

APPENDIX TWENTY-SEVEN

The Apocalypse, The Day Of Atonement, And
The Latter Days

Appendix G

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Almost all scholars have applied the Day of Atonement as a type of the priestly work of Christ throughout the entire Christian age. This is done primarily on the basis of Heb. 9:8, 12, 25; 10:19, 20; 6:19, 20. Almost all the commentaries listed in the bibliography make this application. Some scholars through the centuries, however, have believed that the Day of Atonement has a special application to events immediately preceding the return of Christ. This position is based mainly on the fact that the Book of Revelation in many places alludes to the imagery of this solemn Jewish fast. To show that this second position is sound is the aim of this appendix.

More than two centuries ago Sir Isaac Newton penned the following significant statement:

“The Temple is the scene of the visions, and the visions in the Temple relate to the feast of the seventh month, for the feasts of the Jews were typical of things to come. The Passover related to the first coming of Christ, and the feasts of the seventh month to his second coming; his first coming being therefore over before this Prophecy was given, the feasts of the seventh month are here only alluded unto.”¹

The New Testament obviously endorses the idea that the Jewish festival year prefigured the entire Christian age. The typical genius of the Old Testament economy as everywhere recognized in the New Testament provides the foundation for such a supposition. Furthermore, the inspired apostles specifically apply the Jewish festivals in this way.

For example, in 1 Cor. 5:7 Paul alludes to the Passover as the type of the crucifixion of Christ. The gospel writers are also careful to point out that the climax to Christ’s ministry occurred in connection with the Passover. In Rev. 7:9 the redeemed are pictured as standing before the throne “clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” According to the translators of the KJV, as shown by their marginal notations, this is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Lev. 23:40 we read: “And you shall take on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.” In harmony with this is Christ’s frequent allusion to the harvest in connection with the end of the world. The Feast of Tabernacles was also called the Feast of Harvest, occurring as it did after the completion of the gathering in of the year’s produce. The references in the New Testament to Christ as the firstfruits and the time record of the occurrence of Pentecost help to fill out this picture of the typical significance of the Jewish ceremonial year. A following comparison illustrates the point made by Sir Isaac Newton and other scholars on this matter:

Spring Festivals Typifying Significant Events of First Advent

Passover	Crucifixion
First Fruits	Resurrection
Pentecost	Pentecost

Autumn Festivals Typifying Significant Events of Second Advent

Trumpets	Rev. 8 and 9
Day of Atonement	Rev. 8:1-6; 11:19; etc.
Feast of Tabernacles	Rev. 7:9; 14:14-19

The spring festivals have always come in for much attention and have been applied to the First Advent with universal consent by evangelical interpreters. Unfortunately, the festivals of autumn have not met with the same study emphasis. In a standard work on Leviticus in the *Expositor's Bible* we have the following illuminating statement by Dr. S.H. Kellogg as he of necessity turned his attention to the feasts of the seventh month:

“We have already seen that the earlier feasts of the year were also prophetic; that Passover and Unleavened Bread pointed forward to Christ, our Passover, slain for us; Pentecost, to the spiritual ingathering of the firstfruits of the world's harvest, fifty days after the presentation of our Lord in resurrection, as the wave-sheaf of the firstfruits. We may therefore safely infer that these remaining feasts of the seventh month must be typical also. But, if so, typical of what? Two things may be safely said in this matter. The significance of the three festivals of this seventh month must be interpreted in harmony with what has already passed into fulfilment; and, in the second place, inasmuch as the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles all belong to the seventh and last month of the ecclesiastical year, they must find their fulfilment in connection with what Scripture calls ‘the last times.’

“Keeping the first point in view, we may then safely say that if Pentecost typified the firstfruits of the world's harvest in the ingathering of an election from all nations, the feast of tabernacles must then typify the completion of that harvest in a spiritual ingathering, final and universal. Not only so, but, inasmuch as in the antitypical fulfilment of the wave-sheaf in the resurrection of our Lord, we were reminded that the consummation of the new creation is in resurrection from the dead, and that in regeneration is therefore involved resurrection, hence the feast of tabernacles, as celebrating the absolute completion of the year's harvest, must typify also the resurrection season, when all that are Christ's shall arise from the dead at His coming.

“And, finally, whereas this means for the now burdened earth permanent deliverance from the curse, and the beginning of a new age thus signalled by glorious life in resurrection, in which are enjoyed the blessed fruits of life's labours and pains for Christ, this was shadowed forth by the ordinance that immediately upon the seven days of tabernacles should follow a feast of the eighth day, the first day of a new week, in celebration of the beginning season of rest from all the labours of the field.

“Most beautifully, thus regarded, does all else connected with the feast of tabernacles correspond, as type to antitype, to the revelation of the last things, and therein reveal its truest and deepest spiritual significance: the joy, the reunion, the rejoicing with son and with daughter, the fullness of gladness also for the widow and the fatherless; and this, not only for those in Israel, but also for the stranger, not of Israel, — for Gentile as well as Israelite was to have part in the festivity of that day; and, again, the full attainment of the most complete consecration, signified in the tenfold burnt-offering; — all finds its place here.

