

"A New Approach to Revelation"

By Tricia Tillin, Banner Ministries UK

<http://www.birthpangs.org> and <http://www.banner.org.uk>

How The Day Of Atonement Temple Service Sheds Light On The Book Of Revelation

(This study looks a lot better online! Please view it there if possible)

Part One - The Reason for this Study

Why is it necessary to re-examine the Book of Revelation? Hasn't it already been interpreted "to death" and every last strand of meaning been sucked out of it and offered to the Church ad nauseum? Sometimes it feels that way. Even so, surprisingly, there is still massive disagreement and uncertainty about its interpretation.

I'm not going to offer THE definitive answer to everything. That would be arrogance. Nor is this article like the book-selling pages in which you scroll down one brightly-coloured exclamation after another until at the bottom you discover you have to buy a DVD or book to find "NOW! REVEALED: The Answer You Have Been Praying For!!!" .

As I mentioned in the [Contents Summary](#), there will be readers here who exclaim, "*but I already KNOW what Revelation means! I have no confusion about it and if you do it's because you haven't been taught the correct doctrine about it*". If this is you, I urge you to stick with it and read as many parts of this article as you can. I only want to ADD to our knowledge not completely overthrow the classic interpretation. However, there will be challenges to the standard viewpoint, which I pray you will consider also.

There is certainly room for more understanding. Would God provide us with scripture that is too deep to be understood? Did He not promise that at the end of days (at least) the books of prophetic wisdom would be opened so that those in need of help and comfort would be reassured? These coming years will be the most testing and dangerous that the Church has ever faced and it is my belief that God will not leave us without the tools for facing up to them bravely and with revealed knowledge by the Word of God.

The Book of Revelation begins by assuring us of its intent: "to show his servants things which must shortly take place"

When I decided to follow up on thoughts I had while reading Revelation and other books of the Bible, I looked online to see if there were any similar studies. I found there were some similar ideas, but mostly from Seventh-Day Adventist or Preterist sources. I am neither. I am a futurist, but I was not discouraged, as the conclusions of those other studies were different to mine, and they didn't hold to the plain meaning of scripture.

Later Note: I have subsequently found some studies from evangelical pre-millennial and messianic writers that spoke of the same ideas.

In essence, my belief is that much of the Book of Revelation is set into the framework of a **celebration in the Temple**, as John of Revelation would have remembered it. As I studied further, I became convinced the celebration was that of the **Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur**, perhaps the most important, solemn and significant feast-day to Israel, and prophetic of the Day of Judgement.

(There are suggestions that the day of the festival in Revelation was also a Sabbath. That would be fitting, since the events described are both the Judgement Day, the Final Atonement AND the "Sabbath Rest" of the Church and world. This is explored in [Part Four](#))

Naturally, Revelation does not describe a LITERAL Jewish feast day celebration. For us, those days are over. Jesus our High Priest has already fulfilled all the "types" and there are no more blood sacrifices (indeed there is no more earthly Temple building in Jerusalem.)

However, what references there are to the Day of Atonement ceremonies in the Old Testament and elsewhere are vitally important to our understanding of what is going on in the Book of Revelation as a whole. So much so, that I feel **we cannot completely grasp the meaning of Revelation without knowing its framework**. That is because in reality this Day (called simply THE DAY by Jews) is not a Jewish feast day, but a fulfillment of what John the writer knew was a symbolic representation of the Last Day, the Day of the Lord!

What Can We Learn?

From a modern-day Gentile perspective there is much in Revelation (as well as in other parts of the bible) that we fail to grasp. While this is true in general of "going the extra mile" (Matthew 5:41) and the "jot and tittle" of the Law (Matthew 5:18) for example, things become even harder when we study Revelation as outsiders to the context of John's day and his experiences.

While we can perhaps never perfectly enter into the mind of John of Revelation, it helps enormously to see his vision from his point of view. We can only grasp the significance of certain passages of Revelation within the framework of the Temple worship of John's day. This also holds true for other biblical passages, such as the importance of wedding garments (Matthew 22:1-14) and the cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12). (Note: the non-essential question of whether or not the Temple was still standing when John wrote Revelation is covered elsewhere. See the [summary page](#).)

Some scriptures in Revelation evade understanding outside their context, ie. the Temple Worship.

How many have struggled to explain in different (and some rather silly) ways the "open door in Heaven" in chapter Four? Who are the 24 elders and why do they fall prostrate? Why are martyrs seen "under the altar" in chapter six, and why are they "given white robes" (verse 11). What is the meaning of the silence in Chapter 8? Why is John taken "to the wilderness" to see the fate of Mystery Babylon in Chapter 17:3? Why are the churches lampstands? Why are the righteous urged to "keep their garments" in 16:15? Why does the angel raise his right hand in Chapter 10:5? Why does Jesus say "I stand at the door and knock" in Chapter 3:20? These and many more puzzling questions can be answered by studying Revelation as the Day of Atonement ceremony in Herod's Temple.

I can quote one learned author as saying this:

*"...even in New Testament times...St John could find no more adequate imagery to portray heavenly realities and the final triumph of the Church than that taken from the service of praise in the Temple. Thus, when first 'the twenty-four elders, representing the chiefs of the twenty-four courses of the priesthood, and afterwards the 144,000, representing redeemed Israel in its fulness (12 x 12,000), sing * the new song * — the former in heaven, the latter on Mount Zion — they appear, just as in the Temple services, as 'harpers, harping with their harps.' Possibly there may also be an analogy between the time when these 'harpers' are introduced and the period in the Temple service when the music began — just as the joyous drink-offering was poured out. There is yet a third reference in the Book of Revelation to 'the harps of God,' with most pointed allusion, not to the ordinary, but to the Sabbath services in the Temple." [Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* Page 75]*

Also, looking at Revelation alongside the order of service on the Day of Atonement reveals some surprising new facts about the people and events described. For instance, it shows us who the martyrs represent, and why the palm-waving multitude suddenly appear in Heaven. It provides a chronological sequence of events but also shows us where the events are a narrative (or interlude as I have called them) instead.

Was John a Priest?

Edersheim also gives support to the idea that the writer of Revelation was himself connected to the priesthood, or himself a priest. He writes:

*"There is a marked peculiarity and also a special charm about the allusions of the 'beloved disciple' to the Temple and its services. The other New Testament writers refer to them in their narratives, or else explain their types, in such language as any well-informed worshipper at Jerusalem might have employed. But John writes not like an ordinary Israelite. He has eyes and ears for details which others would have left unnoticed. ... This, as we shall have frequent occasion to show, appears in his Gospel, but much more in the Book of Revelation. **Indeed, the Apocalypse, as a whole, may be likened to the Temple services in its mingling of prophetic symbols with worship and praise.** But it is specially remarkable, that the Temple references with which the Book of Revelation abounds are generally to minutiae by which a writer who had not been as familiar with such details, as only personal contact and engagement with them could have rendered him, would scarcely have even noticed, certainly not employed as part of his imagery. They come in naturally, spontaneously, and so unexpectedly, that the reader is occasionally in danger of overlooking them altogether; and in language such as a*

*professional man would employ, which would come to him from the previous exercise of his calling. Indeed, some of the most striking of these references could not have been understood at all without the professional treatises of the Rabbis on the Temple and its services. Only the studied minuteness of Rabbinical descriptions, derived from the tradition of eye-witnesses, does not leave the same impression as the unstudied illustrations of St. John. **These naturally suggest the twofold inference that the Book of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel must have been written before the Temple services had actually ceased, and by one who had not merely been intimately acquainted with, but probably at one time an actor in them.**" [ibid page 141]*

Further discussions on whether or not the Temple was still standing and how John of Revelation was connected to the priesthood are found on the [summary](#) pages.

Part Two – Why a Temple Service?

We next need to consider the evidence for Revelation having the format and framework of a worship ceremony in Herod's Temple. Fortunately, the evidence is abundant and very plain to see. There is no 'esoteric' wisdom here; there is no obscure prophetic insight only available to the enlightened. We can read what we need to know within the text itself.

John helps us out immediately by describing what he sees in terms of a Heavenly Temple, with a sanctuary, altar, candlestick, angelic priests, incense, Temple garments, worship, rites and offerings. (Chapter Four and onwards). Are these things a reality or visionary? Was John physically in Heaven or seeing these things "in the spirit" in a vision? We cannot know for sure. However we do know that the earthly tabernacle and Temple were based on a design seen in Heaven (Heb 8:5) and each account throughout the bible is consistent about what Heaven contains, so there is every likelihood that what John saw was a reality.

Nonetheless, whichever interpretation we take, it does not alter the fact that the events of Revelation take place in the context of a Temple, and as a worship service.

Evidence

Many of the elements described by John can **only** fit into the context of the Temple, as known to Jesus and the disciples and the early Church. [This was the Temple as rebuilt by King Herod, and it will be further described in [Part Five](#).]

Having studied the Book of Revelation extensively over the years, I have never found anything so revealing and helpful as fitting it into its proper framework, as a Temple Ceremony. Indeed, I will now find it impossible to see it any other way. For me, it is like looking through a window previously steamed up by the heat in the kitchen that suddenly becomes clear and allows me to see a view of the garden beyond. I can never UN-see Revelation, having glimpsed the Heavenly Temple and what happened there, as described by John.

It is now obvious to me that what John sees in Heaven is the genuine Temple of God, a model or pattern of which was given to Moses. It is now plain that John is entering through the great gates of that Temple when he ascends to Heaven, and all that he sees comes to life as parts of that Temple and its angelic services.

All of these aspects are to be explored as I proceed through the study. However, just for the moment, I will just list some passages in Revelation that relate to the Temple and its ceremonies. They are numerous:

1. The appearance of Jesus as High Priest 1:13
2. The seven golden candlesticks 1:12
3. The Book of Life 3:5
4. The 24 elders in white garments 4:4
5. The harps and golden bowls of incense 5:8
6. The white robes 6:11
7. The great multitude worshipping with palm branches 7:9
8. The trumpets Chapter 8
9. The golden censer of incense upon the altar 8:3-4
10. The 'new song' sung by the 144000 Chapter 14

11. The sea of glass 15:2
12. The tabernacle 15:5
13. The seven bowls 15:7
14. The final feast Chapter 19

How is it NOT like the Earthly Temple?

The differences between the heavenly and the earthly Temple are perhaps just as important as the similarities. They demonstrate the truth of the gospel. At the feast of Atonement in Israel, it was the High Priest (symbolic of Jesus) who performed every one of the many rituals himself. Yet in Revelation we see angels carrying out the tasks such as offering incense and pouring out the bowls of wine.

That is because Jesus our High Priest has FINISHED the work of salvation. During the time of the Law, the High Priest symbolised the Messiah who had not yet come to earth. Thus, his carrying out all the sacrifices and other tasks on the Day of Atonement was a message to Israel: it spoke of the Son of God who would win the victory over sin and death all by himself.

And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. Is 63:5

However, when John wrote down the heavenly vision, **redemption had been won**. The Law was fulfilled. Jesus had become the one perfect sacrifice for sin. The work of salvation had been accomplished and Jesus "sat down" which denotes that his Priestly work has now finished.

*Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **sat down at the right hand of God**, waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet..." Hebrews 10:11-12*

Thus in the heavenly Temple Jesus is seen only as the Slain Lamb and the Almighty Lord. He does not perform any of the rituals himself. His servants do what is necessary at his command. He takes part only in the final denouement, as mentioned in Hebrews 10, when his enemies are made a footstool for his feet at his coming. (For the Father has made him Judge of all John 5:22).

Although the work of salvation is finished, Jesus still ministers on our behalf in Heaven. [Please see this page](#). He is an Intercessor, Advocate and active Head of the Church. We should not have a mental image of the Lord sitting idly on His Throne merely waiting the End of the Age.

Likewise, there are no blood sacrifices made in the heavenly Temple.

Jesus is seen as the "slain lamb" (Rev 5:6) because his sacrifice on the cross has already been made. And that is the ONLY sacrifice now needed, opening the way to the Father. Therefore, when John arrives in the heavenly Temple there is no veil or door that blocks the throne of the Almighty (which in the earthly tabernacle was the Shekinah presence of God in the Holy of Holies). But John sees it all (Rev 4).

Nonetheless, twice during the Revelation narrative we see the Holy of Holies or at least the inner sanctuary itself. In Revelation 11:19 "God's Temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his Temple". and in Revelation 15:5 "behold, the Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:...And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the Temple". If this appears odd, I can only say that it confirms John's determination to set the visions in the context of Yom Kippur and the Temple of Jerusalem; otherwise these references would be unnecessary.

We also see that parts of the Temple are excluded such as the outer court which is "given over to the Gentiles" [Rev 11:2] and these passages remind us we are witnessing a vision of future events and not merely a descriptive of heaven.

Not All Are Chosen

There is an intriguing similarity between the choosing of the righteous who are to escape the last days judgement, and the choosing of the priestly lots. In the first-century Temple worship, lots were made for choosing which of the priests would take part in the actual ceremony. Although a number of priests were ordained to serve, not all would be READY, and not all would be CHOSEN. [See "[Choosing the Lots](#)"]

This reminds me of the oft-repeated biblical phrase "*Many are called, but few are chosen*". It was a rigorous and exact procedure for a man to become a priest. See this page for example: <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/resource/priests.xhtml>

Now however, instead of needing to be totally free of any crime, sin or disablement, while belonging to the family of Levi or specifically descended from Aaron, we can ALL be accepted into the family and lineage of God. We can be - because of Jesus - declared righteous and clean, become part of His family, and take the Name of Jesus! We are [adopted](#), and we are cleansed from all sin and defilement, when we accept the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. This means that we are ALL in that sense priests before the Lord:

"You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". 1 Peter 2:5

"You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people he claims for his own to proclaim the glorious works of the One who called you from darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9)

You would think that this election and calling itself would be enough to grant us **all** an equal and automatic right to service before the Throne, yet there are degrees of reward, differences in service, many types of crown awarded, and not all are equally fitted to the task. Furthermore, Jesus repeatedly warned us that awareness, discernment and readiness would be needed to avoid "falling asleep" and losing sight of His Coming. [Matthew 25:13 and 1 Thess 5:6]

In warning of the coming persecution and disaster, Jesus suggested there were those who would experience them as a snare, catching them unawares, because their hearts were "weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this life" and instead he commanded prayer and watchfulness:

"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will soon come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36)

Indeed, the parable that Jesus told in Luke 12, verses 35 onwards, to warn us of the perils of unreadiness, is remarkably similar to the instructions to priests at night in the Temple - another direct link between the endtimes prophecies and the Temple ceremonies. The priests also had to be awake, bathed, dressed, with their lamps lit and listening for the knock at their door, for the Overseer - we are told by rabbinical literature - could come unexpectedly and at any hour.

This same warning is given several times in Revelation, for example:

Rev 3: 2-3 "Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."

Rev 3:10 "Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

Therefore it is possible to lose your Christian reward. (See 1 Cor 3:11-15 where the DAY will test and disclose our work) Even more disturbing, we can see from many passages of scripture that some will not qualify at ALL, having despised their inheritance and "trampled on Christ". They have chosen to return to their old ways, despite a profession of faith. They give lip-service to God but their hearts are far from him and they are dedicated to self, not the service of the Messiah.

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? [Hebrews 10:28-29]

In Temple terminology, they have not bathed, nor put on the white garments that befit them for heavenly service, and in some cases do not even HAVE a white garment at all - resulting in a prompt dismissal from the Throne on that Day. [Matt 22:11] They are returned home "where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth".

In my studies of scripture, I have concluded that this fate is NOT absolute (ie going straight to hell), but refers to the horror of being returned to earth just at the time of the Antichrist reign, instead of escaping that fate in the Rapture. However, this act of mercy will no doubt shake some into repentance and even through martyrdom they will eventually attain to a place beside the saved.

We are commanded not just to obtain the garments of righteousness (Rev 3:18) but to PUT THEM ON - that is, to put on Christ: ...Ephesians 5:23 *"and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."* and Romans 13:14 *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."*

Therefore, there is a danger of being a mere spectator at the Cross, and giving mental assent only to the redemption in Jesus Christ.

Be Ready

The priests who have qualified for service, in the Temple or anywhere else, are clearly a privileged group - just as we are. Yet being of the right family and having attained to priesthood was not enough.

To be chosen to serve required dedication to the task. For feast days the preparation would begin long before dawn, and in some cases require staying awake all night. There was a ritual bath to take, and white garments to put on, and a readiness to serve that would result in answering the knock at the door which could come unexpectedly, at any hour.

"But then the preparations for the service of the morning required each to be early astir. The priest whose duty it was to superintend the arrangements might any moment knock at the door and demand entrance. He came suddenly and unexpectedly, no one knew when. The Rabbis use almost the very words in which Scripture describes the unexpected coming of the Master, when they say, 'Sometimes he came at the cock-crowing, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later. He came and knocked, and they opened to him. Then said he unto them, All ye who have washed, come and cast lots.' For the customary bath was required to have been taken before the superintending priest came round, since it was a principle that none might go into the court to serve, although he were clean, unless he had bathed. A subterranean passage, lit on both sides, led to the well appointed bathrooms where the priests immersed themselves. After that they needed not all that day to wash again, save their hands and feet, which they had to do each time, however often, they came for service into the Temple. It was, no doubt, to this that our Lord referred in His reply to Peter: 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit'." [Edersheim Page 149]

"Thereupon... the priests passed into the Hall of Polished Stones to cast lots for the services of the day". [Ibid p150] Thus, qualified priests who were already within the Temple complex not only needed - firstly - to be ready, bathed and dressed but ALSO in addition had to be specifically CHOSEN through a process of lots, for every kind of activity that day. [See [Word Document here](#)]

As we shall see, throughout the first part of the Book of Revelation there are four opportunities to be chosen, but when all lots are allocated there are NO MORE opportunities to take part in the activities of the DAY. This process of filtering out first the unqualified, then the unprepared, then the unchosen should perhaps make the Church more serious about the commands of Jesus to be AWAKE and READY for his unexpected knock.

The Unqualified Removed

At the conclusion of the allocation by lot, all who had not been chosen were required to remove their white priestly garments, and return them to the Official in charge of their storage. They had then to put on their ordinary clothes. They were still priests, and still living and working within the Temple, but they were not required to serve.

Furthermore, at a special signal - one that relates to SEAL SIX in Revelation - *the Overseer separated all the priests who had become defiled and stood them all together at the Eastern Gate*. This was done to display to everyone their impurity and unfitnes to serve, so that no question could be made about why they had not attained to service. Do we see a hint of this when Jesus warned those who claimed to be believers and had done "many mighty works in your name" that they would be sent away. [Matthew 7:21] There is also a striking similarity in Matthew 22:12 to the excluded priests who no longer have their special garments of service.

The need of white garments is mentioned several times in Revelation. ([web page here](#)) They clearly refer to righteousness and fitness to be in Heaven. The lax Laodiceans are urged to obtain white robes, the martyrs and overcomers are given white robes and in Revelation 19:8 *"to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints"*.

Not only did the priests have to possess special garments but they had to "keep them". This refers to the punishment for those who fall asleep on duty!

"..., in the midst of some dry account of what went on in the Temple, we suddenly come upon the very words which St. John had employed to describe heavenly realities. Perhaps one of the most striking instances of this kind is afforded by the words quoted at the head of this chapter - 'Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.' [Rev 16:15]. They literally describe, as we learn from the Rabbis, the punishment awarded to the Temple-guards if found asleep at their posts; and the Rabbinical account of it is curiously confirmed by the somewhat naive confession of one of their number, that on a certain occasion his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple as he went his rounds at night."

[http://www.birtpangs.org/articles/media/Edersheim_Temple.pdf Page 143]

The White Stone

Another direct reference to the Temple services - and specifically those of the Day of Atonement - is found in Revelation 2:17 where the victorious were given a white stone: *"To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it"*.

