



## JESUS AND THE JEWISH FESTIVALS: HIGH HOLIDAYS AND SUKKOT

### Yom Kippur and the Omens of Jerusalem's Fall

#### The Ninth of Av

Destruction of Temple  
Rejection of the Land

#### Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement

*Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:27)*

- Fasting on Yom Kippur
- Austere, solemn day of judgment
- Fasting like hypocrites

#### The Atonement Ceremonies

- Leviticus 16
- Atonement
- Holy of Holies
- Incense
- Book of Hebrews
- Two Goats
  - Casting Lots
  - For Hashem
  - For Azazel

He pushed it over backward, and it rolled down the ravine. And it did not reach halfway down the mountain before it broke into pieces. (m.Yoma 6:6)

#### The Scarlet Cloth

He tied scarlet yarn on the head of the goat which was to be sent forth, and turned it around [his back to the sanctuary] to face the way it would be sent out. On the one that was to be slaughtered [for the sin offering] he tied the scarlet yarn [around its neck] at the place at which the slaughter was to be made. (m.Yoma 4:2)

Rabbi Yishmael said, "They tied a thread of scarlet wool over the gate of the Temple, and when the goat reached the wilderness, the thread turned white, as it is written [in Isaiah 1:18], 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; [though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool].'" (m.Yoma 6:8)

Our Rabbis taught, "At first they tied the scarlet yarn on the outside of the door to the [Temple entrance]. If the yarn turned white, the people [saw it and] rejoiced, but if it did not turn white, they felt sad and ashamed. To prevent this, they began to tie it to the inside of the door [to the Temple entrance], but the people were still peeking in though the doorway to see if it became white. If it turned white, they rejoiced, but if it did not turn white, they felt sad and ashamed. To prevent this, they began to tie [the scarlet yarn] to the rock [in the wilderness where the goat was pushed over the edge]." (b.Yoma 67a)

#### The Last Forty Years

Our Rabbis taught: "For the forty years before the destruction of the [Temple] the lot [for the LORD on Yom Kippur] did not come up in the right hand; the strip of red cloth did not turn white; the western light [of the *menorah*] did not stay lit; and the doors of the Temple [would not stay closed but] opened up by themselves, until Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai rebuked them. He said to them, "Temple, Temple for what purpose do you frighten with your counsel. I know about you! Your future ending will be destruction, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied about you [in Zechariah 11:1], 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars!'" (b.Yoma 39b)

#### Josephus, *Jewish War* 6:289-309

#### The Comet

Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year.

#### Passover 66 CE

<sup>290</sup> Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month of Xanthikos {e} [Nisan], and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone around the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright daytime; which lasted for half an hour.

<sup>291</sup> This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskilful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it.



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<sup>292</sup> At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.

### The Doors

<sup>293</sup> Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and extremely heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and fastened with iron-bound bars, and had bolts sunk very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night.

<sup>294</sup> Now, those who kept watch in the temple, came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up there, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again.

<sup>295</sup> This also appeared to the common people to be a very happy prodigy, as if God thereby opened to them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies.

<sup>296</sup> So these publicly declared that the signal predicted the desolation that was coming upon them.

### Surrounded by Armies, Iyar 21 CE

Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the twenty-first day of the month of Artemisios [Iyyar],

<sup>297</sup> a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those who saw it,

<sup>298</sup> and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen

<sup>299</sup> running about among the clouds, and surrounding the cities.

### Revelation at Pentecost, 66 CE

Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner {f} [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise,

<sup>300</sup> and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "We are departing from here."

### Yeshua ben Chanan, Sukkot 62 CE

But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a common man and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our

custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple, {g}

<sup>301</sup> began suddenly to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city.

<sup>302</sup> However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet he did not either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those who chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before.

<sup>303</sup> Hereupon our rulers supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator;

<sup>304</sup> where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!"

<sup>305</sup> And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, "Who he was? and from where he came? and why he uttered such words?" he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not stop his melancholy dirge, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him.

<sup>306</sup> Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near anyone of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!"

<sup>307</sup> Nor did he give ill words to any of those who beat him every day, nor good words to those who gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come.

<sup>308</sup> This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this dirge for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased;

<sup>309</sup> for as he was going around upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.