphasis that was repeated in the Leviticus 23 passage above. As we begin to explore other scriptures that help illuminate the Day of Atonement, please keep in mind Israel’s plight during the Great Tribulation: utter helplessness to effect their national salvation and agony over the seeming dichotomy between Yahweh’s recent miraculous victory over their Muslim tormentors and their present precarious predicament. Doing **“no work at all”** is an essential concept in the doctrine of salvation, one that is particularly hard for most Jews to grasp. But during these Last Days, a Sabbath rest will be imposed upon them; they will be forced to sit back and watch Yahweh achieve their final salvation—without their help (gasp!). And this, as we shall see, will inexorably lead to a profound national repentance, an affliction of Israel’s collective soul, the final step in their journey toward the light: the recognition and acceptance of Yahshua, their Messiah.

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The fact that the Day of Atonement as presented in the Torah is impossible to keep—and has been for over 2,500 years—ought to have sent hordes of Jews back to their scriptures to try to figure out what happened. The prophet Jeremiah, writing at the very time when the ark of the covenant went missing from the temple, tells them where they went wrong: **“Behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took**

them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says Yahweh. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Yahweh. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34) Israel (the remnant who hasn't given up) is still trying to operate under the Old Covenant—the Law. But their own scriptures plainly state that a New Covenant is in effect, one in which the law of Yahweh is not an outward regimen of rule-keeping, but an inward relationship with their God. In reality, it's a *renewal* of the original covenant. The rules were never the point. Nothing has changed.

By the way, those who are still laboring under the illusion that the Church has somehow taken the place of Israel in the heart of Yahweh need to read this passage carefully. The New Covenant is *not* between God and the believing gentiles—it is between Yahweh and Israel, or more precisely, “the house of Israel *and* the house of Judah”—all twelve tribes. Gentile Christians are only *incidentally* beneficiaries of the Renewed Covenant. We are but wild branches that have been grafted into the olive tree of God's Kingdom, orphan children who have been adopted into Yahweh's family, prodigal sons who were dead but were given new life. In the context of our discussion of the Day of Atonement, note that all seven of Yahweh's *miqrym* are to be fulfilled *in the precise order* in which they were mandated in the Torah. As the Feast of Weeks introduced the Church, the Feast of Trumpets will herald its exit. And as the Feast of Trumpets precedes the Day of Atonement, so must the rapture of Yahshua's called-out assembly precede the “**new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...[when Yahweh] will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.**”

Ezekiel says more or less the same thing, stressing that the choice of whether Israel follows Yahweh or not carries consequences with it. “**Thus says Yahweh Our God: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,' says Yahweh.**” (Ezekiel 11:17-21) The Jews, in trying to rigidly adhere to the Law, had developed a heart (not to mention a head) of stone by following the letter of the law to the exclusion of its spirit—a spirit of love, mercy, and gratitude. Understand, of course, that *nobody* actually kept the Instructions of Yahweh. What the Jews did was to try to observe a mere

caricature of what Yahweh had actually said to do: He said, for example, “Don’t do your regular work on the Sabbath.” They said things like, “If you walk farther than 2,000 cubits on the Sabbath you’ve broken the Law.” Their law, maybe. Not Yahweh’s. Here in Ezekiel, Yahweh says that they’ll *never* be able to **“walk in My statutes and keep My judgments”** until they’ve had a change of heart.

David foresaw a day when his people’s heart of stone would be traded in for something a bit softer. **“Yahweh is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us....”** Notice that it’s Yahweh doing the pulling, not Israel doing the pushing.

**“As a father pities his children, so Yahweh pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more....”** David knew what it was like to disappoint his Creator. But as a father himself, he understood God’s perspective on His children: we’re all going to screw up now and then. And though the wages of our sin is death, Yahweh wants nothing more than to restore fellowship with His kids as early and as often as possible. **“But the mercy of Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.”** (Psalm 103:8-18) Children who love their fathers make an effort (however imperfect) to do what they ask, for they trust them with their very lives. But Israel is like a runaway teenager; they have been estranged from Yahweh so long they have forgotten how to trust. The day is not far off, though, when their national memory will get jogged.

Then **“they shall walk after Yahweh. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses.”** (Hosea 12:10-11) The gathering of Israel to their own land is the first step toward their great awakening. This process has already begun but it is far from complete.

The next step will be their cleansing: **“They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”** (Ezekiel 37:23) Carved idols aren’t a real big problem any more, of course, but Israel still serves its false gods: money, pride, tradition, intellect. (And don’t look so smug; Christians have their own unique—and stupid—golden calves. How many churches have split over music style or the color of the new sanctuary carpet?) The cleansing—the

softening of Israel's national heart—will occur when Yahweh destroys the armies of Gog, Israel, and much of the rest of the world for that matter, will finally be ready to listen: **“So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel. Surely it is coming, and it shall be done,”** says the Lord Yahweh. **“This is the day of which I have spoken.”** (Ezekiel 39:7-8)

Looking ahead, Hosea gives us a peek at the bottom line: **“I will heal [Israel's] backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him. I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread; his beauty shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon. Those who dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall be revived like grain, and grow like a vine. Their scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, ‘What have I to do anymore with idols?’ I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; Your fruit is found in Me.”** (Hosea 14:4-8) But not yet. We still have the hell on earth of the remainder of the Tribulation to endure. I've included that passage here (instead of including it with scores of similar passages in the chapter on the Millennial reign of Christ) because what's coming in the short run is unbelievably grim. It's light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak.