Various interpretations have been given for this white stone, but realising the framework of the Day of Atonement in the Temple gives us the clue:

No one explanation seems to be able to satisfy everyone as to exactly what the lots were made of or what they looked like. However, if we combine the information given by 'Yoma' [The Day] in the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishnah, it seems that the lots were two stones: one white and one black. According to the Talmud and the Mishnah, the white stone displayed the word "For the Lord", and the black stone displayed the words "For Azazel". [Source]

Thus the name upon the white stone, as well as being "For the Lord" as a chosen and forgiven servant of God, was also a name chosen by lot that could never be given to another, nor revealed to another - perhaps the name of God, or the new name of the believer in Heaven?

On the Day of Atonement, it was considered to be a good sign if the lot "for the Lord" was drawn first with the white stone, and held up in the right hand, since the goat that was to be killed brought forgiveness of sins for the Israeli people. *"the choice of which goat was to be God's goat was in the casting of lots with two stones - black and white. It was always considered good if the white stone showed up in the right hand - but from 30 AD, it always ended up with the black stone in the right hand."* [Source]

"...a random choosing of the "lot" was cast on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The lot chosen determined which of two goats would be "for the Lord" and which goat would be "for Azazel" or what we know as the "Scapegoat." During the two hundred years before 30 AD, when the High Priest picked one of two stones, again this selection was governed by chance, and each year the priest would select a black stone as often as a white stone. But for forty years in a row, beginning in 30 AD, the High Priest always picked the black stone! The odds against this happening are astronomical (2 to the 40th power). In other words, the chances of this occurring are 1 in approximately 5,479,548,800 or about 5.5 billion to one! By comparison, your chances of winning your local state or municipal-run cash Lottery would be much more favorable! The lot for Azazel, the black stone, contrary to all the laws of chance, came up 40 times in a row from 30 to 70 AD! This was considered a dire event and signified something had fundamentally changed in this Yom Kippur ritual." [Source]

Part Three – Which Feast?

While it can be easily demonstrated that the Book of Revelation takes the form of a Temple service, why have I concluded that it is the Day of Atonement that is portrayed there? The writer tells us! He receives the vision on - and relating to - the "Day of the Lord". (Revelation 1:10). We should not confuse this with the later Church tradition of "the day of the Lord, i.e., Sunday". What John as a Jew and first-century believer meant was THE DAY - The Judgement Day, the Day of Atonement.

"We must remember two vital facts about the book of Revelation: First, it is a book of prophecy primarily concerning the time of Christ's coming and the events that lead up to it (Revelation 1:1-3, 7). Second, it is written by a Jew steeped in the language of the Old Testament. To him, the phrase en teé kuriaké heeméra ("on the Lord's day")—and its Hebrew or Aramaic equivalent—would imply what is called in the Old Testament "the Day of the Lord," the time of the coming destruction that climaxes in the return of Christ (Isaiah 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; Amos 5:18; etc.). In the introduction to E.W. Bullinger's Commentary on Revelation, he explains definitively that the "Lord's day" in Revelation 1:10 is not talking about the first day of the week." [Source]

Is Revelation about Tabernacles?

Some years ago, I had assumed that Revelation portrayed **the entire Feast of Tabernacles**, the winter feast of Israel, including the New Year celebration, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) itself and the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). I once assumed (mistakenly as it turned out) that the bowls cast down to earth by the angels in the latter part of the book were like the bowls of sacrificial blood dashed upon the altar on the Day of Atonement. I also assumed that the trumpets in Revelation, and the "last trump" of the Rapture were the same, and that both spoke of the Feast of Trumpets. However, the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4 is not referring his readers to the seven trumpets of Revelation. He would be unable to do so, since that book had not yet been written!

Just as Jesus used a variety of different parables to make the same point, so Paul and John used different illustrations to point to the same prophetic event. It is easy to confuse the two, but we should not.

"We cannot go to the Book of Revelation and say that the voice of the seventh angel (Revelation 11:15) is the last trump. In the first century, the last trump (shofar) meant a specific day in the year. In Judaism, there are three trumpets (shofarim) that have a name. They are the first trump, the last trump, and the great trump. Each one of these trumpets indicates a specific day in the Jewish year. The first trump is blown on the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) (Exodus [Shemot] 19:19). It proclaimed that G-d had betrothed Himself to Israel. The last trump is synonymous with Rosh HaShanah, according to Theodore Gaster in his book, Festivals of the Jewish Year, in his chapter on Rosh HaShanah. Herman Kieval also states the same thing in his book, The High Holy Days (Volume I, Rosh HaShanah, Chapter 5, Footnote 11), in the chapter on the shofar. The great trumpet is blown on Yom Kippur, which will herald the return of the Messiah Yeshua back to earth." (Hebraic Heritage Ministries, <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/2175/>)

Is 27:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the **great trumpet shall be blown**, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem" --- which day?

Is 27:1...the day that "the Lord with his severe sword, great and strong (that proceeds out of his mouth on the day of his coming, compare Rev 19:15) will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent (Red Dragon), that twisted serpent, and he will slay the reptile that is in the sea (the great beast arose from the sea, in which is the bottomless pit Rev 13:1)

Neilah: The Closing of the Gates of Heaven & The Coming of the Kingdom

The Feast of Trumpets is about various things, but the most important for our study in Revelation is about the crowning of the KING of this world. The trumpet blasts pronounce God's rulership and man's need to repent and obey. This opportunity is open throughout the festival, but ends at the closing blast of the shofar, the Tekiah Gedolah. Accompanying this is the final Yom Kippur prayer service, the Neilah, the Closing or Locking.

Neilah is the final service of Yom Kippur. It is the Jewish belief that the gates of Heaven are open during the days of repentance to receive prayers for forgiveness and that they close after the Neilah service. When the final blast of the

shofar (the Shofar HaGadol, the Great Trumpet) is heard at the end of the Neilah service, those who have observed the day with sincerity should feel that they have been inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life. [\[Source\]](#)
In ancient times groups of laymen attended the sacrifice at the Second Temple in Jerusalem as **representatives of the common people**. Each day before sunset, when the Temple gates were being closed, **these deputations prayed the Neilah** [\[Source\]](#) Neilah means 'closing'. There are two views in the Talmud as to what is or was closing at this time. The first is that it refers to the Temple gates that were closed at the end of the day. The second is that it is the gates of heaven that are closing as daylight fades (Yerushalmi Berachot 4:1). "Open the gates," our liturgy says, "For day is nearly past." [\[Source\]](#)

As I show later on in the study, these 24 chosen representatives of Israel who are allowed to pass through the great gates into the Sanctuary area of the Temple, may be the 24 elders John saw in that area. Therefore it is very intriguing that Revelation 11:15-18 describes the very prayers of Neilah in their worship at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Amazing Similarity

The 24 elders not only proclaim God as KING (Rev 11:17) but that same verse echoes the Neilah prayer "The One who is and was and who is to come". Compare this statement from a Jewish site, speaking of the Neilah affirmations: "This is followed by a threefold repetition of "Praised is His name, whose glorious kingdom for ever and ever," the line that is usually recited as a silent response to the Shema. This recalls the threefold declaration: "The Lord is king (present), the Lord was king (past), and the Lord will be king (future)." [\[Source\]](#)

Over and over, therefore, we have in the book of Revelation the prayers and ceremonies of Yom Kippur, the Day.

Three Woes

I will make here just one further observation on the blowing of the shofar. There are four different sounds associated with the Feast of Trumpets. They are explained as follows:

- **Tekiah:** A straight trumpet blast signifying Kingship. A pure unbroken sound that calls man to search his heart, and seek forgiveness through repentance.
- **Shevarim:** Three short notes representing a man moaning in repentance. A broken, staccato, trembling sound.
- **Teruah:** Nine staccato notes blown in rapid succession, similar to the wail of a person weeping in short bursts.
- **Tekiah Gedolah:** One Long Blast. The prolonged, unbroken sound typifying a final invitation to sincere repentance and atonement.

Notice particularly the "Shevarim" blast. "Three short notes typifying sorrow..." Does that not reflect what the angel said (8:13) about the three last blasts of the Revelation trumpets? **Woe, Woe, Woe** might even be a description of the very sound the shofar made. In Hebrew 'woe' is OY (o'-ee) and in Greek it is OUI: (oo-ah'-ee)

- [Hear the sounds \[Youtube\]](#)

It will help understanding to briefly outline both the Feast of Tabernacles and the Day of Atonement itself, to show the reasons for my conclusion - because there are important differences that demonstrate it is ONLY the Atonement [Yom Kippur] ceremonies being performed in Revelation.

Feasts Fulfilled and Unfulfilled

The feast days of the Old Testament were intended to demonstrate the redemption of God's people. Jesus Christ gave his life as the lamb of God at Passover, and rose again at the waving of the Firstfruits. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. These Spring and Summer feast-types have been fulfilled but the Autumn feast days have not.

In the Autumn (called the Fall in countries other than the UK where I live) there are three feasts close together that all have to do with HARVEST. They are Rosh HaShanah (the Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement and holiest day of the year,

called simply THE DAY [Yoma] in Jewish literature), and Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths). Prophetic in nature, all three remain to be fulfilled.

* A useful page with illustrations can be seen here www.pray4zion.org/TheLast3FallFeastsoftheLord2014.html
Rosh HaShanah

Rosh HaShanah is the "head of the year" or the New Year celebration. The Biblical name for this holiday is called **Yom Teruah** (Hebrew: יום תרועה, literally "day [of]shouting/raising a noise") or the **Feast of Trumpets** according to the correct biblical calendar of the 1st and 2nd Temple period, not Rosh HaShanah. The ram's horn or Shofar is blown on this important day, and the total number of blasts on Rosh HaShanah is one hundred.

But - importantly - this is not the END of judgement, but the BEGINNING. It is the first of the High Holy Days or Yamim Nora'im ("Days of Awe") which usually occur in the early autumn. [\[See for example this page.\]](#)

Delayed Judgement

In the Talmud tractate on Rosh HaShanah, it states that three books of account are opened on Rosh HaShanah, wherein the fate of the wicked, the righteous, and those of an intermediate class are recorded. The names of the righteous are immediately inscribed in the BOOK OF LIFE, and they are SEALED "to live."

The intermediate class are allowed **a respite of ten days, until Yom Kippur**, to reflect, repent and become righteous; the wicked are "blotted out of the book of the living forever." (Compare Revelation 3:5)

It is - for Israel - a time for serious reflection, fasting and repentance.. And that repentance and confession before God needed to be serious and genuine, even according to the Old Testament law, otherwise there was no atonement for sins. It is a time to cast away sin, as symbolized by the traditional act of Tashlich ('to cast') where Jewish people visit a body of moving water and cast bread crumbs into the water – this symbolically "casts away" the sin into the river.

Yom Kippur is the Day of Judgement

In Jewish liturgy, Rosh HaShanah leads to **Yom Kippur**, which is described as "the day of judgement" (Yom ha-Din) and "the day of remembrance" (Yom ha-Zikkaron). A prayer of that day says "*You cause every living soul to pass before you; you count, reckon and review every creature, determining its lifetime and inscribing its destiny. **On Rosh HaShanah it is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed.***"

It is also in Jewish tradition "*the coronation of God as King of the universe in preparation for the acceptance of judgements that will follow on that day, symbolized as "written" into a Divine book of judgments, that then **hang in the balance for ten days** [Days of Awe] waiting for all to repent, before **being "sealed" on Yom Kippur** [Day of Atonement]."*

There is a very revealing ancient Jewish Tradition that says the sealing angel of Ezekiel chapter 9 and thus also Revelation 7:2-4 and 9:4 is sent out to seal the people of God **on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement!**

Yom Kippur / Atonement

As mentioned above, this most solemn of days in the Jewish calendar and Old Testament was special in a number of ways. On that day the High Priest alone performed the ceremonies and sacrifices. On that day, cleansing of sin was obtained for all by a special series of sacrifices. Also, on that one day of the year he was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, and to see the very throne of God.

NOTE: Although we use the word "Atonement" for this feast day and throughout the English translation of the bible, there is no such word in Hebrew. Indeed, the word needed to be specially created for the purpose of translating "kippur" which means expiation - literally covering. "*By the early 16th century, "at-one" was a transitive verb meaning "to achieve a state of at-one-ness, or reconciliation, between two parties" (The Forward, "On Language," 9/21/07). And it was William Tyndale, in his 1530 translation of the Hebrew Bible, who coined the English phrase, "day of at-one-ment," to translate the Hebrew Yom hakippurim in the Torah. Where he could have used the English version of the Latin translation of the Hebrew word "kippurim"— the more common word*

"expiation"—he instead chose what was then a new word, "atonement." In his translation, Tyndale affirmed that the response to the defiling power of sin is the restorative power of connection, the power of "at-one-ing." [\[Source\]](#)

Yom Kippur is "the tenth day of [the] seventh month" (Tishrei) and also regarded as the "Sabbath of Sabbaths". This day completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days or Yamim Nora'im ("Days of Awe") that commenced with Rosh HaShanah.

Unlike the other Jewish holidays, the Day of Atonement was no festive event. It was a day of national mourning and repentance. This was a Sabbath day celebration, which meant that no work could be done (Lev. 23:26-32). Anyone who did not observe this Sabbath was to be cut off from his people (Lev. 23:29), which is a euphemism for being put to death. Beyond this, this was a day when the people were to "humble their souls" (cf. Lev. 16:31; 23:27; Num. 29:7), which, according to many, included fasting. This would thus be the only religious holiday which was characterized by mourning, fasting, and repentance. [\[Source\]](#)

Some Rituals

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest himself performed the offering of the daily sacrifice, the incense offering, and the other sacred duties. After a series of immersions and ablutions he offered a bull as his personal sin-offering. He confessed his own and his family's sins, the sins of the tribe of Aaron (the priests), and those of all Israel (Lev. 16:6).

Every time he uttered the holy name of God, the '[Tetragrammaton](#)' which was uttered only on the Day of Atonement, the people prostrated themselves and responded: "Blessed be His Name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever" (see Tosef., Sot. 13:8; Yoma 39b). During the service of the high priest, this procedure was repeated ten times (Tosef., Yoma 2:2), or, according to another source (TJ, Yoma 3:7), 13 times.

The high priest then drew two lots from a wooden box, one inscribed "For Azazel" [or just the single word Azazel] and the other "For the Lord." The role of each was determined by the lots. The high priest sent the goat "For Azazel" into the desert and he offered the other as a sin-offering.

Special white linen garments were worn, the people had to be in a state of mourning and fasting, and sacrifices were offered that differed from any other day of the year. These were intended to obtain cleansing from the sins of the nation, the priests and the High Priest himself, along with the Temple and Sanctuary itself. It was a total cleansing of all defilement.

The fate of the two goats used that day will be familiar to many: one was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and the other was dispatched far away to the desert, never to return. (In later years the Jews made sure it could never return by throwing it off a cliff.) As there was no equivalent word in English for the Azazel, the word "scapegoat" was invented when the bible was translated..

All of these rituals will be examined in depth later on because they all have a mirror-image in the book of Revelation.

Sukkot / Tabernacles

The seventh (and final) feast given to Israel is called Sukkot or the "Feast of Tabernacles." The word Sukkot means "booths." During this week-long festival many Jewish families construct a booth or hut in which meals are eaten throughout the festival. It reminds Israel of the huts (Sukkot) that they lived in during their 40 year sojourn in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. This happy time is one of the three great pilgrimage feasts recorded in the Bible when all Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord in the Temple in Jerusalem.

As can be easily seen from the bible accounts and Jewish tradition, this time of living in specially-constructed booths points to the Lord's promise that He will once again tabernacle with His people when He returns to reign over all the world from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:1-7).

It also has the meaning "The Feast of Ingathering" since it comes at the time of harvest. After Israel entered the Promised Land, Sukkot was associated with the harvest at the end of the year. Certain customs were incorporated into the observance of Sukkot, including decorating the sukkah, performing special "wave" ceremonies of the "Four Species" (i.e., the lulav), and circling the synagogue in a processional while singing hymns. In Revelation 7:9 we see the great multitude of people waving their palms before

the Throne because for them the time of mourning has ended and their joyful festival of praise has begun. **They ARE the "ingathering", the harvest of God!**

While the Jews looked back to the wanderings in the desert, we Christians look forward to the joyful time when God will once again dwell with his people. This is the true meaning of the Feast of Booths.

Beloved, I don't know when the Lord Yahushua is coming back. But I believe that symbolically we are in the sixth month of the Jewish calendar—the month of Elul—the month of preparation for the first day of the seventh, holy month Tishrei which is Rosh HaShanah—the Feast of Trumpets which prophetically points to His return! If you belong to Him, you have been through the four spring feasts which have already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ—Pesach (Passover) when the blood was applied to your heart through His death, Unleavened Bread when you were freed from sin and buried with Him, Firstfruits when you experienced His resurrection power of new life after conversion and Shavuot (Pentecost) when you were baptized in the Holy Ghost for power in ministry. You are now in the sultry summer months of the Jewish calendar, waiting for the final three feasts to begin in the fall. As you walk through the fourth month, the fifth month, the sixth month, your eyes are on that seventh month prize—HIS GLORIOUS RETURN (Feast of Trumpets—Rosh HaShanah), JUDGMENT DAY (Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur) and ETERNITY WITH HIM (Feast of Tabernacles—Sukkot). [\[Source\]](#)

So why is Revelation the Day of Atonement?

From all seen above, the links between Revelation and Yom Kippur may have become apparent already. If not, here are a few additional thoughts. The Day of Atonement, as portrayed in Revelation is:

1. The Day of Judgement and most solemn day of the year
2. The closing of the door of Heaven and the final opportunity to repent
3. The sealing into the Book of Life
4. The restoration of Israel
5. The establishment of the King and Kingdom
6. The wearing of white garments (mentioned several times in Revelation)
7. The only day that God's Throne (in the holy of holies) is seen
8. The day on which Jews believed satan appeared to accuse God's people
9. The day in which the 'Azazel' goat was cast down
10. The day that began in mourning, fasting and prayer but ended in joyful celebration

And as we go on through this study, many more reasons will emerge.

[Part Four – Is it also the Sabbath?](#)

In Part Three we looked at the possibility that the Book of Revelation portrayed in prophetic terms the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. There is also a suggestion that this important day may be a Sabbath. Certain holy days could not fall on the Sabbath, but Yom Kippur was not one of them. [The modern Hebrew calendar has been arranged so that Yom Kippur does not fall on a Friday or Sunday, but it can occur on a Saturday.]

Arguing against this is the fact that trumpets could not be blown on the Sabbath in reality. However, the **prophetic Sabbath** of the Revelation is not just the ordinary day of the week, but the "Sabbath of Rest" that is to come at the end of the age.

We will shortly look at the way the Jews viewed this concept and how it relates to Revelation and the End. The Bible plainly states that Christ's earthly kingdom will last one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7), and it also makes perfect sense that this one thousand year kingdom should be the seventh thousand year period, or seventh millennium, of human history. This makes Christ's kingdom **the Sabbath day of the earth and human history.**

Jesus is our 'Rest'

Those of us who are Christians have in a real sense already entered into rest, because we depend on the finished work of Jesus for our future. However, as Paul pointed out, "there remains a rest for the people of God" -

Heb. 4:3-11 "For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest," although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this

way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest". Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts". For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience."

