



כפור יום Yom Kippur Day of Atonement [Leviticus 16](#), [Isaiah 57:14-58:14](#)



כפר The key word in this portion, the root of **כפור**, is used 13 times, beginning in [Leviticus 16.6](#): **כפר** *kafar* to cover/purge/make an atonement/make reconciliation/cover over with pitch/pacify/propitiate/atone for sin. In this portion, the blood of sacrifice is the **כפר** that covers sin from year to year. The final sacrifice is the perfect offering of **ישוע** *Yeshua* Jesus/salvation, the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice is once for all, [Hebrews 9.24-28](#).

The first use of **כפר** in the Bible is [Genesis 6.14](#), when God tells Noah to cover the ark with **כפר**. The pitch is the protective covering that keeps out the flood waters of judgment and preserves the lives of those aboard the ark. Here in [Leviticus 16](#), the **כפר** of blood keeps away the penalty of sin from year to year, preserving the lives of sinners. [Hebrews 10.1-13](#) specifically addresses **יום כפור** and the sacrifice of bulls and goats on this day. It makes the point that if these sacrifices actually removed sin, they wouldn't need to be repeated each year. But by one sacrifice, **ישוע** has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. We are justified once for all by the grace of His sacrifice. Then we live in the process of sanctification.

Afflict Your Soul [Leviticus 16.29](#), [Leviticus 23.27](#) say that it is a statute forever on **יום כפור**, the 10th day of the 7th month, to afflict our souls and do no manner of work, neither us nor the stranger living among us. [Leviticus 23.27](#) says this day of **הכפורים** *hakeeporeem* atonements (plural or intensifier of **כפר**) is a **מקרא קדש** *meekra-kodesh* holy calling together. It is the holiest day of the year, the culmination of the 10 Days of Awe, which begin on Rosh Hashanah. At top is a painting of Jews atoning for sin on **יום כפור**. Here is a picture of



Highway 20 in modern-day Tel Aviv, **ישראל** *Yisra'el* Israel. While there is no law against eating or driving on **יום כפור**, most in **ישראל** abstain. The fast is from sundown to sundown. Many of the secular in **ישראל** take advantage of the nearly-empty streets, especially on the eve of **יום כפור**, to bicycle or rollerblade. The fast is well known among early believers. Paul uses it as a date reference in [Acts 27.9](#), indicating the sailing was in a dangerous time of year. Do you fast on **יום כפור**? **ישוע** said that His followers would fast after He was taken, [Matthew 9.15](#).

Forgiveness ים כפור is one of the two most joyful days of the year. Why would a day of fasting and atoning for sin be a joyful day? One reason is that, although many people died the preceding year, we didn't! Another reason is that God is forgiving sin. After Moses smashes the first set of tablets when he sees the sin of the Golden Calf, then returns up Mt. Sinai for another 40 days, tradition is that he returns with the second set on ים כפור. God is forgiving ישראל and renewing the covenant. Sin is כפר on ים כפר, but in ישוע it is taken away, [John 1.29](#). [Psalm 103.12](#) says that God removes our sin from us as far as the east is from the west—unlike north and south, which meet at the poles, east and west never touch. [Micah 7.18-20](#) says that God will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Then, as Corrie Ten Boom says, God puts up a sign that says, “No Fishing!” These last two verses sound surprisingly “New Testament.” Remember, don't steal Bible verses—give them back to ישראל when you're done!

Scapegoat In English, the person who carries all the blame for some wrong is the scapegoat. This expression comes from [Leviticus 16.8-10](#), which describes two goats, one which is sacrificed and the other, the Azazel, which escapes into the wilderness. Since the Septuagint translation which began the practice, Azazel is often translated Scapegoat/the sent away. Still, some think of Azazel as a type of demon. But that doesn't square with [Leviticus 16.5](#), in which two goats make one sin offering. A better picture is ישוע, who fulfills both types: He is sacrificed as a sin offering and then He descends to the grave, taking our sin with Him.