Asaph voiced what has become Israel's recurring nightmare. Now, for the last time, the Jews will pray with the psalmist: **“O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps. The dead bodies of Your servants they have given as food for the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth. Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. We have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to those who are around us....”** Successive waves of invasion, beginning with Babylon's, have brought Jerusalem to its knees. And the latest, the grand expedition of Magog, had gotten to the very gates of the city before Yahweh had lethally intervened. The Muslims did not succeed in taking Jerusalem, but Israel's celebration over their annihilation is proving premature: what Islam had failed to accomplish with military might, the Antichrist has achieved with stealth and treachery.

And the Jews, seeing the elusive dream of “the peace of Jerusalem” slip from their grasp once again, cry out, **“How long, Yahweh? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You, and on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name. [By this time, that's everybody.] For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us! Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us, for we have been brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name's sake! Why should the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’ Let there be known among the nations in our sight the avenging of the blood**

**of Your servants which has been shed.”** (Psalm 79:1-10) If God were like a man, He *would* be angry forever! The Jews plead with Him to “**provide atonement for our sins.**” *I did that, Yahweh could rightfully proclaim. You had Him crucified. I raised Him from the dead but even then, only a handful of you followed Him. So what do I care if* “**they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place?**” But Yahweh is not a man, nor are His thoughts petty and vindictive like ours are. He dreams of one thing above all others: restoring His chosen people to fellowship. He *does* care.

Yahweh will not be angry with Israel forever. Their time of spiritual exile will end—but not until God has given the gentiles all the time they need to make up their minds whom they will serve. We’ve had our two thousand years; it’s the Jews’ turn again. As Paul wrote, “**For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.**” (Romans 11:25-27)

Paul was quoting from the writings of Isaiah, but somewhere between the Hebrew text, the Septuagint Greek translation Paul probably used, the Koine Greek he wrote in, the Latin through which it was transmitted, and the English text we now have, there was a slight shift in the meaning (though both permutations are doubtless true). Isaiah put it this way: “**The Redeemer will come to Zion [not “out of,” as in Romans], and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,’ says Yahweh. ‘As for Me,’ says Yahweh, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,’ says Yahweh, ‘from this time and forevermore.’**” (Isaiah 59:20-21) Since it’s painfully clear that Yahweh’s promise of sending His Spirit upon Jacob/Israel is yet future, this passage must refer to the coming Millennial blessings of the Jews. But the process by which this happens is clearer in the Isaiah passage: the risen Christ will come *to* Zion—He will come *to* the repentant Jews.

We’re being given a glimpse at the *real* Day of Atonement—the actual day upon which the prophetic holy convocation described in Leviticus will be literally fulfilled, just like all five before it were. (Of course, the Feast of Trumpets, prophetic of the rapture, is yet future as I write these words.) The process of Israel’s return to fellowship with their God will not be complete until they recognize and accept their Messiah, the risen Yahshua—personally.

Remember Yom Kippur’s requirements: First, Israel must observe the Sabbath rest, that is (in this context), they must not work for their own salvation, but rather accept the sacrifice provided by Yahweh. And second, they must “afflict [their]

souls.” *Nothing* could afflict the souls of Israel like a sudden personal confrontation with their Messiah, still bearing the marks of his crucifixion, not coming but *returning* to reign in glory. At that moment they’ll all know exactly what it was like for Joseph’s older brothers (Genesis 45) when they found out that he was still alive—and now in charge. I mean, what do you say at a time like that? “Oops?”

Zechariah describes the moment: **“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself...all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.”** (Zechariah 12:10-12,14) *That’s* what it means to be “afflicted in their souls.” It has nothing to do with ritual fasting or uncomfortable shoes—and everything to do with the realization that the whole nation has been living a horrendous lie for the last two thousand years. Oh, they’ll fast, all right. Nobody will have an appetite. They’ll weep. They’ll pray. A little vomit won’t be inappropriate. Everybody will want to just be alone with their thoughts: *affliction of the soul*.

What else do we know for sure about the Day of Atonement? The date: the tenth day of the month of Tishri on the Hebrew calendar, which falls in September or October. But what year? For several rather obvious reasons, I’m convinced that the ultimate Day of Atonement will happen very near the end of the Tribulation—*five days* from the end, to be exact. To explain, I’ll have to let a cat from a future chapter out of the bag a little early: the seventh and final holy day on the Hebrew calendar is the Feast of Tabernacles. It commemorates, among other things, the day when Yahshua will begin His earthly reign. This Feast begins on the fifteenth day of Tishri—five days after Yom Kippur.