The principle of the Sabbath is one of the oldest institutions in the world, dating back to the creation of the world. Later it became one of the most important parts of the Law given to Moses. Indeed, we find it hard to understand why anyone defiling the sabbath day by working (or doing other prohibited things) was put to death! This seems extremely harsh, but it establishes a part of God's message that is vital. God rested on the seventh day:

*Thus the heavens and the earth were **finished**, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God **finished** his work which he had **done**, and he **rested** on the seventh day from all his work which he had **done**. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God **rested** from all his work which he had **done** in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)*

For each of the other days of creation, there follows an evening and a morning which speaks of a progression and development onwards. Yet on this final day of the week there is no mention of evening and morning, nor any alteration or development, only the repeated words FINISHED and DONE.

The other repeated word is REST, because that is the hidden prophetic message of the Sabbath. Indeed, the word "seven," the word "sabbath," and the word "rest," are all the same basic word in Hebrew, Shabat, seven, sabbath, rest. However this rest is not just recreational time after work, but a "ceasing of activity", a cessation because the work is COMPLETED..

Although the tradition of Israel established a certain day of the week (Saturday) as the weekly Sabbath, they were in danger of missing the point God was making. God's true sabbath rest was an illustration that pointed to the Son of God. The weekly sabbath ended at the cross. In Colossians 2:13 Paul says "*let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a **shadow** of what is to come; but **the substance belongs to Christ**.*" (Colossians 2:17)

The Lord Jesus confirmed this in his death and resurrection, rising on the Sabbath day (for when the women arrived at his tomb at daybreak on Sunday they found that "He is RISEN" already!) Thereafter, the NEW DAY had begun just as the work of God in redemption was **finished**. On the cross as Jesus died he said as much, "it is finished!" and from that point on, the work of trying to please God and keep the Law was ended. From that point on, resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ was our hope of salvation.

This is why Paul cries, "*Not I, but Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me,*" (cf, Gal 2:20). This is the secret of the Christian who learns "*it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,*" (cf, Phil 2:13). So true Christian life is to cease from dependence on one's own activity, and to rest in dependence upon the activity of the One who dwells within. That is fulfilling the sabbath, the true sabbath. (Facts taken from ['The Seventh Day'](#), by Ray C. Stedman, 12/10/67)

A Future Rest

So, believers enter into the rest of trusting the finished work of Christ. Then why is it that Hebrews 4:11 goes on to say, "*Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience.*"

The simple and obvious answer is that we all need to be vigilant against temptation and backsliding. We all need to be diligent in keeping ourselves in the centre of the love of Christ. A deeper answer is that it refers to the "final rest", the final sabbath of this world which is to come at the end of this age. That is what we find hinted at in the Book of Revelation.

Many Christians and also Jews believe that human history is divided - like the days of creation - into seven eras of a thousand years. There are - they say - six days of labour followed by a seventh millennium that is like the Jewish Sabbath, a day of rest for mankind, nature and the earth, the Age of God.

Here is one [website](#) in which I would advise caution but it discusses the concept of the 7000 years extensively, even concluding that the 6000 years ends in March 2015 (which I doubt). If we date the final two thousand years from the birth of Jesus, then according to my own studies the 2000 years began with his conception around 7BC and thus ended around 1994 (which is by no coincidence the date the first seal opened!) We are now in the transition period between two millennia, just as the time of Jesus on earth was a transition between the Old and the New Covenants.

"For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night." [Psalm 90:4] "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." [2 Peter 3:8]

"The early fathers most commonly looked for the second advent at the end of 6000 years of the world's history" (New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: Vol.VII, p.376).

"Of the sabbath He speaketh in the beginning of the creation; 'And God made the works of his hands in six days, and He ended on the seventh day, and rested on it, and He hallowed it.' Give heed, children, what this meaneth, 'He ended in six days.' He meaneth this, that in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end..." [The Epistle of Barnabas, circa 200 A.D.]

"For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: 'Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.' This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to and END at the sixth thousand year" (Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.1, p.557).

"The view most frequently expressed there . . . is that the Messianic kingdom will last for one thousand (some said two thousand) years. 'In six days God created the world, on the seventh He rested. But a day of God is equal to a thousand years (Ps.90:4). Hence the world will last for six thousand years of toil and labor; then will come one thousand years of Sabbath rest for the people of God in the kingdom of the Messiah.' This idea must have already been very common in the first century before Christ" (Encyclopedia Britannica, eleventh edition, concerning the Talmud: Millennium," p.459).

Jewish Belief in the Sabbath Rest

A much more complete and interesting explanation of this ancient Jewish belief, which long ante-dated the time of Christ and Peter, is given in the Jewish New Testament Commentary, by Dr. David H. Stern. In a commentary on II Peter, chapter 3, dealing with the "day" for a "thousand years" equation, Dr. Stern writes that this idea "has deep roots in Judaism, specifically in connection with dating the Messianic Era." He then quotes the Talmud, in tractate Sanhedrin, as follows:

"Rav Kattina said, 'The world will exist for six thousand years, then for one thousand it will be desolate, as it is said, 'The Lord alone will be exalted in that day'" (Isaiah 2:11). Abaye said, 'It will be desolate two thousand, as it is said, "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we will live in his sight"' (Hos.6:2). "It has been taught in accordance with Rav Kattina, 'Just as every seventh year is a year of sh'mittah [letting the land lie fallow], so it is with the world: one thousand years out of seven are to be fallow -- as proved by the following three texts taken together [in which the key word is "day"]': 'The Lord alone will be exalted in that day' (Isaiah 2:11); 'A psalm and song for the day of Shabbat' (Psalm 92:1), meaning the day that is entirely Shabbat; and, "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past" (Psalm 90:4). "The school of Eliyahu teaches: "The world exists for six thousand years -- two thousand of them tohu ["void"]; two thousand, Torah; and two thousand, the era of the MESSIAH. But because of our numerous iniquities many of these years have been lost"' (Sanhedrin 97a-97b). [Source]

The Days of Creation and the Days of the World

Clearly the dates are approximate!

- **First Day of 1,000 years** - Adam to Noah/The Flood = *Innocence and Ignorance* (Light and Darkness divided)
- **Second Day of 1,000 years** - The Flood to Abraham = *Separation* [of peoples, nations and religions] (Heaven and Earth divided by the firmament)
- **Third Day of 1,000 years** - Abraham to the Kingdom = *Growth and Expansion* (Land, vegetation, trees, seeds and fruits)

- **Fourth Day of 1,000 years** - Kingdom to Jesus = *Rulers, Prophets, Exile & Return* = (Signs, rulership, light and darkness distinguished)
- **Fifth Day of 1,000 years** - Jesus to Religious Empires = *Church Expansion & Corruption* (Abundant living creatures in sea and sky)
- **Sixth Day of 1,000 years** - Reformation to Modern Day = *Church Recovery* (Domestic and wild animals and mankind)
- **Seventh Day of 1,000 years** - Return of the Lord to end of Millennium = *The Kingdom* (Sabbath Day)

Now it can be seen that Revelation, being a book of prophecy about judgement day and the return of the Lord to earth, incorporates the idea of the SABBATH REST into the Day of Atonement ceremonies.

Therefore I will suggest that this feast day seen in vision by John was not only a heavenly Yom Kippur of the most perfect and final kind, but that it is a prophetic Sabbath Day. There are few differences in the rituals and prayers to watch out for, and today "The only difference in observance between a weekday Yom Kippur and a Shabbat Yom Kippur is that (in Ashkenazic communities) the Avinu Malkeinu prayer, which is normally recited four times in the course of the Yom Kippur services, is recited only once on a Shabbat Yom Kippur, at the conclusion of the final (Ne'ilah) prayer." However, this statement confirms the sacred nature of Yom Kippur:

"...all other fast days are postponed until Sunday when they fall on Shabbat.¹ However, unlike all other fasts, Yom Kippur is not postponed, and is fully observed even on Shabbat. The Torah dubs Yom Kippur Shabbat Shabbaton—the "Shabbat of Shabbats," implying that it takes precedence over Shabbat. According to chassidic teachings, Yom Kippur falling on Shabbat doesn't "deprive" us of the pleasures—eating, drinking, resting, etc.—which Shabbat normally affords us. Rather the extremely holy nature of Yom Kippur accomplishes the same objectives, albeit in a higher, more spiritual manner."
[\[Source\]](#)

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

And here is a piece of evidence that in Revelation we not only have the Yom Kippur but also the SABBATH ceremonies:

(Rev 15:3 KJV) And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

(Exo 15:1-3 KJV) Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

*"Moses and the children of Israel sang on the other side of the sea a song of thanksgiving and triumph, which, repeated every **Sabbath** in the Temple, when the drink-offering of the festive sacrifice was poured out ... Tradition informs us that the "Song of Moses" was sung in sections (one for each Sabbath) in the Temple, at the close of the Sabbath-morning service. The Song of Moses consists of three stanzas (Exodus 15:2-5, 6-10, and 11-18), of which the first two show the power of Jehovah in the destruction of His enemies, while the third gives thanks for the result, in the calling of Israel to be the kingdom of God, and their possession of the promised inheritance. (Alfred Edersheim, [Bible History, Old Testament, vol. 2, chap. 7](#))*

*"... At the close of the additional **Sabbath** sacrifice, when its drink-offering was brought, the Levites sang the 'Song of Moses' in Deuteronomy 32. This 'hymn' was divided into six portions, for as many Sabbaths (v 1-6; 7-12; 13-18; 19-28; 29-39; 40-end). Each portion was sung in three sections with threefold blasts of the priests' trumpets, the people worshipping at each pause. If a Sabbath and a 'new moon' fell on the same day, the Sabbath hymn was sung in preference to that for the new moon; if a feast day fell on the Sabbath, the Sabbath sacrifice was offered before that prescribed for the day. At the evening sacrifice on the Sabbath the song of Moses in Exodus 15 was sung." (Alfred Edersheim, [The Temple: Its Ministry and Services, chap. 9](#))*

*" There is yet a third reference in the Book of Revelation to 'the harps of God' (Rev 15:2), with most pointed allusion, not to the ordinary, but to the **Sabbath** services in the Temple. In this case 'the harpers' are all they 'that had gotten the victory over the beast.' The Church, which has come out of great tribulation, stands victorious 'on the sea of glass'; and the saints, 'having the harps of God,' sing 'the song of Moses, the servant of God.' **It is the Sabbath of the Church;** and as on the Sabbath, besides the psalm for the day (Psalm 92) at the ordinary sacrifice, they sung at the **additional Sabbatic sacrifice** (Num 28:9,10), in the morning, the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32, and in the evening that in Exodus 15, **so the victorious Church celebrates her true Sabbath or rest by singing this same 'Song of Moses and of the Lamb,' only in language that expresses the fullest meaning of the Sabbath songs in the Temple.**" ([Ibid.](#), chap. 3) [\[Source\]](#)*

Part Five – The Temple Setting

Now we can begin to look at the Book of Revelation itself, but in context. We need to understand where the main characters and places are situated. Knowing a little more about the Temple with which John was familiar - Herod's Temple of the first century AD - will make certain passages more clear.

Having seen the link between Revelation and the Temple in the first place, and then studied it for nearly a year, on and off, and collected a drawer full of material about the idea, I cannot see the setting of Revelation today as anything other than the Heavenly Temple.

I hope that by the end of this study you will see it the same way. It places the vision in its proper context and also, as you will see, sheds light on many of the most puzzling prophecies.

Aspects that are particular to the worship ceremonies and practises will be left out of this page, because I intend to cover them all later. For the moment I want to give you a more clear idea of the physical Temple itself - both that of Herod at the time of Jesus, and the Heavenly Temple of God.

We will then begin to see where John was placed, what he saw, and who the main characters taking part in his vision were, because the Second Temple in Jerusalem was merely an inexact earthly model of God's Temple in Heaven.

There is a useful 3D tour of Herod's Temple here: jerusalem.com/tour/jewish_Temple_3D

Short History of Herod's Temple

- Page of facts with links [here](#)
- Another description with illustrations [here](#)

Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians and slowly rebuilt after the exile. King Herod, in the 18th year of his reign decided to rebuild the Temple completely and it took over 60 years. Indeed, it had only just been completed when it was again destroyed by the Romans in AD70.

The work of rebuilding the Temple began in 19 BC and started by leveling larger portions of the Temple Mount, so that the new building might be erected on a broader base. All around the Temple Mount beautiful marble porticoes were constructed. A wall surrounded the whole area and a small portion of it remains to this day, known as "The Wailing Wall."

While the main part of Herod's rebuilding was completed before his death in 4 BC, the work went on for more than 60 years after that. When Jesus visited the Temple it was said that the place had by then been under construction for 46 years. The work was not entirely finished until 63 AD, only 7 years before the destruction of the entire Temple in 70 AD.

It was a massive structure and very impressive. As can be seen from the floorplans on this page, there were several different areas where people were allowed access. The Temple itself stood on the Temple Mount with an Outer Court or Plaza which was accessible to anyone, unlike the rest of the buildings. Only Jews were allowed through the gates into the inner courts. When John is instructed to measure the Temple, he is told, *"But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months."* (Revelation 11:2)

The word Gentiles in the bible can also be translated "nations" or "peoples". In terms of the Book of Revelation, this would be the world outside of John's immediate vicinity, the Gentile nations surrounding Israel. John himself, at the opening of his vision, was metaphorically in the place of the Israelites, the inner court.

Below we see a floor-plan of the inner courts. The "Court of Women" was not just for Jewish women, who were housed in a gallery above the Court, but for all other Jews except under certain circumstances. The Women's Court is where ordinary people gathered to take part in the services, specifically at the "time of prayer" which was the offering of the incense. Acts 3:1 describes

how "Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer." [This was the evening service, at about 3pm]

Mounting 15 steps from that Court we find a huge gate - [the Nicanor Gate](#) - which was only opened when a service was in progress. (The link is to a liberal Jewish website but gives some of the supposed history of this impressive gate.)

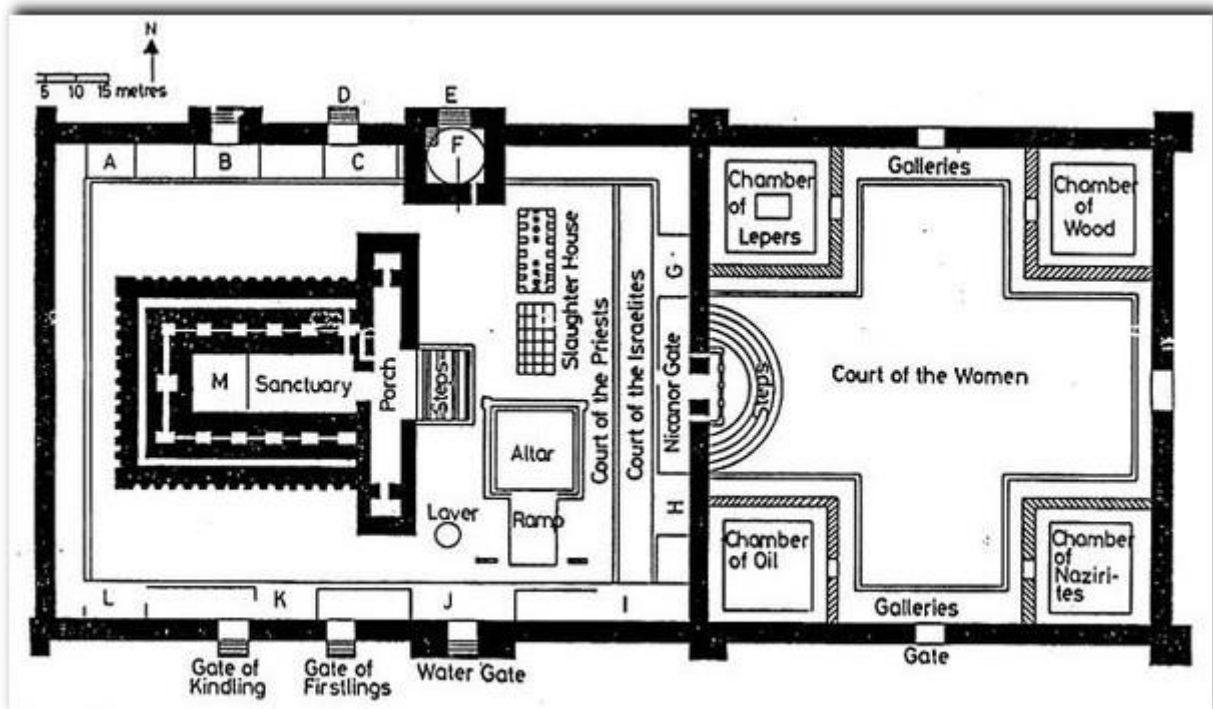
Beyond the gate was a narrow court where certain Jews could gather to watch the sacrifices more closely, but further than this they could not go. Later we will find that only 24 representatives of the people could enter beyond the Nicanor Gate to watch the sacrifices; others of the common people did not see what was going on.

Here on the curved steps of the Nicanor Gate the Levite musicians with their trumpets, cymbals and other instruments assembled to accompany the recitation of the Psalm (and here therefore we will find the angels with their seven trumpets).

Acts 5:21 speaks of the Council of Elders that met at one time on the steps of the Court of Women. "At daybreak they entered the Temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of Israel". The Council or Senate or Sanhedrin had 23 members so it's tempting to see the 24 elders of Revelation (seniors - same bible word as senators) as the heavenly version of this. However, it is more likely - given their participation in the praise later on in the book - that they are the 24 representatives of Israel, or the 24 courses of priests that surrounded the Sanctuary. [See plan below]

The Inner Courts

In the area between the Court of Israel and the Sanctuary itself, and surrounding it on all sides, was the Court of Priests where only properly sanctified and authorised members of the Temple Priesthood could minister. Here was the huge altar of sacrifice and the bronze laver for washing hands and feet. There was also an area set aside for the tethering and slaughter of the sacrificial animals.



The Holy Place

From the Priests' Court another grand staircase led up to the Porch of the Sanctuary, and beyond the vestibule of the Sanctuary stood another set of huge doors.

These led into the Holy Place - marked "sanctuary" on the plan. It was a sacred area containing only the Golden Altar of incense (Rev 8:3) the Menorah or seven-branched candlestick (Rev 4:5) and the Table of Showbread.

In Herod's Temple there was a separation between this Holy Place and the innermost chamber, the most sacred of all - the Holy of Holies. However, as we know from history and from our bibles, this Veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus opened the way back to the Father by his sacrificial death. (Matt 27:51).

Thus what John sees in Heaven is the Throne of God unveiled, with no separation between God and man. [Oddly however, to preserve the vision as a service in the Temple, John later speaks of the sanctuary as being "closed" and "no man could enter". (Rev 15:8) He also catches a glimpse of the Ark of the Covenant which at one time was housed in the Holy of Holies - despite the historical facts of salvation: "And the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his Temple the ark of his testament..." Rev 11:19]

The Holy of Holies

As mentioned above, the innermost sanctuary into which only the High Priest could enter, and even then only once a year, was the Holy of Holies. This was the seat of God in the earthly Tabernacle, and the glorious Presence of God dwelt here until disobedience and idolatry took its toll in Israel and they forfeited the blessing of God.

Originally this holy chamber housed the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tablets of the commandments of God given to Moses, Aaron's rod that budded, and a Pot of Manna. However, the Ark had been removed by the time of Herod's Temple, so it contained only the foundation stone.

NOTE: At first inspection, I Kings 8:9 and Hebrews 9:4 seem to contradict each other. Hebrews states, "...wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." I Kings 8:9 only lists the two tables on which the Ten Commandments were written. But in Hebrews 9:4, the word translated "wherein" comes from the Greek word Hou. Many concordances, including Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, state that Hou means "at which place." The original Greek word is more general in nature and simply means "in the same location."

Summary

In conclusion, the vision of John shows us every part of the Temple and the participants. He begins at the Court of Women where all Jewish people could attend the meetings. There he encounters the High Priest, Jesus, among the candlesticks of the seven churches. Later he ascends to the great door leading into the inner courts, where he sees the angelic priests in ministry to God and the 24 elders.