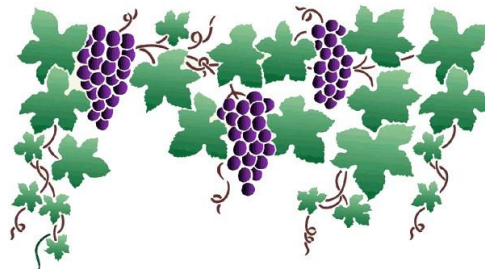


Forgiveness and Judgment In [Leviticus 16.12-15](#), the high priest takes burning coals and incense into the Most Holy Place and there offers the incense before the Mercy Seat/ark cover. Seven times he sprinkles first the blood of the bull and then the blood of the goat. In [Revelation 8.3-6](#), we see an angel offering incense and prayers of the saints at the altar. Then the coals are thrown to the Earth and seven angels begin to sound their seven trumpets.

Incense, prayers, the number seven, and national forgiveness vs. judgment of nations—ים כפור and the Book of Revelation are connected. [Revelation 11.15-19](#) describes judgment, a relief for those who get rewarded and a terror for those expecting punishment. Then the Temple of God in heaven is opened and the ark is seen. Normally, the only day of the year that the ark is seen is ים כפור. (Picture courtesy of www.templeinstitute.org)

Forgiveness or Judgment We see this contrast between forgiveness and judgment in [Isaiah 61.1-3](#) also. This is the portion ישוע reads in [Luke 4.14-21](#), but He stops before reading the part about the day of vengeance of our God. Yet in that same day of vengeance there will be beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. If we live our lives in God's kingdom, we don't have to fear the Day of Judgment.

In [Revelation 14.18](#), an angel is told to gather the clusters of ripe grapes from the earth. Barley is a spring crop in ישראל and wheat is a summer crop, but grapes are ripe in time for the fall feasts, another tie-in to ים כפור.



Membership has its Privileges [Leviticus 16.16-17](#) specifies that ים כפור culminates in the atonement for ישראל. The next and last feast of the year, Succoth, is for the nations. But ים כפור is for ישדאל. Replacement theology says that ישראל is no longer necessary; all the blessings for ישראל have been transferred to the Church. That's quite a gamble, and contrary to [Romans 11.11-24](#), that we are saved by being grafted into the olive tree of ישארל, not some other way.



Veil The understanding of ישראל is veiled as Paul describes in [2 Corinthians 3.12-18](#) and only in ישוע is the veil removed. But what about believers in ישוע—are we blinded or hardened at all? Paul says in [1 Corinthians 13.12](#) that we do not see face to face now, but through a glass darkly, like a poor reflection in a mirror. Now we know in part; then we shall know fully.

Part of our blindness is to תורה [Torah](#) Law/Instruction. The Jews have תורה but not ישוע, and the Church has ישוע but not תורה. תורה is the written Word and ישוע is the living Word. There is no contradiction, and we need both. Perhaps as we open our hearts to ישוע, ישראל will open their hearts to ישוע. Another part of our blindness is replacement theology, that we don't need ישראל anymore. Many in the Church think ישראל has no role, except to muck up the "peace process" with the Muslim world.



Removing the Veil We can remove our veil by seeing ישוע in תורה—taking that trip down the road to Emmaus that those two disciples were privileged to take 2,000 years ago—and by recognizing that God’s gifts and calling for ישראל are forever—He has not abandoned them.

God will meet with ישראל face to face when He brings them from exile, [Ezekiel 20.33-35](#).

Their blindness will be removed when ישוע returns and God takes away their sin, [Romans 11.25-32](#). Then they will say, “ברך הוא שבא בשם של האדוני!” *baruch hu shebo b’shem shel ha’adonai* “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” [Matthew 23.37-39](#).

And there is a veil that covers all nations, which God will remove in the last days, [Isaiah 25.7](#).

Robe Dipped in Blood Another connection to ים כפור is found in [Revelation 19.11-21](#).