“And so now we can see why it was that our Saviour declared (Matt. xiii. 39) that the end of this present age should be the time of harvest; and how Paul, looking at the future spiritual ingathering, places the ingathering of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 25) as one of the last things. In full accord with this interpretation of the typical significance of this feast it is that in Zech. xiv. we find it written that in the predicted day of the Lord, when (ver. 5) the Lord ‘shall come, and all the holy ones’ with Him, and (ver. 9) ‘the Lord shall be King over all the earth; ... the Lord ... one, and His name one,’ then (ver. 16) ‘everyone

that is left of all the nations ... shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles;’ and, moreover, that so completely shall consecration be realised in that day that (ver. 20) even upon the bells of the horses shall the words be inscribed, ‘Holy unto the Lord!’²

This long quotation has been given in full because Dr. Kellogg adequately presents the reasoning of those who apply the feasts of autumn to antitypical events associated with the second advent of Christ. How, then, do such writers interpret the latter-day significance of the Day of Atonement? Dr. Kellogg asks:

“Now, if the feast of tabernacles has been correctly interpreted, as presignifying in symbol the completion of the great world harvest in the end of the age, does the prophetic word reveal anything in connection with the last things as preceding that wheat harvest; and, in some sense, preparing for and ushering in that day, which should be the antitype of the great day of atonement?”³

He then proceeds to suggest that the antitype would be the repentance of literal Israel and her cleansing from sin. This view of reclaiming Israel as the event signified in this connection is not peculiar to Dr. Kellogg, but has been echoed by several. The same scholars generally apply the Feast of Trumpets to the warning message of the approaching advent of Christ, and Mt. 24:14 is often quoted in this regard.

The above constitutes evidence that it is not a peculiar view which represents the Day of Atonement as having special application prior to the second coming of Christ. The next step is to inquire, What are some of the references in Revelation that employ Day of Atonement imagery, and who are some of the scholars that have drawn attention to such?

Frederick Nolan, noted linguist and theologian of the nineteenth century, asserted in *The Time of the Millennium Investigated* that on many occasions the attention of antiquaries and scholars had been drawn to the references to the Day of Atonement in the Book of Revelation. After declaring his belief that the imagery of the seventh seal was derived from the great Day of Atonement and the jubilee, he stated: “The analogy between this description, and the service of the Temple, upon one of the most solemn festivals of the Mosaic ceremonial, is so obvious that it has often excited the attention of the antiquary and scholar.”

He further asserts that the frequent allusions in Rev. 9 and 15 to the ark of the tabernacle, the altar, and the incense, refer not to the “daily service,” but to the “peculiar solemnity” of the service on the “great day of Atonement,” performed “by the high priest, in the holiest place of the Temple,” and celebrated in the seventh month.

Nolan notes that the jubilee always commenced on the Day of Atonement and was ushered in with the sound of trumpets. Thus to him the opening of the seventh seal with its allusions to the Feast of Trumpets and to the Day of Atonement points to the opening of the millennium and the true jubilee.⁴ Joshua Spalding, a contemporary of Nolan, was also a writer on the prophecies of the Book of Revelation. Like Nolan, he held that the feasts of the seventh month were symbolic of the final restitution of all things. L.E. Froom gives in some detail the views of this writer in his third volume of *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*.⁵

Another writer referred to by L.E. Froom is John Tudor, one-time editor of the *Church of England Quarterly Review*. Commenting on the pouring out of the last vial, Tudor wrote:

“The temple of God is then opened, and the ark of his testament seen, xi. 19; and the voice issues from *the throne*, xvi. 17; both expressions equally denoting the holy of

holies, which was only entered once a year, on the day of atonement. This period is therefore our day of atonement, and requires our particular notice, to know what events we may expect, answering to the type.”⁸

Elsewhere in speaking of Rev. 8:1-5 and 11:19, he affirms that “all the imagery in this poem was taken from the Day of Atonement” — the golden censer, the incense, the deep affliction, the temple opened, and the ark exposed (“indicating the opening of the veil on the day of atonement”).⁷

Sir Isaac Newton, perhaps more than any other scholar, has stressed the point made in the first quotation of this appendix, namely that the visions of the Book of Revelation abound with the imagery of the feasts of the seventh month.