As events unfold, he also sees the Temple furniture such as the Altar of Sacrifice standing just outside the Sanctuary, the Golden Altar of Incense in the Holy Place, and the Ark of the Covenant once situated in the Holy of Holies.

Now we can go on to see how these things influence our understanding of the endtime prophecies of Revelation.

Part Six – The Seven Letters

Starting out at the first chapters of Revelation, we encounter John on the Isle of Patmos where he has been exiled for his faith. Across the Mediterranean Sea is the mainland of Asia Minor, where he has many Christian friends and fellow-workers. Church tradition (that cannot be fully substantiated) says that John was a pastor in the church in Ephesus and had a special relationship with other churches in the area, but this we do know from the letters to the Seven Churches in his book.

There is also a church tradition that places John at Ephesus along with Mary the mother of Jesus for a few years. After his exile on Patmos, John apparently returned to Ephesus and is buried there [see his tomb below]. So there is an affectionate link with the writer of Revelation and the Asian churches.

NOTE: Why did John mention only seven churches? This may have been for prophetic purposes, or to use the biblical number of perfection, seven, or it may just be that he wrote his vision at a time when there WERE only seven churches active in the area. This tricky question is explored elsewhere. <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-index.html>.

The Initial Setting

As you will see from the illustration below, I have used my knowledge of the Temple Courts and the Book of Revelation together to suggest that at the beginning of his vision - when John first encounters the Lord Jesus, the High Priest of our salvation - he is situated in what is called the [Women's Court](#).

If you have read <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday5.html> you will know that this Court with four huge candelabra was open to all bona fide people of Israel. In symbolic and prophetic terms, however, it is the place for believers. Rev 22:14,15 *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."*

So John, in prayer and worship before the Lord, is transported in mind and spirit to the "Day of the Lord", the Judgement Day. Remembering his experiences of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, he recalls the Day of Atonement ceremonies and likens that to the coming time of cleansing, redemption and wrath when Jesus will be enthroned as King, and God once more dwells with men.



The Ascension

John knows that **seven days before** that Yom Kippur ceremony, the Jewish High Priest will have been escorted to his chambers in the Temple.

There he ministers, reads the scrolls of the Law, and practises his part in the great DAY to come. *"During the whole of that week, he would perform all the Temple duties, such as burning the incense, lighting the lamps, offering the daily sacrifice, etc. In addition, he would study two Torah portions and learn them by heart to make sure he didn't make any mistakes. On the eve of the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would stay up all night learning Torah and preparing himself spiritually. If he fell asleep, young priests woke him up by reciting psalms."* [\[Source\]](#)

However, now the only High Priest is Jesus Christ. When John encounters the Lord he sees him wearing priestly garments. (Rev 1:13 compare 15:6) But the time for the service is not yet.

So, as I said, the Jewish High Priest would have entered the Temple SEVEN DAYS before the important Feast of Yom Kippur, while the ["Days of Awe"](#) ran their course. Although the Books of Life and Death had been opened, the final decision about whose names would be entered there had not been taken. It was a time for fasting and solemn reflection, for repentance and getting right with God!

Going back to the Book of Revelation, do we see these facts reflected there? YES. When John sees the risen Lord, before the Day of Atonement ceremony begins in earnest, there are SEVEN letters to inscribe. These letters represent both the seven days that the High Priest spends inside the Temple, and the **seven ages** that had to pass before the Day of Judgement could come.

Our High Priest goes to the Temple

Jesus Christ our High Priest fulfilled this type. Before the final Day, he ascended from his earthly home to the heavenly Temple, there to minister on our behalf. There - the bible tells us - he has been "waiting" (Heb 10:13) for the Day of Judgement to begin. Meanwhile, not just seven days, but **seven ages** pass. And just as the trumpet sounds on each one of the Jewish "Days of Awe" to call Israel to repentance, so the gospel trumpet is sounded day by day to call people to repent and believe before it's too late. **The great DAY is coming when the Books will close and no further names will be entered.**

So I believe that apart from the obvious and genuine prophetic message to each church in Asia, we have in Chapters 2-4 of Revelation a prophecy of the seven AGES of the Church. During those seven ages, as Jesus awaits his endtimes role in the Heavenly Temple, the Church goes out into all the world to preach the gospel - either effectively or not, as the case may be.

The Seven Ages of the Church

This important study on the meaning of the seven letters to the churches has been more fully explored on many websites across the Net. (For one example, see [HERE](#)). However, on this page I will briefly run through the seven churches in history and show how the expansion and decline of the Church leads in a very prophetic way towards the final call.

This is not to say that the letters were simply prophetic, not historical. God's amazing wisdom, foreknowledge and ability to know the end from the beginning means that the letters were just as relevant to the seven Asian churches as they are to the Church as a whole. But below I attempt to point out the phases that the worldwide Church experienced from the resurrection of Christ until today.



Before I begin, it's important to realise that these are not isolated churches that die out when their day is done. This is an overview of the progression of the Church as a whole, in its ups and downs. We still see representatives of each of these attitudes and denominations. For example, the Roman Catholic Church did not end in 1517.

1. **Ephesus:** THE MISSIONARY CHURCH - The early church with its missionary zeal but slow decline into the "loss of its first love" and fervour. This early phase lasted from Pentecost to the onset of universal hatred and persecution, and the consequent end of open mission. (30AD to 250AD)
2. **Smyrna:** THE PERSECUTED CHURCH - Historians often list TEN ten major persecutions in the early church, reflecting the "ten days" of suffering that Jesus prophesied of Smyrna. It began under Nero but was sporadic until 250AD when Decius issued an edict requiring all citizens to sacrifice to the emperor in the presence of a Roman official. (250-313AD)
3. **Pergamos:** THE STATE CHURCH - Persecution ended when Constantine declared himself a Christian in 312 AD. His Edict of Milan the following year offered tolerance and acceptance to the Christian Church. State persecution by the Romans ended. However this was a mixed blessing, as anybody could claim to be a Christian without fear. Consequently the Church became more and more pagan and organised, with the priesthood, legalism and various rites making a reappearance.. Marcellinus, reputed to be the first "pope", was elected in 296 and Siricus the first "Bishop of Rome" in 384. The last Roman Emperor was killed in 480 and Rome and Constantinople were shaken by a huge earthquake. (313-480 AD)
4. **Thyatira:** THE CORRUPTED CHURCH - For many centuries thereafter the Church was riddled with greed, corruption, immorality, paganism and false religion. Secret societies such as Freemasonry rose up, and the power and domination of the priesthood grew immense. True Christianity was driven underground. In December 800 Charlemagne was crowned king of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1053, the first step was taken in the process which led to formal schism between the Roman Church and the Greek. The Roman Catholic Church ruled in Europe and much of the rest of the world. But slowly, and gaining momentum after 1300AD, reform challenged this dire situation. Eventually in 1517 Luther nailed his theses to the Church door. (480-1517)
5. **Sardis:** THE FLESHY CHURCH - After the Reformation, the Church had increasing liberty to spread the gospel but it became apathetic and tradition-bound instead. It was slow to throw off the paganism and dead rituals of the previous centuries. It had the name of life but was dead. Persecution and dissatisfaction led to many small breakaway cults and denominations arising, who sought to purify the message of the Church. From around 1730 there was an evangelical and spiritual renewal. Wesley was saved in 1738. Whitfield preached from 1740. (1517-1742)
6. **Philadelphia:** THE PURIFIED CHURCH - From 1742 what we now call the Great Awakening took place, and revival influenced many to break away from dead traditional churches. The power of God in the Holy Spirit was rediscovered, and the gospel began to be preached effectively once more. (1742-1960)
7. **Laodicea:** THE LAX CHURCH - In the 1960's many things had changed in the post-war world. New Age teachings, Spiritism, Humanism and Philosophy became popular and the Church lost its way, turning to cultist practises and heresies to please the flesh. This descent into selfish indifference tested the faith of all Christians and remains the situation to this day. In 1960 American Episcopalian Dennis Bennett claimed to have received the Holy Spirit, and the term "charismatic" was coined by American Lutheran minister Harald Bredesen in 1962. However, along with a genuine renewal of the gifts and ministries of the Spirit, false teachings and manifestations crept in and gradually replaced the genuine. That brings us to the Church of today!

I realise that this list above raises many questions and leaves many others unanswered. This particular study is not the place for an extended study of the Seven Churches, but I DO intend to tackle it elsewhere, so anyone who would like to follow up my statements should wait for the specific page on the Seven Churches of Revelation.

On with the Revelation study...

Having avoided the temptation of a major diversion into speculation about the letters to the seven churches, we can now return to the subject in hand. Once Jesus has instructed John to write to the seven churches, indicating both John's present-day and ours, the situation and location changes. Leaving his earthly location as symbolised by the Woman's Court [in the front portion of this illustration], John is invited (as the service begins) to "come up here" to see what takes place 'afterwards'.

This is not only a prophetic statement but a literal one in the case of the Day of Atonement, because at this point in the service the 24 Israelite representatives of the nation, suitably purified, would mount the 15 steps to the inner court and take their place in front of the altar that stood before the Sanctuary itself.

There they would see the officiating priesthood, the great altar of sacrifice, the "bronze sea" and the doors of the Sanctuary itself.

This indeed is what happens to John. He leaves the place of ordinary worship and mounts up the steps to the massive Nicanor gate which takes him, symbolically and literally, from earth to heaven. We take up his story on the next page.

Part Seven – “After This”

The scene changes dramatically when John enters through the "open door" into the Court of Israel, before the Sanctuary. He is invited behind the scenes, as it were, to see what happens "after this". Like so much else of Revelation this means two things at the same time.

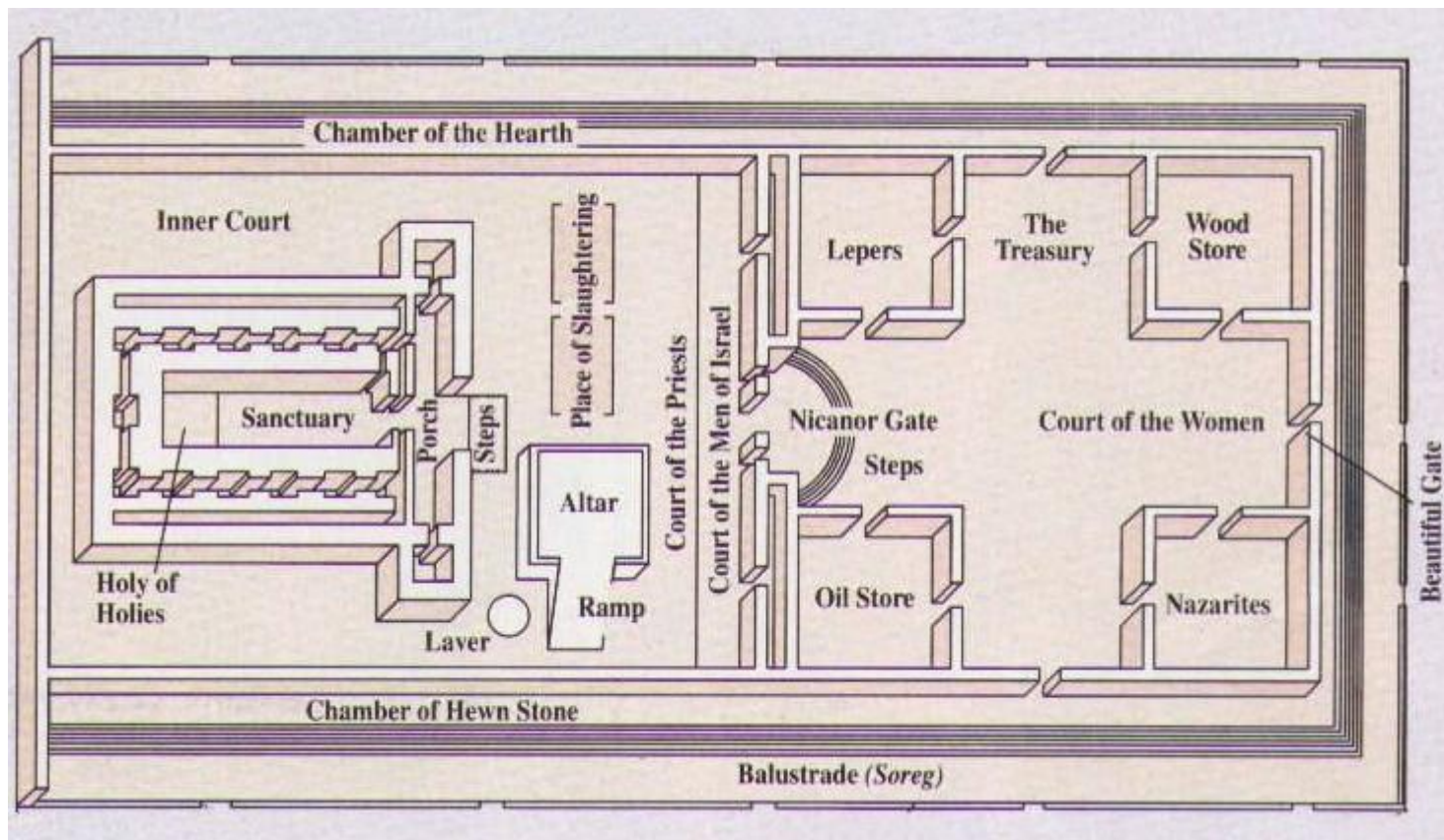
In the words "after this" [Rev 4:1] clearly the Lord intended John to perceive a before and after in what was being revealed to him as a prophecy. In terms of the seven letters to the churches, the events that followed were prophetic of the coming Day of Judgement (Yom Kippur) when the Church would ascend to its heavenly home, the nations would be judged, the false christ would woo mankind and ultimately Jesus would return to earth as Ruler.

These events did not take place immediately after the historic churches of Asia Minor received their warning letters. Nor did those events follow immediately after the earthly ministry of John. Some would teach that the events of the prophecy relate to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD70. In that case the letters would be historic and the events would follow almost immediately afterwards. But the major stumbling block to that teaching is that Jesus did NOT return to the earth as predicted.

Therefore I am inclined to believe that the seven churches (as I outlined in the <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday6.html>) were the **seven successive phases of Church history** leading to the last days, in which we now live. The story of the Church then continues from a heavenly aspect.

The Open Door

But also, in terms of the worship service of Yom Kippur, the time had come for John to move beyond his ordinary viewpoint in the Court of Women, along with all the other representative Israelites. He mounted up towards the "open door" - the Nicanor Gate - that led into the Court of Israel. Although activities had already begun hours earlier, this was a sacred and solemn moment for all involved. (It will be explored shortly. First we must find out what has already happened there during the night - the same night in which Jesus "waited" and in which John wrote the seven letters).



At Night in the Temple

Before John arrived [speaking merely in terms of the physical Temple], there has been much activity. Preparations are being made for the great feast day. These events may not have much relevance prophetically (or perhaps they do?) but they are of interest in any case, so I'll outline them briefly before going on to the scene as described by John when he enters the Heavenly Sanctuary area.

As previously stated, at the Feast of Tabernacles the High Priest would have entered his chambers in the Temple compound seven days before Yom Kippur, but on the eve of that great Day, he would join the other priests in their quarters and dine there.

So, in Revelation 3:20 Jesus stands at the door and knocks, and *"if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him"*. This implies a preparedness for service and a readiness for action. It was addressed to the Laodicean Church primarily, because the "door" should have been attended throughout the night (compare Mark 13:33) and Jesus is about to return! The Laodiceans - like the unworthy servants - were saying "My Master delays his return" and were in danger of missing the knock on the door.

Luke 12:44 "...And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.'"

But in the Temple it was just the same, in fact remarkably so. The priests were on duty and not pleasing themselves. They did not idle away their time but made themselves ready for activities in the feast day to come.

In particular - on the last night before Yom Kippur - they would stay awake along with the High Priest, reading the Torah and singing psalms. Could we perhaps see this situation in the night before the death of Jesus, as He prayed in the Garden? There, he urges the disciples to stay awake with Him and pray "lest you enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46). And *"could you not watch with me one hour?"* was his rebuke. (Mark 13:37) Unlike the Temple priests, the disciples did fall asleep.

However, it was around MIDNIGHT on Yom Kippur that the activities began - so watchfulness was very necessary. There would have been many rituals and preparations to carry out before the Overseer knocked at the door of the Priests' Chamber to call them to service. Any who were not ready, bathed, ritually purified, dressed in white garments and available at that hour were unfit for service and were turned away. Obviously also, they had to STAY AWAKE and be alert. We can learn from this the need for a similar readiness for the Lord's sudden return!

Do Not Fall Asleep

Staying awake was a theme of both the Temple services and the sayings of Jesus in regard to the endtimes. There is a similarity between them that is worth pointing out.

Matt 24:42-43 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into...."

Mark 13:33-35 "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning--...."

1 Thess 5 6-8 "...so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober..."

The Night Watch

But there was a still earlier call for awareness. Before ever the Overseer knocked at the door and called the priests to their daily service, the Temple Guards were required to stand at their posts throughout the night, and watch. Falling asleep (as for the Christian) had **dire consequences**.

"By day and night it was the duty of the Levites to keep guard at the gates, to prevent, so far as possible, the unclean from entering. To them the duties of the Temple police watches were also entrusted, under the command of an official known to us in the New Testament as the 'captain of the Temple.' ... At night guards were placed in twenty-four stations about the gates and courts. Of these, twenty-one were occupied by Levites alone; the other innermost three jointly by priests and Levites. Each guard consisted of ten men; so that in all two hundred and forty Levites and thirty priests were on duty every night. [The Temple, Its Ministry & Service, Edersheim p147]

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." These verses literally describe, as we learn from the Rabbis, the punishment awarded to the Temple-guards if found asleep at their posts; and the Rabbinical account of it is curiously confirmed by the somewhat naive confession of one of their number, that on a certain occasion his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple as he went his rounds at night [Ibid, Edersheim p143]

The theme continued long before dawn at Yom Kippur when, as before mentioned, the priests were called to service. Even then, they would not all minister but lots were utilised to choose who would do each task.

The Priests are Called

The Overseer who had the job of calling the priests to begin their daily tasks would knock unexpectedly at their door. This is described in terms almost identical to the bible's warning of the unexpected call of Jesus:

"The priest whose duty it was to superintend the arrangements might any moment knock at the door and demand entrance. He came suddenly and unexpectedly, no one knew when. The Rabbis use almost the very words in which Scripture describes the unexpected coming of the Master, when they say, 'Sometimes he came at the cock-crowing, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later. He came and knocked, and they opened to him. Then said he unto them, All ye who have washed, come and cast lots.' For the customary bath required to have been taken before the super-intending priest came round, since it was a principle that none might go into the court to serve, although he were clean, unless he had bathed." [Ibid p149]

Following this there was a sequence of events, all of which took place **before** John joined the proceedings at the Sanctuary door. I speak with regard to the earthly Temple of course, and we do not know if there is any real significance to these events in a prophetic sense. However, listed they are:

- The First Lot is drawn in the Hall of Polished Stones, [or some say, the Priests' Quarters] to choose who will cleanse the altar and prepare the incense.
- The Overseer takes the keys to open the wicket gate, allowing the dawn patrol to circle the Temple buildings
- Two groups of priests circle the Temple with torches to check that all is well, and return to the sanctuary
- The First Lot priest enters unseen between the great altar and the sanctuary door in darkness. All that the priests hear is the sound of the water laver as he ritually washes his hands and feet. This sound is the signal for the other priests to spring into action.
- The other priests designated to do so wash themselves, rake the altar, and place the wood there in readiness for the new fires.
- The Second Lot takes place, where 13 more individual tasks are allocated including the preparation of incense and lamps inside the Holy of Holies.
- A priest immediately goes to check if the sun has risen, because the lamb cannot be slain before dawn; meanwhile the priests who are to prepare the incense and lamps in the Holy of Holies approach the Sanctuary door.
- Daybreak is announced, and the priest is told "go fetch a lamb" for slaughter.
- DAWN: The gatekeeper goes around to open the Sanctuary door. The first trumpet sounds! The noise of the door being opened has great significance because the people everywhere knew that the morning sacrifice was being made - the lamb was killed.
- Meanwhile the lamps were trimmed, ready for a new day, and the incense altar was cleansed.