ישוע, whose Name is the Word of God, [John 1.1,14](#), rides on a white horse, His robe dipped in blood, striking down the nations with a sharp sword which comes from His mouth, treading the winepress of the fury of God’s wrath. He is followed by an army also on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

This is a reference to [Isaiah 63](#), which opens with the same imagery, and then again connects the judgment and forgiveness of God. In this passage, the Savior is coming from Bozrah.





Dressed in Fine Linen The high priest when performing the sacrifices on **יִם כַּפֹּר** wears just four white linen garments: tunic, pants, sash, and turban, and no colored garments which he normally wears.

A robe worn by Jewish males on rare occasions is the kittel, which is primarily a burial garment without pockets. It is simple white dress to emphasize equality in death. It may be worn on the wedding day, when leading the Passover Seder, **יִם כַּפֹּר**, and some other occasions. A Jewish person hearing the description of an army dressed in fine linen following the Savior would immediately connect to the kittel and the dress of the high priest on **יִם כַּפֹּר**.



Coming from Bozrah The Savior comes riding from Bozrah with crimson garments, red like one treading the winepress. Bozrah is the capital of ancient Edom and found in modern-day Jordan. It is within the borders of **יִשְׂרָאֵל** God gives to Abram in [Genesis 15.18](#).

יֵשׁוּעַ This picture of **יֵשׁוּעַ** as trampling the enemies of God so that His robe is stained in blood is odd to most Christians. We've been so conditioned to think of a sweet baby/gentle Shepherd who taps at the door of our hearts, begging to be let in. But **יֵשׁוּעַ** says in [Matthew 10.34-36](#) that He did not come to bring peace, but a sword. So even in **יֵשׁוּעַ** we see the connection between savage judgment and loving forgiveness we've been seeing in **יִם כַּפֹּר**.



I Knew Jesus before He was a Gentile There's a song by the Liberated Wailing Wall, Jewish believers in **יֵשׁוּעַ**, by this title. Before the Church made **יֵשׁוּעַ** into an unrecognizable non-Jewish Gentile, **יֵשׁוּעַ** in fact was Jewish in every way. The curious allegory is that this is exactly what happens with Joseph in Genesis:

Starting in [Genesis 37](#), Joseph is one of the twelve sons of **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, and the favorite. Over the years, two dreams and two cloaks get him into major trouble. While in a foreign land, separated from his family, he is called by the king. He shaves off his hair, changes his clothes, gets appointed to the second-highest office in the land so that Gentiles bow before his chariot, [Genesis 41.43](#), takes a Gentile name and a Gentile wife, [Genesis 41.45](#), and names his children [Forgotten](#) and [Fruitful](#), so it's not surprising that when his brothers see him again after about 22 years, he is unrecognizable to them, [Genesis 42.8](#). Joseph, like **יֵשׁוּעַ**, appears to be a Gentile.