So why do I think *this* Day of Atonement will be in the same year as the definitive Feast of Tabernacles? First, look again at the Zechariah 12 passage above. The mourning—the affliction of the soul—occurs when the Jews **“look on Me whom they pierced.”** When Christ comes, He will “touch down” on the Mount of Olives—i.e., in Jerusalem. The believing Jews (i.e., those who have thankfully recognized Yahweh’s mighty hand in their deliverance from Magog) have been living in self-imposed exile since a month before the middle of the Tribulation, i.e., day 1,230. But Revelation 12:6 specifically states that **“The woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”** That leaves a thirty-day window at the very end in which some of them will return to Jerusalem. As you might imagine, things will be utterly chaotic by then, and the Antichrist will have long

since given up on the idea of controlling Israel or dealing with individual Jews; now he's bent on destroying the whole nation, but his iron grip on the world had degenerated into palsied spasms by now. And the "times of the gentiles"—as measured by their ability to "tread the holy city under foot" for a period of "forty-two months" (Revelation 11:2)—are just about over.

The bottom line for our current inquiry, then, is that the specific Yom Kippur of prophetic significance must occur in the final year of the Tribulation, for the Jews could not **"look on Me whom they pierced"** when Yahshua returns to the Mount of Olives if they were still hiding out in the wilderness. But why must the *Messiah's* final return come at the very end? Are we making an unwarranted assumption when we say that? Couldn't Yahshua show up, say, a year before the Tribulation winds down? No, unless fighting the dragon and his Antichrist prove to be an uphill battle for Him (which is an admittedly ludicrous concept). For **"it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished."** (Daniel 12:6-7) How could Messiah be physically present while the "power of the holy people" remains "completely shattered?" It doesn't compute, especially when you realize that the Zechariah 12 phrase, **"They will look on Me whom they pierced"** is in *Yahweh's* voice. (The passage begins, **"The burden of the word of Yahweh against Israel. Thus says Yahweh, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him..."** Zechariah 12:1). Those who insist that Yahshua was something less than God need to deal with that. It was *Yahweh* whom they pierced when they crucified Yahshua the Messiah.

Israel's awakening is a process, like the one Ezekiel saw in his vision of the dry bones. It's like dying in reverse gear—moving in stages from death toward life. Yahweh said to a valley full of bones, **"Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh..."** As Ezekiel watched, **"There was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them...."** Then God said, **"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live...and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army."** (Ezekiel 37:5-10) The "breath" that came upon them is the very spirit of Yahweh!

After the Romans dispersed Israel in A.D. 70 and then came back to finish the job in 135, the Jewish nation was nothing but dry, scattered bones. They were "there," but so far gone they could only be identified by dental records, so to speak. In the mid-nineteenth century, though, the bones started to rattle and come together to form complete skeletons. By 1948, flesh had enclosed the skeletons; then skin covered the musculature during the Battle of Magog; I imagine their

eyes were wide open by this time, too. About this time Yahweh put Israel on life support in the isolation ward of the wilderness and began CPR in earnest. And like the Great Physician He is, He kept working on the lifeless corpse of his beloved nation for three and a half years. There were encouraging flickers now and then, but Israel was still essentially flat-lined. But now, at the last possible moment, God brings in the “crash cart.” It’s code red—a critical situation, now or never, do or die. At the sight of Yahshua setting foot on the Mount of Olives, Israel’s heart starts pumping on its own for the first time in two thousand years, and they finally realize the life-giving truth: Yahshua *is* Yahweh. For the nation of Israel, the Day of Atonement in 2033 will be the ultimate wake up call, the epiphany of epiphanies. It’s the Great Oy Vey.

When Yahshua had said, “**I and My Father are one,**” (John 10:30) he hadn’t been merely speaking metaphorically, as if to say, *God and I see things eye to eye*. When He had told Philip, “**He who has seen Me has seen the Father,**” (John 14:9) He was speaking the literal truth. When Paul informed us that in Yahshua “**dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,**” (Colossians 2:9) he was saying the same thing: Yahshua is Yahweh. The very Creator of the universe has come to live among us in a human body. I can’t pretend to fully understand this, of course. It’s well beyond my feeble powers of comprehension. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t true.

You’ve got to appreciate the drama of this whole thing. It’s like in the movies, where the bomb’s timer is ticking down the final seconds. In this case, after almost 6,000 years, we’re down to the last five days—on a twenty-four hour clock, there are only five seconds left. Our hero, Israel, has to decide whether to cut the black wire or the white wire—to eternally sever ties with Satan, or with Yahweh. But unlike in the movies, we in the “audience” are personally involved as well. If Israel cuts the white wire (as their fathers tried to do in A.D. 33), or even if they do nothing, the whole thing will blow up not only in their faces, but ours as well: the God upon whom we are depending for our salvation will have been proved a liar. But Yahweh is not a liar. Israel *will* cut the black wire, short-circuiting Satan’s bomb and bringing to fulfillment a thousand promises of redemption and reconciliation scattered throughout scripture.

It’s enough to make you spill your popcorn.