The Scene When John Arrives

As you can see above, there has been a lot of activity throughout the night and early hours before dawn. During that time the Temple was prepared for a new day's services and the sacrifice of a lamb was made. All these

preparations were part of the daily morning service, which had to be completed before the special Yom Kippur ceremonies began. The gate was not opened to any ordinary person during these events. John, as an ordinary worshipper, would not have witnessed any of this previous activity, but enters the Sanctuary as a privileged witness invited by the High Priest (Jesus).

He does so at the first blast of the trumpet that day, sounded as the great Sanctuary gate is opened. This trumpet - a threefold blast - should not be confused with the first trumpet of the sequence later on in Revelation. Listen to the shofar blowing in the link below -

.As we already established, on Yom Kippur the High Priest would make all the offerings and do all the tasks, with help from the other priests. Therefore, perhaps John joined proceedings as Jesus our High Priest "trimmed the lamps" of the churches, which takes place at the same time as the daily lamb is slain; we then see that Jesus is also the "lamb that is slain".

Historically and spiritually of course the Lamb of God HAS been slain - and this event will never take place again. But in terms of the order of the Feast Day, John begins his prophecy "after this" when the daily morning sacrifice has already taken place.

The Throne in Heaven

John enters the Heavenly Temple and immediately sees what no earthly priest or worshipper would ever see - the glorious Throne of God. Let's go on to find out what else he sees, and why.

Part Eight –The Throne Room

We proceed now into the Heavenly part of this vision. Although in one sense everything that John of Revelation has seen so far is a prophetic vision, and therefore a spiritual or heavenly event, in terms of location he has been on earth up to now.

John has heard about earthly events, such as the Church and its earthly mission, and his location is therefore (as regards the Jerusalem Temple) in the Court of the common people - that is, the so-called Women's Court outside the Sanctuary.

John now obeys the command to "come up here" and he ascends to Heaven. This is like ascending the impressive 15-step staircase from the womens' Court up to the glorious and immense **Nicanor Gate** seen here in this illustration, and entering into an altogether more sacred space.

From now on John tells us about what is going on with regard to the High Priest, Jesus Christ, and his servants. He begins by describing the scene. But before we take up the story inside the Heavenly Temple, let's see what this staircase really represents.

Stairway to Heaven

This immense and impressive set of stone steps leading up to the Nicanor Gate was broad and deep. It raised the Sanctuary part of the Temple seven meters above the Womens' Court. As I have said, it also made a division between the place for the common people (albeit God's people) and the Sanctuary area where sacrifices and other rituals took place.

In terms of the book of Revelation, it marked John's departure from the ordinary earthly realm of worship to a higher realm, not ordinarily seen.

Here on the Nicanor steps, the Levite musicians and singers of Herod's Temple would assemble to accompany the services, performing their sacred music on a kind of platform above the people. In this way, the men and women who had no sight nor access into what was going on beyond, could know at what point of the service they were, and what was the appropriate response.

Therefore, the role of the trumpets was vital. They announced the opening of the great Sanctuary door, the sacrifice, and the libation of wine and they also gave a three-fold blast during the pauses in the recitation of the Psalm of the day.

We find from reading contemporary literature and discussions thereon, that the arrangement of the trumpeters was not just in a straight line across the top of the steps, but in two descending ranks on either side of the great staircase. Could this be the location of the angelic trumpeters of Revelation therefore? I believe so!

Jacob's Ladder

This arrangement brings to mind an Old Testament scripture in which Jacob surely saw a similar vision to John, and even saw the identical heavenly staircase (equivalent to the stairs up to the Nicanor Gate) in his dream. There is always consistency in the bible.

Genesis 28:10-19, Jacob ... dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it [or "beside him"] and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants;" Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it." And he was afraid, and said, "**This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven**".

The word 'ladder' gives us the wrong impression, for the Hebrew word was 'sulam' or 'salam' which is used only once in the entire bible. Therefore, it is difficult to pin down an exact meaning but it derives from the words for a ramp, or staircase. Among researchers there is no unanimity on this question. 'Sulam' may be derived from the Akkadian "simmiltu" meaning a system of ascent, steps upwards, such as in the Ziggurat. Alternatively it may be derived from the root Hebrew Sl", or a Battery Ramp .In the NIV translation of the Bible, the term "stairway" is used instead of ladder.

We notice that Jacob sees not only the stairway but believes he has been privileged to experience **heaven itself**, the "house of God". When he awoke, he believed that God was present in that place. He took the stone he had been using to rest his head, poured oil on it and consecrated it to God. Then he called the place **Bethel**, meaning "house of God."

Most scholars interpret Jacob's ladder as a connection between heaven and earth, with God taking the initiative to reach out to man. The perfect "ladder" is Jesus Christ, who is God come to earth to save mankind, therefore bridging the two realms.

Jesus refers to himself as this ladder in John 1:51: "And he (Jesus) said to him, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'" (ESV) Jesus is the WAY or GATE into Heaven, the House of God. What both Jacob and John saw was a representation of this Way, but the gate is also reproduced both in the earthly and heavenly tabernacle as a wonderful and impressive doorway with a staircase.

John enters Heaven via Jesus, the Way

Now that the similarities between Jacob's and John's stairway can be seen, and adding the information about the precise location of the trumpeters during the vision of Revelation, we can more easily understand their role. We can understand that the trumpets are warnings, or announcements, made to ordinary people that events are taking place behind the Sanctuary doors that will impact everyone on earth.

Later on, we find out that the trumpets blew during the pouring out of the WINE. It causes us to realise that there is a relationship between the TRUMPETS and the BOWLS in the book of Revelation - and indeed the descriptions of each are nearly identical. However, the bowl judgements, when they actually begin, are in fact **greater in scope and intensity** than the trumpets had announced!

The Throne Room

Having ascended the staircase, John enters the **Sanctuary** area of Heaven. He describes the scene in the only words he has - human words of course. They are inadequate to tell us the exact splendour of Heaven, but we have to make do with his description, alongside similar biblical accounts in the Old Testament.

In Herod's Temple John would have discovered the area used only by priests. Their court surrounded and fronted the inner sanctuary itself. It contained the great stone altar of sacrifice with its woodpile fires for burning offerings, a huge bronze laver for

ritual washing of hands and feet, an area for the tethering and slaughter of animals, and the steps up to the vestibule of the Holy Place.

On the far left [bottom] is the small area called the **Court of Israel** where some 24 accredited representatives of the nation could assemble to watch the sacrifices.

What John sees in Heaven is similar but in important ways different: he sees no division between the inner and outer areas but all are disclosed to him immediately. Upon entering heaven he sees "a throne set in heaven and One sat upon the throne..." Rev 4:2. This would, in earthly terms, be the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies which would never be seen by the common man.

In the description given to Moses (who was to build a replica of the Throne-room) that Ark - and its [mercy-seat throne of God on earth](#) - had winged covering angels upon it. Here in heaven we see the real four covering angels around the throne. They are the Cherubim described in the Old Testament, Exod 25:17-19 "*You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends....*"

The atonement cover was the lid for the ark. On top of it stood two cherubim (angels) at the two ends, facing each other. The cherubim, symbols of God's divine presence and power, were facing downward toward the ark with outstretched wings that covered the atonement cover. The whole structure was beaten out of one piece of pure gold. The atonement cover was God's dwelling place in the tabernacle. It was His throne, flanked by angels. God said to Moses: "There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites." (Exodus 25:22) "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover." (Leviticus 16:2) Other Scriptures also speak of God's throne: "...the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark." (2 Samuel 6:2) "O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth." (Isaiah 37:16) Above the ark and the atonement cover, God appeared in His glory in "unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16). This light is sometimes referred to as the Shekinah glory. The word Shekinah, although it does not appear in our English bibles, has the same roots as the word for tabernacle in Hebrew and refers to the presence of the Lord. [[Source](#)]

The Brazen Sea

Not immediately, but during the course of John's vision, he also sees other objects in the heavenly Temple, with which he would be familiar, as a Jew. Again, there are important omissions.

The Priests' Court seen above had an area set apart for the sacrifice of animals which understandably does not exist in Heaven. Also, the huge bronze laver for purification - called in the Old Testament the "Bronze Sea" - is not mentioned, unless it is the "crystal sea" of Rev 4:6. This sounds more likely on discovering that the Old Testament version was made from the mirrors donated by Jewish women. ([see here](#)).

The symbolism of the brazen sea is described in detail in the Midrash 'Tadshe'. "**The sea represented the world;**... The two rows of colocynths (knops) below the rim were symbolic of the sun and the moon, while the twelve oxen on which the sea rested represented the zodiac ("mazzalot")."

Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine John and others "standing on the glassy sea" as the bronze laver in Heaven, nor is it clear why they would. It seems to me that water purification is not necessary for anybody in Heaven! I prefer to believe therefore that the crystal sea before the throne is the "firmament" seen by other visitors to Heaven, and is therefore an attempt to explain how Heaven is surrounded by, and has its foundation upon, the purest crystal atmosphere, unlike anything known to mankind.

Ezek 1:22 22 "Now over the heads of the living beings there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads."

(Remember here that Ezekiel saw the throne descending to earth, thus the "crystal sea" that he saw was ABOVE the throne and the four living creatures, not BELOW it.)

The Menorah

Inside the Holy Place within the Tabernacle and also Herod's Temple Sanctuary were three main objects, two of which John describes as also being in Heaven. Again the item he omits is intriguing. The seven-branched candle-holder, or "menorah" as it is called stood sideways on the left, and on the opposite side was the "table of shewbread". Between them was the golden altar of incense.

John mentions the "seven spirits before the throne" as being the reality of the seven lights in that holy place. [See [this page](#) for a short discussion on the seven spirits of God] In truth, that which gives light to the world is Jesus Christ, who indeed called himself "**The Light of the World**" in John 8:12.

Furthermore, Jewish literature speaks of the Temple Menorah in similar terms. The light was not placed there (they say) in order to illuminate the inner sanctuary itself but conversely, in order to shine OUT from it to give "light to the world". [[Source](#)]

"Originally, the Menorah was a seven-branched candelabra beaten out of a solid piece of gold ... Only pure, fresh olive oil of the highest quality was suitable to light the Menorah....[which] endures as a symbol of Divine light spreading throughout the world. To this end, God commanded that the Menorah's goblets be turned upside down on their stems, emphasizing the importance of spreading light to others. This design reflects the Menorah's exact purpose in the Holy Temple, which was to spread the light of Godliness to the entire world, not to illuminate the Temple itself. The seven lamps of the Menorah also allude to knowledge, with six of the branches representing human wisdom, guided by the center branch of Divine light. The Menorah's design and the ideas it communicates endure as an inspiration for universal enlightenment." [[Source](#)]

Thus, what John sees in heaven are the seven spirits of God mentioned in Isaiah 11:2, as well as the power (horns) and wisdom (eyes) of the Lamb, Jesus in Revelation 5:6. Collectively they are the Holy Spirit of God which descended to the Church at Pentecost and is sent out "into all the earth" to preach the gospel.

I found this explanation of the word "Menorah" in Hebrew quite fascinating as it confirms what we already knew: that the seven-branched candlestick in the Temple was but a symbol of the coming Messiah, the Son of God! Please see <http://www.answersintheendtimes.com/index.php/Hebrew-Studies>.

The Golden Altar of Incense

So much for the Menorah. But what of the altar of incense? John also sees this in Heaven. (Rev 8:3) We are told that incense is symbolic of the "prayers of the saints" in Rev 5:8 so there is an obvious role for the golden altar of incense before the Throne. However, the missing item is the table containing the loaves of bread.

The Table of Shewbread

This item, the Table of Shewbread as we call it, containing the "Bread of the Presence" would have been well known to John, so failing to mention it as present in the heavenly Temple is important. [An alternative, and more appropriate, translation would be presence bread, since the Bible requires that the bread be constantly in the presence of God (Exodus 25:30).]

The number of the loaves laid on the table - twelve - suggests that the bread was not intended as an offering to God which is how the Assyrians and Babylonians used them, but rather, as a **remembrance of the twelve tribes of Israel** who were continually in the presence and sight of God. They were made of fine flour, unleavened. Some writers suggest that incense and salt were applied to or incorporated into the loaves - these three facts symbolising the purity and sanctity of the bread. Thus they spoke of the redeemed people of God.

Literally, the Hebrew that is translated "showbread" is lechem ha'panim, that is, "bread of the faces" -- or, "bread of the Presence (of God)." The PLURAL form of "faces" is used, panim. So this could also be a reference to the "faces" of the twelve tribes of Israel, as they appear before God, represented by the loaves of bread.

That being the case, **why is the table of shewbread not seen in heaven**, standing before the Throne? I would like to suggest that they ARE, but in a completed form. No longer represented as loaves of bread, the redeemed of Israel are surrounding the Throne - seated and crowned - along with an equally representative number of New Testament elders. There as the 24 elders they are "ever before the Lord" and in continual praise and worship to him.

The Throne of God

The prophets are entirely consistent in their descriptions of heaven. Micaiah's account (1 Kings 22:19) is the first detailed depiction of a heavenly throne room in Judaism and it speaks of God's throne surrounded by his angels. Isaiah (Isaiah 6) adds to this the seraphim with covering wings, the altar (of incense?) from which the angel took a burning coal, and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1) goes further still. He sees a "raging fire" as the background of the throne, the four living creatures in greater detail, the firmament over their heads and the throne of God itself set in sapphire with God described as like fire and amber. He also sees the rainbow around the throne just as John did.

Isaiah sees what John describes as the four living creatures (which themselves are reflected in the Seraphim covering the Ark in the Tabernacle.) In Isaiah 6:3 we read that these seraphim call "Holy, holy, holy" which is exactly what John hears in Heaven from the four living creatures in Revelation 4:8. But this also is heard during the Temple liturgy:

"Immediately, the reader of the prophetic portion goes in and holds the Torah and chants: *"Hear O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One"*. (Dt. 6:4, shema.) And the people repeat after him, and he repeats and says: *"One is our God, great is our Lord: HOLY. One is our God, merciful is our Lord: HOLY. One is our God, great is our Lord: HOLY and awesome is His Name"*." [\[Source\]](#)

Daniel (Daniel 7:9) confirms the likeness of the "Ancient of Days" as a mixture of the purest white and fiery flame, with thousands and thousands of attendant angels. Zechariah (Chapter 3) depicts a vision of the heavenly throne room where he meets the "Angel of the Lord" who is surely Jesus, and sees the golden lampstand with seven lamps burning before the throne; later he also sees - as did John - the four horses and chariots sent out into the earth (the "four spirits of heaven" 6:5) as judgements of God.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and various apocryphal books speak of the throne-room as a mixture of fire and ice - suggesting both the brightness of God's divine glory, and the crystal sea.

All of this suggests interpretations to what John of Revelation said. For example:

- The four living creatures (4:7) are connected to and representative of the four spirits of heaven (7:1 where the word for 'wind' is identical to that of 'spirit')
- They are also, according to Zechariah, sent out in judgement to the four quarters of the world.
- And thus they also have a connection to the four horses/horsemen of Revelation chapter 6. where the four living creatures are responsible for sending forth the four horse judgements. (This is examined in my studies on the four creatures elsewhere.)
- The seven spirits before the throne seen in Revelation 4:5 (depicted in Herod's Temple as the seven-branched Menorah) have a connection to the Two Witnesses later described in Revelation 11:4, as the angel specifically refers to the two olive trees of Zechariah 4:2.
- These seven spirits have a connection to the seven churches (Rev 3:1, 15:6) which collectively are the 'eyes' of God throughout the earth.

The Green Rainbow

Likewise, we can question the colour of the rainbow around the throne which is translated "emerald" in most bibles today. (Rev 5:4:3) The Old Testament accounts tell us this is not so. Again, my study on that subject - and the other gems of the bible - will be found elsewhere on the website in due course, so as not to stretch out these pages too far. But the testimony of the scriptures overall is that the throne of God is surrounded by fire and light.

Easton's Bible Dictionary says this: *"Hebrews nophek (Exodus 28:18; 39:11); i.e., the "glowing stone", probably the carbuncle, a precious stone in the breastplate of the high priest. It is mentioned (Revelation 21:19) as one of the foundations of the New Jerusalem. The name given to this stone in the New Testament Greek is smaragdus, which means "live coal."* I think a glowing white-hot live coal is a much more accurate description of the fire, light and glory surrounding God's throne!

The 24 Elders

Here we come to a very contentious section of Revelation. The identity of the 24 elders that John sees surrounding the Throne is vigorously defended on all sides. What does scripture show us about these people, and what does the Temple setting demonstrate? I have made one suggestion above - that they are representatives of each of the tribes of Israel (once represented by 12 loaves on the table of shewbread) and an equal number of the saved of the Church.

There is also another hint given in Jewish literature, which refers to the 24 Jewish men that are chosen to represent their nation on feast days, when it would be impossible to allow all visitors to view the proceedings in the Temple. These 24 are the ones who are allowed to pass beyond the gate and stand in the special portion of the Priests' Court. **To John therefore, these 24 men are representative of "Israel" as a nation.**

We have two other contenders: the Sanhedrin or Council of Israel which met in the Temple and consisted of 23 members (or 71 on important occasions) and secondly the 24 courses of priests who attended to the Temple services on a rota system.

To be brief here (with additional material found via the <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-index.html>) the 24 elders are human beings not angels (for they claim to have been redeemed Rev 5:9) and are also in that verse called "kings and priests". Priests they are, since they have harps, and bowls of incense, and sing praises to God (Rev 5:8). But John applies this to himself and all **believers** in Revelation 1: 6 *"and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father"*.

It is first applied to Israel, so long as they stay obedient to God, and later to the redeemed of Israel, that is the Church:

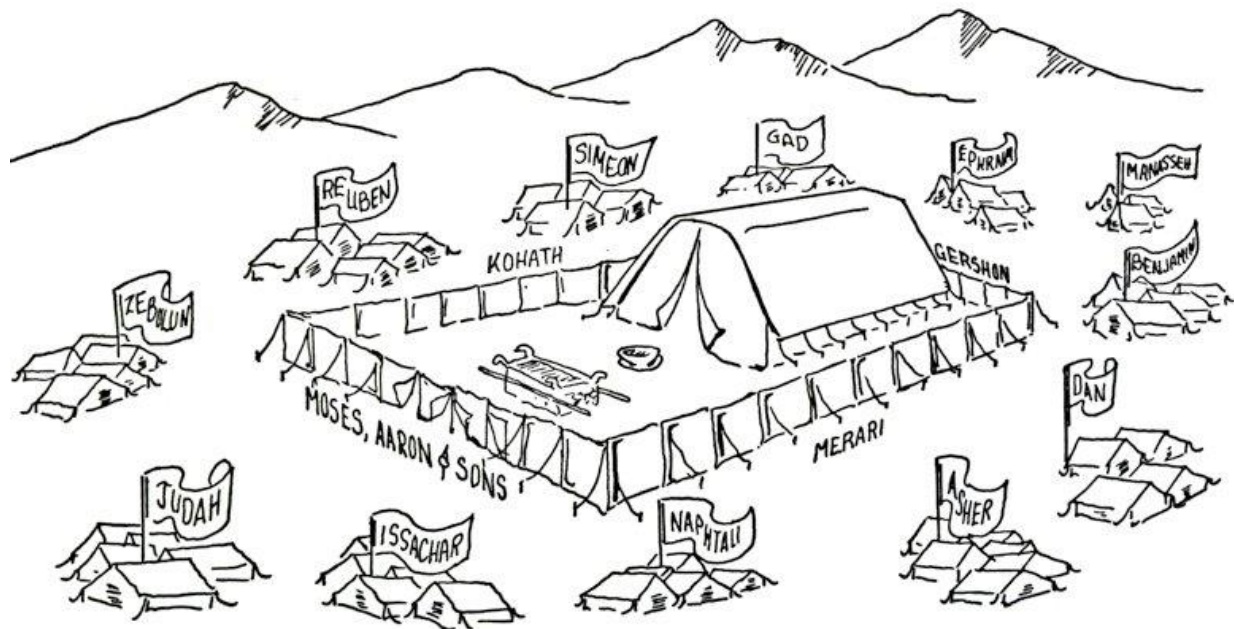
Exodus 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel. So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him...."