Joseph and יִשְׂרָאֵל Reveal Themselves to their Brothers When the sons of יִשְׂרָאֵל come to Joseph for food on that first day, not recognizing him, Joseph accuses them of being spies, puts them into prison, and tests them on the third day. The apostle Peter admonishes us to remember in [2 Peter 3.8](#): with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and vice versa. We are entering the third “day” since יִשְׂרָאֵל lived on earth. Joseph weeps when he hears his brothers’ confession of sin, [Genesis 42.24](#). יִשְׂרָאֵל will be deeply affected when he hears יִשְׂרָאֵל repent for ignoring Him all this time. Joseph keeps Simeon and tells his brothers not to return until they bring Benjamin back with them. In [Genesis 43](#), the brothers reluctantly return with Benjamin on the “second day.” Joseph weeps when he sees the only other son of his mother Rachel. The brothers have returned the money they found in their sacks from the last trip—they had sold Joseph for money, but now money is not as important as honesty. The men marvel that Joseph arranges them at the meal in birth order, but he is so hidden from them they still can’t figure it out. They leave with Benjamin but because of another of Joseph’s ruses, they are drug back and Joseph keeps Benjamin as a prisoner on the “third day.” Then in [Genesis 44.18](#), Judah makes a plea for Benjamin. This is so important that it is the start of a תּוֹרָה portion, וַיִּגַּשׁ Vayigash And He Approached. In the years since Judah first wanted to kill Joseph, then settled for selling him into slavery instead, he has lost two sons of his own, Er and Onan, [Genesis 38](#). He understands the pain a father feels on the loss of his sons. Judah pleads with Joseph that the loss of Benjamin, after the apparent loss of Joseph, will kill their father יִשְׂרָאֵל, and Judah offers himself as a substitutionary offering for Benjamin. And so in [Genesis 45](#), Joseph reveals himself to his brothers on this “third day.” In the same way, יִשְׂרָאֵל will test His brothers’ hearts. When he sees full repentance on the basis of love for their Father, He will reveal Himself on the “third day,” possibly this time we are living in right now! Joseph’s brothers were troubled/frightened at his presence. When יִשְׂרָאֵל recognizes יִשְׂרָאֵל as their Brother, they too will be troubled/frightened. Then they will finally realize, “We knew יִשְׂרָאֵל before He was a Gentile!”

Seasons of the LORD In [Leviticus 23, verse 2](#), God tells יִשְׂרָאֵל of מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה *moediy YHVH*, appointed places/appointed times/sacred seasons of the LORD, including this sacred appointment, יָמֵי כִפּוּר. If a man and woman are to be married on a certain date, but one uses a solar calendar and one uses a lunar calendar, they won’t be seeing each other at the altar! And so the Church, for various reasons, has changed God’s schedule and chosen its own instead. Then in [Leviticus 23.27-32](#), God emphasizes repeatedly the importance of keeping יָמֵי כִפּוּר holy and the consequences for failing to do so.



[Isaiah 58](#) is a lesson in what it really means to keep fasts and Sabbaths. Verses 8 to 14 list amazing blessings for keeping them correctly. One of the blessings is to be called *Repairer of the Breach*. There is a huge gap between Christian and Jew and much of it is the Church’s doing. Many in the Church work at keeping the gap open. Are you called to be one of the ones to repair it?

Even the Transgressors in Israel In the book [*Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*](#) by Yaffa Eliach, she tells the story of a cruel Jew, Schneeweiss, and the rabbi from his town, Spira. Spira does not want to reveal himself to Schneeweiss, remembering him as ungodly. Now as a concentration camp foreman, Schneeweiss holds power over the lives of his fellow Jews. But the rabbi's students beg Spira, "Ask Schneeweiss that we not be assigned to a major work detail on **י"ם כפור**."

So Rabbi Spira speaks to Schneeweiss. At first mocking, Schneeweiss' heart changes and ultimately he deflects the Nazis' anger away from the rabbi and his men and toward himself. When Schneeweiss dies in place of the faithful rabbi and his fellows, the rabbi later says that he understood for the first time what the Talmud says, "Even the transgressors in Israel are as full of good deeds as a pomegranate is filled with seeds."

Curiously, like so many stories in God's Kingdom, this one tells the end at the beginning: Schneeweiss means snow white. Men only see Schneeweiss' cruelty. But God sees his true heart.

Glossary, in order of appearance:

יום כפור	<i>Yom Kippur</i>	Day of Atonement
כפר	<i>kafar</i>	to cover/purge/make an atonement/ make reconciliation/cover over with pitch/pacify/propitiate/atone for sin
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
הכפרים	<i>hakeeporeem</i>	atonements (plural or intensifier of כפר)
מקרא-קדש	<i>meekra-kodesh</i>	holy calling together
ישראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
”ברך הוא שבא בשם של האדוני!”	<i>baruch hu shebo b'shem shel ha'adonai</i>	“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”
ויגש	<i>Vayigash</i>	And He Approached
מועדי יהוה	<i>moediy YHVH</i>	appointed places/appointed times/ sacred seasons of the LORD