Commenting on Rev. 5, Newton declares:

“It was the custom for the High-Priest, seven days before the fast of the seventh month, to continue constantly in the Temple, and study the book of the Law, that he might be perfect in it against the day of expiation; wherein the service, which was various and intricate, was wholly to be performed by himself; part of which service was reading the Law to the people; and to promote his studying it, there were certain Priests appointed by the Sanhedrin to be with him those seven days in one of his chambers in the Temple, and there to discourse with him about the Law, and read it to him and put him in mind of reading and studying it himself. This his opening and reading the Law those seven days, is alluded unto in the Lamb’s opening the seals.”⁷

And on Rev. 8:1-5, Newton further says:

“The seventh seal was therefore opened on the day of expiation, and then *there was silence in heaven for half an hour. And an Angel, the High-Priest, stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer; and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints, upon the golden Altar which was before the throne.* The custom was on other days, for one of the Priests to take fire from the great Altar in a silver Censer; but on this day, for the High-Priest to take fire from the great Altar in a golden Censer; and when he was come down from the great Altar, he took incense from one of the Priests who brought it to him, and went with it to the golden Altar: and while he offered the incense, the people prayed without in silence, which is the silence in heaven for half an hour.

“When the High-Priest had laid the incense on the Altar, he carried a Censer of it burning in his hand, into the most holy place before the Ark. *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel’s hand.* On other days there was a certain measure of incense for the golden Altar: on this day there was a greater quantity for both the Altar and the most holy Place, and therefore it is called *much incense* ...

“The solemnity of the day of expiation being finished, the seven Angels sound their trumpets at the great sacrifices of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles; and at the same sacrifices, the seven thunders utter their voices which are the musick of the Temple, and singing of the *Levites*, intermixed with the soundings of the trumpets: and the seven Angels pour out their vials of wrath, which are the drink-offerings of those sacrifices.”⁹

Some will not agree with all the details of interpretation offered by Newton or all the references which he declares to point to the Day of Atonement ceremonial. However, certain features of analogy between the visions of Revelation and the solemn fast day of Yom Kippur are undeniable. All authorities are agreed, for example, that a golden censer such as referred to in Revelation 8:3 was used only by the Jewish High Priest on the Day of Atonement.¹⁰

Rev. 11:19 is a clearer reference still to another feature of the Day of Atonement, namely the entrance into the most holy place, and the viewing of the ark for the only time in the year. The fact that many scholars have made such quotations as the preceding is conclusive that the Bible's latest book, with its prophecies specially relating to the last times, harnesses the imagery of this special day to express vital truths. It is also significant that this imagery is associated with references to the other holy days of the seventh month, Trumpets and Tabernacles giving a combined witness to the latter-day application of these typical occasions.

Newton's remarks on the sealing work are especially interesting. He quotes Rev. 7:1-3, and says:

“This sealing alludes to a tradition of the Jews, that upon the day of expiation all the people of Israel are sealed up in the books of life and death (Buxtorf, in *Synagoga Judaica*, c. 18, 21.). For the Jews in their *Talmud* tell us, that in the beginning of every new year, or first day of the month Tishri, the seventh month of the sacred year, three books are opened in judgment: the book of life, in which the names of those are written who are perfectly just; the book of death, in which the names of those are written who are Atheists or very wicked; and a third book, of those whose judgment is suspended till the day of expiation, and whose names are not written in the book of life or death before that day. The first ten days of this month they call the penitential days; and all these days they fast and pray very much, and are very devout, that on the tenth day their sins may be remitted, and their names may be written in the book of life; which day is therefore called the day of expiation. And upon this tenth day, in returning home from the Synagogues, they say to one another, *God the creator seal you to a good year*. For they conceive that the books are now sealed up, and that the sentence of God remains unchanged henceforward to the end of the year.

“The same thing is signified by the two Goats, upon whose foreheads the High-Priest yearly, on the day of expiation, lays the two lots inscribed, *For God* and *For Azazel*; God's lot signifying the people who are sealed with the name of God in their foreheads; and the lot Azazel, which was sent into the wilderness, representing those who receive the mark and the name of the Beast, and go to the wilderness with the great Whore.”¹¹

By this statement Sir Isaac Newton declares his belief that the crisis of Rev. 13 over the mark of the beast and also the sealing work described earlier both apply to the antitypical Day of Atonement. He places these events in the setting of judgment as typified by Israel's ancient fast day.

Examining, then, the position of scholars on the Day of Atonement, we find evidence that a goodly number of repute believed the feasts of the seventh month to be typical of events associated with the second advent of Christ. These men did not believe that the significance of the Day of Atonement was exhausted by the use made of it by Paul in Heb. 9. That is to say, the scholars referred to believed that the Day of Atonement has a special significance for those living in the last days of earth's history. Commentaries on the Book of Revelation that have discerned the allusions of the visions to Old Testament ceremonial expressly affirm the

foregoing view. In the realm of eschatology these facts are of tremendous importance at this time.

¹ Isaac Newton, pp. 308, 309.

² S.H. Kellogg, 'The Book of Leviticus,' *The Expositor's Bible*, pp. 468-470.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

⁴ Cited by L.E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, III*, pp. 608-610.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-235.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

⁸ Isaac Newton, pp. 313, 314.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 314, 315.

¹⁰ Herbert Danby (trans.), *The Mishnah*, Yoma iv. 4, p. 167.

¹¹ Isaac Newton, pp. 315, 316.