1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Perhaps also the words of Jesus to his disciples are relevant, for they were to sit on thrones judging Israel in the coming kingdom: **Matt 19 28** *"And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

This combination of believing Israel and believing Church is the clue to the identity of the 24 elders, as I said above. They are seen "surrounding" the Throne of God, just as the 24 courses of priests in the Jerusalem Temple surrounded the inner sanctuary; they are also reminiscent of **the tribes of Israel encamped around the Tabernacle [see below]**. In those days there were 12 tribes representing all Israel; today we also have an additional 12 elders of the Church making 24 elders in all.

Since both Israel and the Church were called "a kingdom of priests", how fitting that the 24 representatives of both the Old and New Testaments combine harmoniously here to worship God before his throne.



Part Nine – The Service Outlined (1)

Having examined in some depth the setting of the Temple, and its context as far as Revelation is concerned, I now come to the real meat of this study, which is the service itself and how it gives a framework to the entire book of Revelation. So much so, that certain events in that prophecy can hardly be understood without it.

John has entered through the great Nicanor Gate to watch what is happening beyond the place of the common man and women (which in this case is the earth, or at least Israel - for the men and women in the Jerusalem Temple were all of Israel). He sees not only the Sanctuary and its furniture in heaven, but the priests, who are angels going about their ministry there.

He has already told us that this vision is of "The Day", the Day of Atonement, but on a much wider scale - that of the **Judgement Day** itself. Paul speaks of it in Romans 2:16 "*On that Day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus*". Jesus speaks of this DAY in Luke 21:34 "*But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly*".

Clearly this refers to a period of time and not one literal 24 hour day. However, John puts this period of time into the judgement day of his own culture and experience, which was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. He sees events following the usual course at Yom Kippur while each action and act of worship adds to the coming judgement of mankind - and in John's understanding, especially the apostate members of his own race and religious background, the Jews.

Then or Now?

Briefly I need to speak of the debate over the early or late day of Revelation. I only refer to it because some might argue John's entire focus was the punishment of Israel for her rejection of Jesus Christ her Messiah, and her violent hatred of the Church - as well as her own apostasy and spiritual adultery. There is certainly much internal evidence on the book of that.

It is very often the desire of [Preterists](#) to prove the early date of Revelation, so as to show that John's words were a prediction of the destruction that would befall the Jews in AD70, and nothing more. While not being a Preterist I incline towards the early date too, for reasons too lengthy to elaborate on here, but I DO see something beyond the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

SEE for example: "http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/media/Before_Jerusalem_Fell.pdf
Before Jerusalem Fell" which examines all the evidence and arguments at length. [Preterist]

Certain questions come to mind as we read the book, and they puzzle us:

If the worst had already happened - Jerusalem and its people had been completely and viciously destroyed - why did John not refer to that, and why did he feel the need to predict an even bigger destruction? Did John believe that judgement would still be pending over two thousand years after he circulated his prophecy? Did he expect the Church of his day to be encouraged by prophecies that had little relevance to their own time or situation? Why did he many times say these events would "happen shortly"? Could he accept that Rome and apostate Israel would not incur the wrath of God in quite the way he prophesied, in his own time? [That is, if you accept the late date theory.]

But in my mind, the early fulfilment in AD70 does not rule out a wider prophetic meaning to Revelation.

There seems to be no reason to suppose that the prophecy, having been partly fulfilled in AD70, could not have a FURTHER and more FINAL fulfillment at the end of this age. I also read the words of Jesus in that way, that is, his description of the coming calamity [Matthew 24 *et al*] seemed entirely relevant to the early Church when they had to flee Jerusalem in AD70, yet we know that there is much more still to come about.

I read Revelation in the same way. I am not bothered by the fact that certain of John's descriptions and words could [and probably did] have a meaning for his own day, and for all I know, THAT is the furthest his own mind could go in understanding his vision, yet in God's perfect plan the inspiration behind this book came to have a much wider scope.

That is why, despite some heavy opposition from various Church elders at the time, it was included in the Canon of Scripture, and why we find it included in the bible today. Up to the modern era there was still opposition when Luther rejected Revelation for inclusion in his own translation. He said in the Preface to the 1622 Translation: "I can discover no trace that it is established by the Holy Spirit." Nonetheless, God overruled. My point is, that God intended for us to have a prophecy for our OWN day as well as that of its writer, John.

It's Both

Over the years as I have studied this book and other research in depth, I have come to see that the same arguments John made against religious apostasy in his own small world of Rome and Israel also apply today.

The "beast" that he saw - containing all the beasts of Daniel chapter seven - was then and is now a composite of the brutal dominant EMPIRE of the last days which will oppress mankind. Also, the woman that John saw was - in his day - the adulterous religion which joined hands and hearts in unity with that empire. Mystery Babylon was Israel who had fallen away from God. He foresaw a dreadful judgement on Israel which came about just as he said. Yet beyond that, we can see a similar judgement and catastrophe to befall the adulterous woman of today.

In short, we should not be overly concerned about the date of the book nor its imagery because the prophecy is not either-or, but BOTH.

The Service Continues

As described before, John joins the Yom Kippur service just at the point [in the genuine Temple service that is] when the required daily rituals would have been carried out, in the early morning. At Yom Kippur the priests had to make an early start as there was so much more to do. They rose before midnight, prepared the altar of burnt offerings and at dawn the daily sacrifice of a lamb had been made.

The remaining rituals concerned the slaughter of various sacrifices particular to Yom Kippur, including a bullock, a ram, and a goat, and certain rituals that happened on this one day only. These are the subject of the book of Revelation and therefore this study.

What happened before and afterwards, in reality, is passed over as not really relevant, even though what happened can easily be slotted into place, since the book does describe that "DAY" in detail. John was perhaps too well aware of what would have taken

place in the Jerusalem Temple to ignore or distort the facts of his vision, so as to break the flow. (Remember also that the great majority of his first-century readers would have picked up on the Yom Kippur references since they also were familiar with the Temple services.)

Dawn

So what John sees at dawn is the "slain lamb", the pure and everlasting sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Rev 5:6) John sees him "in the midst of the elders" and that fact is another heads-up to the framework of the Temple services. It is a fact that the lamb, before being sacrificed, was thoroughly examined (by torchlight) by the priests to make sure it was still perfectly pure and whole, with no spot or blemish that would make it unsuitable.

So we find the Lamb of God surrounded by his elders (Rev 5:6) who conclude that he is indeed a pure sacrifice, and worthy - "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood..." (5:9)

To this Sacrificed Lamb is given a seven-sealed scroll - an event that I cannot find specifically within the Yom Kippur ceremonies unless it refers to the "books of life and death" that were opened and finalised on that day. This hotly-debated scroll has puzzled Christians for centuries.

Is it the Books of Life and Death? It does not seem simply to contain the names of those who were to be redeemed or forgiven, because when it is finally opened it leads to the wrath of God on the earth, the atmosphere and all living things. That surely is why "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sky" praised God that Jesus the Lamb [and the only JUDGE] was found worthy to open this scroll. (Rev 5:13)

For this judgement which has been delayed for so many thousands of years has finally come, to deal with the gross wickedness throughout creation. And "all creation groans..." for that day! Romans 8:21 "...creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body...."

As the seals are sequentially opened, each event reverses a basic blessing upon mankind, and upon Israel as provided in their Covenant. Indeed, Yom Kippur **does** recall the giving of the Law to Moses, which has now been violated to the point of utter lawlessness.

Yom Kippur, or the Day of "atonement," is considered the holiest day of the year, called "Yom ha-kadosh" (יְוֹם הַקָּדוֹשׁ)... According to the Jewish sages, on the 6th of Sivan, seven weeks after the Exodus (i.e., exactly 49 days), Moses first ascended Sinai to receive the Torah (Shavuot). Just forty days later, on the 17th of Tammuz, the tablets were broken. Moses then interceded for Israel for another forty days until he was called back up to Sinai on Ehul 1 and received the revelation of Name YHVH (Exod. 34:4-8). After this, he was given the Second Tablets and returned to the camp on Tishri 10, which later was called Yom Kippur. Moses' face was shining with radiance in wonder of the coming New Covenant which was prefigured in the rituals of the Day of Atonement (Exod. 34:10). [[Source](#)]

As a prelude to the particular events of Yom Kippur, the covenant blessings so graciously provided by God, and so negligently despised by man, are overturned. That is because Israel and mankind has broken the everlasting covenant: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant". Isaiah 24:4. [[Please see Blessings & Curses here.](#)]

- Seal One - The blessing of victory replaced by oppression.
- Seal Two - The blessing of peace replaced by violence and wars
- Seal Three - The blessing of provision, fertility and prosperity replaced by want
- Seal Four - The blessing of life and health replaced by death and disease
- Seal Five - The blessing of safety and security replaced by persecution
- Seal Six - The blessing of the earth's protection replaced by catastrophe
- Seal Seven - The blessing of God's favour replaced by wrath

The Seal Five Martyrs

The first four seals do not have an exact correspondence in the Yom Kippur ceremonies, and in fact seem to have taken place before the services began. They are part of the preparatory tribulations of the Woman (Israel) and the rest of the world. Jesus called them "birthpangs" or "the beginning of sorrows". Perhaps they are allied to the books of life and death that are opened at this feast?

The four horsemen of the first four seals are intimately connected to the Four Living Creatures, but this is not the place to discuss it. [Again, I do hope and pray to be enabled to write what I have discovered on that subject in due course.] For the moment, we will pass over them to come to the opening of Seal Five. All these events are happening at the same place in the service as when John first enters the Sanctuary area. (That is, at DAWN, at the beginning of "The Day"). *(There is a discussion of the opening of the seals discussed separately on my website <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/prophetic/sorrows.html>his link)*

Here (left) we see illustrated the priest with special responsibility for calling out that "Day Has Dawned!" that is "BARKAI". He was sent to a high point in the Temple to watch for the day's dawning on the horizon. When he did, he cried Barkai! At that point, the Temple superintendent told the priest chosen by lot to go get the lamb for the morning sacrifice. This was the official start of the feast-day service.

But what exactly does Barkai mean? Well, amazingly, it literally means "**Morning Star**". When we see the morning star dawn, we know that THE DAY is to begin, and it begins with the trimming of the lamps and the examination of the lambs (in our sequence here.) And from Revelation 22:16 we know that JESUS is the Morning Star for whom we watch. *"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."*

How very interesting, for this fact sheds light (no pun intended!) on the verse in 2 Peter 1:19: *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; to which you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, **until the day dawn**, and the day star (or, morning star) arise in your hearts.*

Isn't that amazing? It can hardly be understood outside of the Temple service, and the priest's call of **Barkai**. For they wait until the precise moment of light spreading across the horizon from the east to announce the day. And we hold onto the promises of God as Peter says, awaiting the LIGHT of Jesus Christ which will announce that our DAY has arrived at last. What did Jesus tell us?

"So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. [Matt 24:26-7]

Night-time Events Before John Arrived

In the Temple, during the night, lots have been made to choose which priests will perform which part of the service. Lot One has already been drawn at or before midnight, and resulted in the cleansing of the altar of burnt offerings. After this another lot was made, and thirteen new tasks were allocated. One of them concerned the slaying of the lamb as a daily sacrifice - which event as we shall see occurs at or just before John's Revelation begins.

At this precise moment, as before discussed, the immense **sanctuary door was opened**. This opening of the sanctuary door was a highly significant moment for the Temple priests, worshippers and people of Israel, because its sound denoted the offering of the lamb was imminent.

At this moment, too, the first trumpet of the day was sounded. *[Could this be the voice like a trumpet that John heard drawing his attention to the open door in heaven? Rev 4:1]* Everywhere the people paused, stopped work and prepared to worship.

And at the same time **five** of the seven lamps were being trimmed and re-lit inside the Holy Place. The others were trimmed, refilled and lit at the burning of incense later on - those who are reading this study will realise the importance of that, prophetically. Only part of the Church is involved in this testing process at stage one, the other portion being dealt with in what we discover is Seal Six/Seven.

It is important to note this fact: that the slaughter of the sacrificial lamb was made at the same moment as the trimming of the lamps inside the Holy Place. And neither could be performed before the call of BARKAI, or "The Day Has Dawned".

This brings us prophetically to **SEAL FIVE** - the martyrs seen "at the base of the altar". (Revelation 6:9). But what then of the opening of the first four seals? They lie outside the particular scope of the Yom Kippur ceremonies, although described in Revelation as preparatory to them.

As Jesus explained to his disciples, the foregoing events [in Revelation, the four horsemen] as dramatic and terrifying as they might seem, are but the preparatory "*birthpangs*" and "*they are NOT the End...*" We have the infallible word of Jesus to back up that fact:

"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but **that is not yet the end**. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. **These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs....**" [Mark 13:6-8]

However, as the day dawns, we progress beyond the season of the four horsemen to the short sharp persecution that precedes the END. In terms of the Temple service, it is the cleansing, trimming and refilling process of the lampstands, the churches.

The Lamps Trimmed

The candlesticks in the Holy Place are - as we have seen - the **Light of the World** who is Jesus the Messiah but at that same time they are the lampstands of the Church (first seen in Rev 1:20). Here they are subjected to a renewal process and made ready for all that is to follow. The trimming of the lamps suggests a preparation time for the churches, and perhaps even a genuine spiritual revival for they are cleansed and refilled with oil by the High Priest at this time.

As we know, before that great and terrible day, we need to make ready and "trim our lamps" (Matthew 25:7) We will also need the boldness, wisdom, guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit to withstand the delusions and other pressures to come upon us. Those who find themselves without sufficient "oil in their lamps" are at a disadvantage when those pressures do come, so it would be best to start making preparations right now!

From accounts of what happened in the Jewish Temple, we can discover that they decided, on biblical evidence, that they should divide the care of the lamps into: "Five and Two", that is, if the priest finds that the "eastern lamps" - on the eastern side of the sanctuary - are still burning he attends to the other five, cleaning out the ashes, filling them with new oil and wicks. But even if these other five are still burning, he has to extinguish them and start again. This is known as "[Improving the Five Flames](#)".

The other two lamps are left until the time of incense. Furthermore, the "Western Candle" is left burning continuously, and used to relight all the others. I wish we could draw an inference from this practise, that the light of the Western Church will never be fully extinguished but will stay alight to rekindle the other world churches in the time of their trial. I say that I wish it were so, but at the moment it appears that the opposite is true.

The Lambs Slain

In the same sequence of events as those in Revelation, Jesus describes the fierce persecution that will break out shortly before his return. He says:

Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, **and then the end will come**. [Matthew 24:9-14]

Therefore it is no surprise that the event taking place in Herod's Temple at the same moment as the lamps being trimmed, is the slaughter and dismemberment of the lamb. Afterwards, the parts (or "members" as they are known) are reverently carried to the BASE of the altar - just where they are seen by John! They are not at this time carried up to the fire and burnt, but laid in

preparation at the altar. *(In the last days, perhaps, revival leads to persecution, and persecution leads to revival, for the lamps are being refilled at the same time as the lamb is being offered.)*

But how can the slain LAMB be at one and the same time both Jesus Christ and the martyrs?

It is because Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, and Christians as the Body of Christ, are ONE - one body. Of course, Jesus Christ our Saviour is not going to be sacrificed again, so Revelation does not portray that event. It is presented as a completed fact in Revelation 5:6. Nonetheless there IS an offering of a lamb, for we are one with Christ. Jesus warned us that just as the world hated and murdered him, so they will do to his followers. (John 15:18)

Parts of the Church will be honoured by sharing the same fate as Jesus, in giving their lives! These we see around the altar, asking when they might be avenged, an understandable question given what they have suffered.

However, the martyrs have a short time to wait, because there are two more priestly lots to be chosen, and daily prayers to be said, before the slaughtered 'members' [parts of the lamb] can be brought up to the top of the altar, and the incense of their prayers can rise to God (ultimately sparking off the judgement and the vengeance of God.) They are also asked to wait a little while until their fellow-servants and brethren are killed in the same way, an event we shall shortly witness both in Seal Six and the next event in the Yom Kippur ritual.

The Last Call

So the ceremonies continue, and as the 'members' are laid at the altar base, other designated priests prepare the flour, wine and similar offerings for later on. They then retire to the Chamber of Hewn Stones for private prayers, and for the choosing of the third and fourth lots. **After this time, no more priests qualify for service!**

This is the last choice! The last opportunity to serve! All who have not been chosen to serve that day have to remove their white garments, re-dress in their ordinary clothes and stand down.

As we shall shortly see, this coincides exactly with the LAST CALL to the Church, to stand ready in the garments of righteousness to be rescued in the Rapture, as Seal Six arrives. At that time also, at Seal Six, the priestly official in charge of the Israelites standing in the Temple would **separate the defiled priests** and stand them before the people so that everyone could see their unfitness for service.

And at the Rapture, the wheat and tares are separated, even resulting in some being turned away despite their claims to be genuine Christians! They do not have white garments like the priests and try to barge their way in wearing ordinary clothing, but are exposed in the eyes of all people as defiled and unworthy. (Matthew 7:22 and elsewhere)

But let us examine these events in sequence:

The Third and Fourth Lots

The process of choosing which priest would accomplish which task was repeated. **Lot Three**, for who would offer the incense on the golden altar before the Holiest, and **Lot Four** for those who would bring the parts of the offerings up to the top of the altar, and pour out the libations.

The offering of the incense (Lot Three) was the most prized task of all. Luke chapter one tells us that this was the once-in-a-lifetime privilege of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, when he heard the voice of the angel in the sanctuary. ([See interesting comment here](#)). Jewish literature tells us that this task of offering the incense was the most beloved of all because it was "influential in subduing evil", and it amplified to the people and to the entire world the mercy and kindness of God. How vitally important then are our prayers, and even more so the cry of the suffering to God: "avenge us!". God hears and responds to the incense of prayer.

The Sixth Seal (Revelation 6:12)

Having chosen which priests would perform the next tasks, they now prepare to continue their service. (We have to bear in mind that - as far as the earthly Temple and Yom Kippur is concerned, all these tasks would be performed by the High Priest himself, aided by others chosen for the tasks. But in Revelation the work of Jesus is completed, so angels act on his command in heaven.)

What happens next explains one of the most puzzling events in Revelation - the half-hour silence in heaven.

As I said, the men who were not chosen for that day's work would disrobe and put on their day clothes. The priest chosen to offer incense would be given a shovel to obtain coals from the main altar, and a vessel of incense. He proceeds to the sanctuary door but before entering he does something mysterious that has great prophetic significance. On the next page we will look at what that is.

Part Ten – The Service Outlined (2)

The day has dawned and the morning star is seen in the sky, allowing the great sanctuary doors to be opened. All preparations have previously been accomplished; the altars and lamps have been readied and the priests, suitably dressed in white linen and ritually pure, have been allotted their tasks for the day. The lamb has been sacrificed and laid at the altar.

Now the "time of incense" has come - that special event in the Temple service when all the people would gather for prayers. The priest chosen for the honoured task of offering the incense inside the Holy Place, with another priest as his helper, would gather fire from the altar of burnt offering in the Priests' Court along with a vessel of incense and they would then approach the vestibule of the sanctuary.

But before going in, they would do something mysterious which is not fully understood to this day. Perhaps as Christians we can see the real significance of this act as a prophetic indication of what is to come.

Throwing Down the Magrepha

Before entering the sanctuary, while still between the altar of burnt offerings and the sanctuary itself, the priest would throw down the magrepha to the floor. There is no way to use an English word for this item as even Jewish scholars do not know what it was, in reality. The word itself implies a shovel, and suggests the fire shovel used to collect coals from the altar, yet this explains nothing! (See [here](#))

Yet so vital and meaningful was this act that it is described everywhere as THE signal for much activity within the Temple and without it. In the language of the Mishna (Tamid5, 6) *"the sound made by the magrepha falling was so deafening at that moment that in the entire city of Jerusalem, no one could hear his friend speaking!"* The item thrown down made such an awesome and deafening sound that it startled and alarmed all who heard it.

As far as the Temple service, it served three purposes:

- 1). When the priests who were outside the court heard the sound, they knew that their colleagues within were about to prostrate themselves before the Divine Presence, and they ran to bow down with them.
- 2). When the Levite trumpeters and musicians heard it, they knew that the Levite choir was about to enter the Women's Court of the people and stand upon the Nicanor steps. So they too ran to join their brothers.
- 3). And when the Overseer heard, he separated the priests who had become defiled, and stood them all together in the Eastern Gate. This way, everyone could see that they were impure and therefore could not serve in the Holy Temple. ([As before-mentioned.](#))

Seal Six

However, as far as biblical prophecy goes, and the book of Revelation, **this deafening noise is the sign that the next seal has been broken**. What happens next is an alarm call to everyone. (And let us be aware that all this has happened BEFORE the actual Yom Kippur ceremonies begin, for we are only now approaching the end of the usual daily morning service which had to be performed before anything else.)

We are as yet in the PRELIMINARY stages of this DAY. Therefore, those affected by the great noise and calamity of Seal Six are calling out "the great day has come!" knowing (prophetically that is) that what follows is the ceremony particular to Yom Kipper, the Day of Atonement, and if their names are not at that time found in the Book of Life, they are doomed for ever.

Rev 6: 12-17 There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"

War In Heaven

What is causing all this commotion? There is a WAR IN HEAVEN causing this disturbance, and the outcome will be determined not only by the power of God and his holy warring angels, but the effects of the Rapture! When the believers - both dead and alive - are raised to Heaven, there is "no more place" for the fallen powers.

This is the beginning of the end for the Dragon, that ancient Serpent. He is about to be cast out onto the earth along with his fallen angels. The earth, the atmosphere and the cosmos reel as this war takes place, and everyone is terrified - that is, everyone but those who already know the outcome. Hallelujah!

Isaiah 24:20 *"The earth is broken asunder, the earth is split through, the earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, never to rise again. So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will **punish the host of heaven on high**, And the kings of the earth on earth...."*

The Principalities and Powers Shaken

Do you see how Isaiah prophesied the punishment of the fallen satanic powers that until that day have been allowed to remain in the "heavenlies" - not in God's heaven - but they have been the "powers of the air". Ephesians 2:2 calls the leading ruler the "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience". That is why the final bowl of God's wrath is poured out "on the air" in Revelation 16:17.

Jesus also prophesied of this same event, when he said that the "powers of heaven" would be shaken. Luke 21:26 25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; **for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**"

Seal Six leads to Trumpets 1-4

As far as EARTH and MANKIND is concerned **there is NO pause between Seal Six and the First Four Trumpets**. They are a continuing series of events. ([See a graphic representation of these earthly events here.](#)) However, John is trying to describe what he sees both on earth and in heaven at the same time, and to keep in step with the events in the Temple service. Therefore as we read his vision, we encounter pauses and interjections in the timeline.

He is trying to reveal the HEAVENLY EVENTS, such as the Rapture and the sealing of the 144,000, alongside Seal Six. Reading Revelation sequentially, it gives us the impression of time passing whereas in fact, heavenly events do not occur in literal time.

A Third of Stars Cast Down

John also needs to give us a retrospective in Revelation Chapter 12 and later, when he backtracks on events and gives us a summary in his first "interlude" as I have called them. I have covered those interludes <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday13.html>. But here we do need to note that as the Dragon (Satan) harasses and torments Israel (the woman) in travail (birthpangs) he casts down with his tail a third of the stars from heaven to earth [Rev 12:4] and the effect is seen in Seal Six and continues into the first four trumpets. The Dragon himself is cast out shortly afterwards.

It is best to read these pages alongside the pictorial charts showing all these events in order. Access them <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-charts.html>

In Seal Six we are told that the "stars fell to earth as figs drop in a strong wind" and in the first four trumpets we see the culmination of these powers falling to earth as "a third of the stars were darkened and did not shine" (Rev 8:12). This is undoubtedly a spiritual event. Yet, it is true that spiritual events are perceived on earth as physical events - the "great mountain" that is cast into the sea is at one and the same time the Dragon falling from the heavenlies and an asteroid falling into the ocean. It is a fallen star (compare Revelation 9:1). The angelic powers are referred to as "stars" both here and in the Old Testament. (Job 38:7, Is 14:13, Jude 1:13)

Earth moves?

Could the event referred to in Seal Six be the shifting of the earth on its axis? That would account - in physical terms that is - for the appearance of stars falling from the sky, the shaking of the earth, the rolling up of the sky, and the fact that afterwards the constellations viewed from earth are different, and a third of them are not seen, from Israel at least. This is just a suggestion, one thought to hold in our minds.

However, after the WAR BREAKING OUT IN HEAVEN and the catching up of the Woman's "male child" (the Rapture) , the devil is **thrown down** onto the earth, the physical effect of this being a "great mountain cast into the sea". That is what we continue to see in the FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.

All these events are looked at later, but in REALITY they **begin** to happen right now. The people of earth are terrified to see that "something" is happening in the heavens, and they have no clue what it is! It happens SUDDENLY and (to unbelievers) without any warning. Just as Jesus said, they are partying, eating and drinking, going about their daily business as usual, when "suddenly" disaster befalls them. (Luke 17:28)

How important then it is to "stay awake" and be aware of the approaching day! How vital to keep our white garments on in readiness, to keep our lamps well lit, and to watch the heavens for the sign of his coming!

Wrath Has Come!

As in the Temple, so on earth, people run at the terrifying sound and sight that occurs. Those who know about prophecy run to make ready for their Day of Redemption, but everyone else seeks cover. They run into the caves to hide from God's wrath. For "The Great Day" - as far as common people are concerned - "has Dawned!!"

This is at one and the same time the most awesome and most terrifying day that the earth has ever seen, and it is the prelude to what Jesus calls "The End". He described these events as the **Great Tribulation** [or time of trouble] which will never be matched for horror. He promises that it will be "cut short" for the elect's sake. He also promises that all who trust in him will be saved out of it. (See Revelation 3:10):

Matt 24: 21- 33 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. ... (29) Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect **from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** (Compare Revelation 7:1)

The Incense Offered

Meanwhile, to continue the Temple service, the two incense priests mount the twelve steps that lead to the Sanctuary building and they enter the Holy Place. They are preceded by the priest who now completes the task of improving the menorah's wicks. The final portion of the lampstands is cleansed, trimmed and rekindled. Afterwards, he prostrates himself once and departs the Sanctuary leaving the incense priest to his task.

At a signal from the Overseer, the priest gently places the incense on the altar, "like sifting grains of flour" and as the Holy Place fills with smoke he prostrates himself then leaves the Sanctuary.

All those outside are waiting in a reverent hush, just as they did when the father of John the Baptist delayed his exit from the Sanctuary. (Luke 1:21) We have to skip over to Chapter 8 of Revelation to see the silence in which the multitudes await the emergence of the incense priest, in this case the angel.

*"In the Jewish Temple, musical instruments and singing resounded during the whole time of the offering of the sacrifices, which formed the first part of the service. But at the offering of incense, **solemn silence** was kept ("My soul waiteth upon God," Psalms 62:1 ; "is silent," Margin; Psalms 65:1 , Margin), the people praying secretly all the time." [Matthew Henry's Commentary of Revelation.]*

The Mystery of the Half Hour of Silence

Revelation 8:1 *"When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."* How often have I studied this passage, and failed to understand why the silence in heaven lasted half an hour. Nothing in prophecy is arbitrary and nonsensical. There must be a reason for John's statement, but before seeing the Temple setting I could not understand it. Now however, all is revealed.

To jump ahead a little, the great multitude [<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday10.html#multitude>] of ordinary worshippers has assembled in the outer court to join in the daily service. As far as the people in the Temple are concerned, activities are progressing behind the thick wall dividing their Court and the Priests' Court, but apart from their knowledge of the scriptures and familiarity with the Temple services, they are not sure of the exact timing.

They have been alerted to the incense priests entering the Sanctuary, by the great noise of the falling Magrepha. Thereafter they need to WAIT in hushed silence for their prayers (the incense) to be offered to God and accepted. It is a recorded fact of the Temple service that the whole process of collecting the fire from the altar, offering the incense, and re-emerging from the Sanctuary took THIRTY MINUTES. During this time, the musical and vocal praises in the Temple ceased, and the people stood in an awed silence! For half an hour.

*"In Exodus 30 we find the detailed specifications of all each priest had to do twice a day. The time usually allocated for that rekindling of the coals, and refilling the incense spread on the coals was **30 minutes**. So in Revelation 8 we are seeing an allusion to the prayers of the saints illustrated in the Tabernacle Incense Offerings". [[Source](#)]*

*The Seventh Seal: The Book is Opened: "Let all people be silent before Yahweh, now that He is stirring from His Holy Dwelling." -Zechariah 2:17 "But Yahweh is in His Holy Temple: Let the whole earth be silent before Him." - Habakkuk 2:20 The angels and the elders cease their songs of praise and a deep and profound silence falls in heaven. Some scholars believe that this passage is a reference to the length of time it took for the High Priest to take the fire from the bronze altar that is in the outer court of the Temple and then to enter the Holy Place and to use the altar fire to burn incense on the golden altar in front of the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant had been kept and then to return to where the people were assembled to give them the priestly blessing. The whole procedure took **about 30 minutes**. (Lev. 16:13-14; Lk 1:10, 21). To give you a more complete picture of this part of the Temple service, let me quote from Alfred Edersheim's excellent book, "The Temple: Its Ministry and Services", page 167:*

*"Slowly the incensing priest and his assistants ascended the steps to the Holy Place, preceded by the two priests who had formerly dressed the altar and the candlestick, and who now removed the vessels they had left behind, and, worshipping, withdrew. Next, one of the assistants reverently spread the coals on the golden altar; the other arranged the incense; and then the chief officiating priest was left alone within the Holy Place, to await the signal of the president before burning the incense. It was probably while thus expectant that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias (that is, Zechariah - Luke 1:8-11). As the president gave the word of command, which marked that 'the time of incense had come,' 'the whole multitude of people without' withdrew from the inner court, and fell down before the Lord, spreading their hands in silent prayer. It is this most solemn period, when throughout the vast Temple buildings **deep silence rested on the worshipping***

multitude, while within the sanctuary itself the priest laid the incense on the golden altar, and the cloud of 'odours' (5:8) rose up before the Lord, which serves as the image of heavenly things in this description." [[Source](#)]

The Name of the Lord upon His People

Their particular tasks completed, the priests all line on the twelve steps of the Sanctuary. They turn towards the people in that area, lay down the utensils they had been using, raise their hands and recite the blessing. Part of this blessing has a direct relevance to Revelation:

Number 6: 23-27 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. **And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel**, and I will bless them.

I Shall Put My Name Upon Them

Here we see the Temple priests giving the blessing to the people. They are making a sign with their hands that uses the Hebrew letters for the blessing ([See this page for an explanation](#)) How fascinating therefore that at the precise moment the priests "**Put My Name upon the children of Israel**" that we find in the book of Revelation (7:4) the angels doing exactly that!.

Hear the blessing given in English and Hebrew along with the sound of the trumpet: [[audio file](#)]

In this short pause in events, we read in Revelation Chapter Seven that the full consequences of Seal Six are held back, along with the trumpet judgements, so that the Remnant of the tribes of Israel can be selected and sealed to protect them from what is to come.

Part Eleven – The Service Outlined (3)

John had at the beginning passed beyond the common court of men and women, into the Court of the Priests, since he is a privileged onlooker. However most people would see nothing of what was going on there, and would gather at about the time the incense was about to be laid on the golden altar of the sanctuary. This was known as the "time of prayer" in the Temple.

The Great Multitude

Luke 1:10 "And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense."

Notice the word "multitude". Now, John returns with the Levitical musicians and choir to the steps overlooking the Women's Court to watch proceedings there. And he suddenly notices that while he has been away, a GREAT MULTITUDE has gathered! Who are all these people, and how did they suddenly arrive, he asks.

The angel is surprised that he does not know, because this is the normal time for the people to gather, the "hour of incense". They are "arrayed in white robes" because they have come to take part in the holiest day of all, Yom Kippur. The people would have had to sanctify themselves before entering the Temple, normally by ritual washing, but in the case of this multitude the blood of Jesus Christ has washed them clean. (Rev 7:14)

The more important piece of information the angel provides, however, is **where** they have come from, and **how**: "*these are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation...*" In other words, this is the result of the alarm signal we heard earlier, the throwing down of the Magrepha.

Those who trusted and believed in God for salvation have not run away into the rocks and caves like everyone else when they saw the end approaching, but have heeded the words of Jesus about that moment:

Luke 17:26-37 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. **But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.** On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. "Where, LORD?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Matthew 24: 30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

Those who believe, and were faithfully watching and waiting for the "Sign of the Son of Man" to arise in the sky (just as the priest watched for the morning star) were not on earth for the full duration of Seal Six but were, as the scripture says, brought OUT of the Great Tribulation of those days. Now in the heavenly Temple they give thanks to God for their salvation (Rev 7:9) and they have gathered to take part in the worship that is about to begin.

"Crying Out With a LOUD Voice"

How I love these little discoveries that bring light to scripture. Here is one classic example. At first glance, the verse in Revelation 7:10 where the great multitude gathered to worship in the heavenly Temple are said to be "crying out with a loud voice..." is mere window dressing, and in that sense irrelevant. However, looking at this place in the Temple service (*but ONLY at Yom Kippur*) we find the people praising and shouting out with a LOUD voice for a particular and special reason.

At Yom Kippur the Holy NAME which was never ordinarily spoken or pronounced, was uttered by the High Priest.. But so sacred was the name that, we are told, the people SHOUTED their praises LOUDLY so they would not hear the Name of God. Let us see what the multitude in Revelation say in praise... "*Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God FOR EVER AND EVER, Amen*". Now compare the statement below:

*"At the height of the most impressive solemnities of the Yom Kippur ritual in the Bet Mikdash the High Priest would invoke the name of God using the original pronunciation of the word, a pronunciation which has now been irrecoverably lost...Our present Mishnah teaches that there were sages... who taught in addition that when the High Priest uttered this most holy name three times on Yom Kippur his voice could be heard in Jericho. [But] While the High Priest was uttering the Divine Name **all the people shouted out as loudly as they could 'Blessed be His Majesty's glorious Name for ever'** (in Hebrew: *Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le'olam va'ed*). They did this in order to drown out the voice of the High Priest so that they would not hear the most holy Name. If such steps were taken in the Bet Mikdash itself in order to drown out the voice of the High Priest how are we to explain the idea that his voice could be heard in Jericho? (It is in commemoration of this shout in the Bet Mikdash that, to this day, on Yom Kippur when we recite the Shema we shout out this doxology instead of adding it quietly as we do on all other occasions of the year.)" [The Study of Tractate Tamid]*

Coming to Completion

Just two more tasks lie ahead for the priests before the morning service is over, and the special Yom Kippur ceremonies can begin. It is very important to note that ALL the preceding events, including the Rapture, have taken place BEFORE the Day of Atonement itself, as a preliminary to the Day. The dividing line between the Morning Service and the Yom Kippur ceremonies is - in terms of Revelation - the fourth trumpet. For more on that, please read on.

The final combined task of the priests, to complete the morning service, is to go to the very top of the altar and offer into the fires there the parts of the lamb, the flour offering and the wine. At the exact same moment, **the trumpets began to sound.**

After the priestly blessing the meat-offering was brought, and, as prescribed in the law, oil added to it. Having been salted, it was laid on the fire. Next the high-priest's daily meat-offering was presented, consisting of twelve cakes broken in halves. Finally, the appropriate drink-offering was poured out upon the foundation of the altar. Upon this the Temple music began. It was the duty of the priests, who stood on the right and the left of the marble table on which the fat of the sacrifices was laid, at the proper time to blow the blasts on their silver trumpets. The priests faced the people, looking

eastwards, while the Levites, who crowded the fifteen steps which led from the Court of Israel to that of the Priests, turned westwards to the sanctuary. On a signal given by the president, the priests moved forward to each side of him who struck the cymbals. Immediately the choir of the Levites, accompanied by instrumental music, began the Psalm of the day. The Psalm of the day was always sung in three sections. At the close of each the priests drew three blasts from their silver trumpets, and the people bowed down and worshipped. This closed the morning service. [Edersheim "The Temple: Its Ministry and Services" Chapter 8]

The Sound of Trumpets and the Noise of Cymbals

From Discussions on the Mishnah we read: "*The limbs would be handed to the High Priest one by one. He would rest his hand on each one and then throw it into the flames of the main fire-stack. ...*"

The Pouring Out of Wine & The Trumpets

After all the limbs had been consigned to the flames another ritual was to be performed, that of the libation of wine. The wine was poured onto the south-western corner of the altar.

It was necessary that the exact moment of the offering of the libation of wine be made known to the Levitical choir and orchestra who were situated on the other side of the Nicanor Gate, on the platform at the top of the flight of fifteen steps leading down to the so-called Women's Court. There were two trumpeters standing on a table in readiness. ... **The trumpeters would sound Teki'ah, Teru'ah and Teki'ah**, and this was a warning to everyone to pay attention for the libation was about to take place.

When the High Priest (or any other priest) bent down to pour the wine out of the pitcher onto the altar the **Deputy High Priest would wave a flag**, and 'ben-Arza who was in charge of the cymbal' would clash his cymbal which was an audible signal to the Levitical choir to start singing the psalm of the day."

This introduces the place in the Yom Kippur service and the book of Revelation where the trumpets begin their sound.

Revelation Chapter Eight

At this point also, in Revelation 8:3, we see the priest who had just offered the incense (Rev 8:3) standing with the others. But instead of quietly laying down his vessel, he **THROWS IT DOWN** upon the earth, where it makes a great noise.

So here is the "clashing of the cymbal" in Revelation 8:5 when loud noises, thunder and lightning, and an earthquake, announce the moment. In the discussion above it is pointed out that, "*At the sound of the cymbal the Levites would break into song. The signal of the cymbal was necessary, of course, because the singers could not see what was going on in the Priestly Court.*

*Each psalm was divided into sections. We do not know how they were divided nor how many verses there were in each division. Perhaps the divisions were a function of the melody (which is now unknown). When the choir and orchestra reached the end of a section **each of the two priests in the priestly court would sound his shofar**. At the sound of the shofar all the people would prostrate themselves. As the previous Mishnah stated: 'With each section a Teki'ah and with each Teki'ah a prostration.' " [The Study of Tractate Tamid]*

Trumpets and Bowls Simultaneous?

Since the trumpet sounds and the pouring out of wine happened **at the same exact moment**, on the day of Yom Kippur, we should see a similarity between the TRUMPETS and the BOWLS.

And of course we do!

In Revelation the Trumpets and Bowls appear to cover the SAME events (except that the trumpets are a herald of the event that has been set into motion, not the event itself. The event that each trumpet announces starts to occur, gathers momentum, and at the end of the day is represented by the ultimate fulfillment in the bowls of wrath.)

However, just like the Seven Seals earlier, the trumpets and bowls follow a particular arrangement that is "**Four, Two, and then ONE**".

By the way, I realise this is a large study (trumpets and bowls, and when they occur) so I have put my finding on http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/trumpets_bowls.html, where you can see that there IS a definite relationship between the trumpets and bowls, and understanding them depends on our looking at Revelation as a vision and not a book that we read chronologically

Four, Two, One

Just like the Seals, the sequence of trumpets is divided into **Four, Two and One**. The first four of the seals are a set, of four horsemen. Then two different seals occur, and finally - after a pause - a seventh seal that is heavenly in scope and finalises all the rest.

Likewise the trumpets and bowls.

| TRUMPETS | BOWLS |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Angel with incense Rev 8:3</i> | <i>Angel with Incense, Rev 15:7</i> |
| FIRST SEQUENCE OF FOUR | |
| (1) Hail, fire, blood, EARTH, greenery | (1) EARTH, sores |
| (2) Mountain into SEA | (2) SEA to blood |
| (3) Fallen Star, RIVERS, waters | (3) RIVERS to blood |
| (4) Third of Sun, moon, stars SKY | (4) Sun scorching SKY |
| SECOND SEQUENCE OF TWO | |
| (5) Bottomless pit, demonic pain, Abbadon | (5) Darkness, pain |
| (6) Euphrates, demonic war, horsemen | (6) Euphrates, demonic war, Armageddon, |
| FINALITY AND COMPLETION | |
| (7) KINGDOM comes, noises, hail, storms, earthquake | (7) AIR, city falls, noises, hail, storms, earthquake |

The first four of the trumpets describe one event and its consequences, the downfall of Satan.

- **The first trumpet** is the first earthly manifestation of the coming asteroid, the hail fire and "blood" that precedes it, synonymous with Seal Six
- **The second trumpet** shows Satan's actual fall as the "great mountain" - or meteor/asteroid - that is to fall into the ocean. This great mountain or star (8:11) is the physical manifestation of a spiritual body, the DRAGON who is cast out upon the earth because there is "no more place found for him" in the heavens, the Rapture having taken place, and the war in the heavens having been lost. (Rev 12:7-8)
- **The third trumpet** shows the effect on the sea of this great mountain's disastrous descent. It also demonstrates that the dragon's fallen angels accompany him. One called Wormwood (the great star burning like a torch Rev 8:9) makes much of the earth's water bitter because of its toxic nature.
- **The fourth trumpet** shows further damage (first seen in Seal Six but held back until this time) to the sun, moon and atmosphere. The effect of this asteroid strike is what we call a "[nuclear winter](#)" or "[impact winter](#)" with water vapour and debris thrown into the upper atmosphere, clouding over all that we normally see.

Incense of prayer brings the judgement

John relates the prophecies (trumpets and bowls - just as with the seals) as one uninterrupted sequence. But we have to remember that Revelation is in fact a series of visions, not one long chronological event! We are not watching a movie from beginning to end, but reading a manuscript that patches together several visions, overlapping and intertwining. This makes it harder to grasp the flow.

If you take a look at the separate page about the http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/trumpets_bowls.html, you will see that what kicked off in Seal Six progresses steadily from that time, gaining momentum and severity through first the trumpets of warning then the bowls of wrath until the final end.

This is where the setting of the Yom Kippur ceremonies helps us, because we are given pointers to the timing within the text of Revelation. Just before the start of the trumpet series, AND before the bowl series, we are told that the offering of **INCENSE** has been given. (Compare Rev 8:3 with Rev 15:7)

One might understandably conclude therefore this is the same incense offering, not realising that there are in fact **THREE incense offerings** at different times during Yom Kippur.

Three Incense Offerings in the Temple

The daily morning and evening service have an offering of incense on the golden altar that stands before the veil of the Holy of Holies. Additionally, during Yom Kippur, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies itself and offer incense directly before the Lord, where the Ark once stood.

At just the right place in the Temple service, we find in Chapter 8 of Revelation the angel offering incense, then casting his censer to the ground - or, onto the Earth. The trumpet-blowing angels are standing ready to blow (8:2), just as they would be in the Temple. As soon as the incense has been offered, those trumpeters would accompany the worship of the people, and at the same moment the vessels of wine would be poured out on the altar.

We are informed by those who wrote about Temple music that SEVEN trumpets would blow during the service, one for the opening of the Sanctuary Gate, three in the pauses for the morning reading, and again three in the evening. Although it's tempting to align Revelation's seven trumpets exactly to these Temple trumpets, there are reasons we should not. Firstly, the door-opening trump is heard by John as he ascends (Rev 4:1) but it is not the first trumpet of Revelation. The FIRST FOUR trumpets of Revelation are a sequential set (as explained previously) and we cannot separate the first one from them.

Secondly, do we separate the first four trumpets from the final three as morning and evening services - as in the Temple? Possibly! However, this disguises the fact that hardly any time passes between them in reality so introducing a long gap is not helpful.

The 42 Months - What Relevance do they have?

On the actual day of Yom Kippur the morning service would have ended by around 9-10am and the evening service would not begin until nearly 5pm. The intervening time would be spent offering the specific Yom Kippur sacrifices. This appears to introduce a long afternoon gap.

If you take a look at the <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-chart1.html>, you can see that as far as Revelation is concerned there is nothing much that happens during that long afternoon, simply because the time was spent making offerings and sprinkling the blood - none of which happens in Heaven OR in the book of Revelation for fairly obvious reasons.

I believe this time-period is the three and a half years when the world worships the False Christ and his Prophet who is presumably giving good reason - through deceptive miracles, signs and wonders - for mankind to trust in his peace-making efforts.

Nonetheless, there IS a relevance in Revelation to this afternoon Yom Kippur ceremony and it concerns the two beasts of Revelation. To find out about it, please go to the next page in this study.

Part Eleven Additional Trumpets and Bowls

This page contains a few further thoughts on the topic of the trumpets and bowls of Revelation. They are intended to be read alongside the other pages in this study, so if you have not read those, you should select the <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-index.html> and start from there.

There are enough revelation timelines floating round the Net to sink a battleship. Imagine my dismay when I realised I had to produce one of my own to add to the variety out there! I didn't want to do it at all. But one morning, after struggling with the reading of the trumpets and bowls (in particular) and knowing them to be the same, or similar, events although happening at different times, I suddenly had what amounted to an epiphany, for which I thank the Lord.

"The Revelation Timeline: Here Is The News"

Instead of seeing the book of Revelation in the modern fashion, like a kind of chronological shopping list, or as a novel - one chapter following another - we have to see it like the Torah, on a scroll. That is, we should see Revelation as a series of columns.

Just like the scroll that Jesus is opening, one column follows the next. One seal opens the first parchment, the second seal opens the second parchment, and so on. In the modern age, translators added chapter numbers to the book of Revelation so now we read it like a novel. Instead, we have to imagine several pieces of paper stitched side by side!

John's visions can be seen in columns, and when we lay them side by side, then we DO notice the similarities. Many of these events are taking place simultaneously over a 42-month period of time. That is the basis of my chart below.

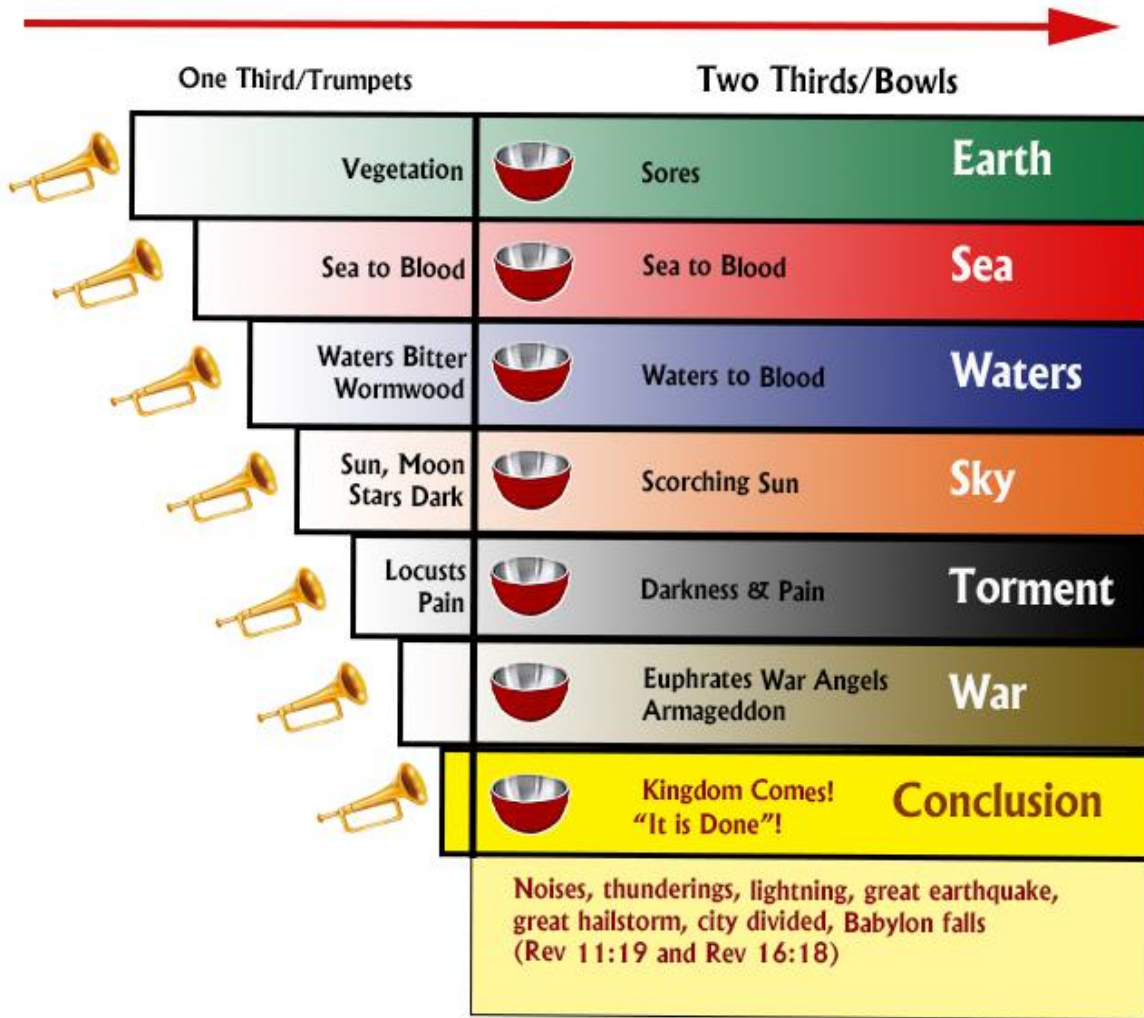
Our Perception is not Prophetic Vision

The timescale of our own lives appears to run in a linear fashion, like one unbroken line dotted with the events of the day, year and so on. But in truth, life is not like this! Everything is happening at once, but we only focus on the events that we know, and see them coming one at a time, one after the other. To read Revelation in that way is a mistake.

A Progressive Event

You need to see the graphic below as a **progressive** outpouring of judgement. This is true also of the seals. What begins in perhaps a bearable way quickly progresses to utter torment. That is the way God works - his mercy is extended to mankind no matter what their condition, in the hope that some will repent. The earlier stages (just as with the seals) are designed as a wake-up call, a warning, a hint of things to come. The trumpets are alarm calls! They warn that what has begun will progress into complete chaos in time.

The events occur over a period of time that in the bible is called "a time, times and half a time" that is, three and a half years or 42 months. It is the period of time that we call "The Wrath of God". The trumpets refer only to one third of the earth, sea, sky and so on being affected, but the bowls extend that judgement to the entire earth.



We need to see events in Revelation unfolding across our screen, scrolling like a slideshow and not reading down the page like a chapter of a book. You will have seen the effect on news websites, with a row of videos and photos illustrating all the main items of news.

So bear with me as I illustrate this in a modern-day example.

You switch on the TV news broadcast. There are three important things happening that they will report on, and they are shown at the bottom of the screen as single images, which keep scrolling across. But tune in to the main news screen and listen to the Newsreader as he presents this news, and imagine this is the book of Revelation.

1. **He first calls upon Sally** who is in South Africa for an important trial that has been dragging on for months and years. Let's go over to Sally now: here we see Sally outside the Courtroom. She tells us that the Judge has just been taken ill and so there is an enforced adjournment. We will return to Sally later...
2. **Now the second piece** of important news. We go to Wales where there has been an explosion in a paint factory. Bill, are you there? We now see Bill and behind him the flames and emergency services. Tell us what is happening, Bill. What happened is that a workman was smoking a cigarette and threw it down beside an oil can. This exploded, causing successive vats of paint to explode. We hear that more fire engines are being called for... thanks Bill, we will get back to you...
3. **And now, we go to London** for news of a Government vote on Pensions. Marion, what can you tell us?

And so on. You are watching these events as IF they happened sequentially, one at a time. Sally presents the first event, Bill presented the second, and now Marion is going to present the third... but obviously ALL these events are ongoing, happening at one and the same time, and only brought to notice when we go there to look and hear about them.

Now you decide to email a report to your friend, telling him what you saw this morning on the News. You might describe them as if they happened one after the other. First you saw Sally, then Bill, after that you saw Marion and so on. Text reading is like that. You would have no other way to convey what you saw!

John of Revelation does the same thing. He relates a series of events, then says "after these things..." to introduce another aspect of the same events or another vision that is a progression of them.

But in the Newsroom as in Revelation, this is the SAME timeline, and the same events. If the three news items above were called "The Trumpets" your friend might read them one after the other, and conclude Trumpet One happened when Sally spoke, Trumpet Two began with Bill, and then Trumpet Three with Marion. He would be wrong. But THAT is how we read Revelation!

An Escalation of Events

Now let's add the Bowl Judgements. As you can see from <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday11.html> and also the graphic above, the trumpets and bowls have an almost exact similarity. However, the trumpets speak of only one THIRD affected, while the bowls affect ALL. If we read them as a long string of events, happening one after the other, it's hard to explain how Bowl One expands on Trumpet One, and so forth. The Newsroom illustration explains that also.

To Continue

Back to the Newsroom: we have heard from Sally, Bill and Marion, and other reporters doubtless followed them. All the events they described are happening in the world today, at the same time, and HAVE BEEN happening before and WILL continue to happen. We broke into each event to catch a glimpse of it in real time. Having looked at our seven news items, the Anchor says: *"And now we go back to Sally in South Africa: Sally, do you have any more to tell us":*

1. **Sally says**, "Now there has been an unprecedented event. An entirely new witness has been announced and we may get to hear new evidence..." Thanks Sally, keep us informed, and we return to Bill:
2. **Bill says**, "The fire is still burning strongly, and I have heard several more explosions. Three more fire engines have arrived and they are struggling to control the blaze. Now I see a helicopter above, also..." Thanks Bill
3. **Marion**, what is happening in London? "As you can see behind me, there is now a huge demonstration of disgruntled workers calling for a review of the pensions scheme."

This is similar to the trumpet and bowl judgements. Each refers to an area in which God's wrath is being poured out, and its effects (like each news item). One affects the earth, another the sea, and so forth. These seven areas are affected almost simultaneously and increasingly. The event that caused the water to become bitter, for instance, may be relatively mild at first but it rapidly escalates until eventually the entire world is affected and all waters are like stagnant blood.

Where do the Seals fit in?

The only set of seven events that do NOT belong to this 42-month timeline are the seven seals on the scroll. The trumpets and bowls cannot begin until the scroll is opened.

As I show elsewhere, the seals cover what Jesus called "the beginning of sorrows" and builds up to an intensity that is only released at Seal Six, when believers are raised and snatched away "out of great tribulation". The Sixth Seal contains within itself all the ingredients of the next three and a half years, and is the first manifestation of them.

What's going on with the Sun?

My current mystery, which can only be solved I think by having a better grasp of the scientific facts, is the apparent disparity between the 4th Trumpet and the 4th Bowl. I say "apparent" because there is never any real disparity in prophecy, only things we do not yet know. Certainly I do not yet understand it fully.

In the 4th Trumpet judgement, a third of the sun, moon and stars are darkened and do not shine – following on from the Sixth Seal events. That could be explained by what is called an "impact winter" caused by any large mass slamming into the earth and throwing up debris, steam and vapour into the upper atmosphere.

If an asteroid were to strike land or a shallow body of water, it would eject an enormous amount of dust, ash, and other material into the [atmosphere](#), blocking the [radiation](#) from the sun. This would cause the global temperature to decrease drastically http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_winter

This we know. But following the 4th trumpet, the 4th bowl event is the sun SCORCHING the people of earth. How can this be? How did we go from a winter to summer? From darkness to scorching sun? From blocked radiation to increased radiation?

Are there any scientists reading this who could explain these things? We see from Seal Six onwards that a major impact at first causes a darkening of the sky and blocks out the sun, moon and stars. Seal Six tells us that this "sackcloth" type of debris-loaded atmosphere makes the moon appear red and the sun dark. This continues into Trumpets One - Four (<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday11.html#trumpets>.)

But it leads to a diminishing of the protective atmosphere, which normally shields us from the sun's full solar energy. If we had no atmosphere we would be constantly bombarded by solar ejections and harmful radiation. This protection appears to be partly removed, and perhaps accounts for the sky turning black as it "rolls up like a scroll".

*"Three atmospheric processes modify the solar radiation passing through our atmosphere destined to the Earth's surface. These processes act on the radiation when it interacts with gases and suspended particles found in the atmosphere. The process of scattering occurs when small particles and gas molecules diffuse part of the incoming solar radiation and this reduces the amount of incoming radiation reaching the Earth's surface. In the Earth's atmosphere, the presence of a large number of particles with a size of about 0.5 microns results in shorter wavelengths being preferentially scattered. This factor also causes our sky to look blue because this color corresponds to those wavelengths that are best diffused. **If scattering did not occur in our atmosphere the daylight sky would be black.**" [\[Source\]](#)*

So in Seal Six we read that "the sky rolled up like a scroll" and therefore it seems part of the upper atmosphere was affected by the incoming fallen stars and "great mountain" that followed. If the composition of the upper atmosphere changed, it would become black, and would allow solar radiation and solar flares to reach the earth and so cause the "scorching" of Bowl Four.

Earth's atmosphere does more than provide oxygen for living things and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. It protects us from dangerous radiation from the sun. In addition to the light we see, the sun also gives off ultraviolet radiation. Much of it is filtered out by the atmosphere. Ultraviolet radiation can destroy living cells **leading to skin cancer**. Also the "greenhouse effect" regulates the earth's temperature and without it **the daytime temperature would be extremely hot** and the nighttime temperature extremely cold.

Following Seal Six, there might be human and super-human attempts to cleanse the atmosphere of dust and debris, resulting in the reverse effect as above.

The rolling up of the sky is a way of saying that the colour of the sky turned from blue to black, rolling inwards. At the same time, stars appear to "fall" when viewed from the earth. Either literal stars fall through space – but would take centuries or millennia to reach earth in that case – or they APPEAR to be falling when viewed from earth, because the earth itself is moving faster.

I believe Isaiah 24:20 describes that event:

"The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, never to rise again. So it will happen in that day, that the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, and the kings of the earth on earth."

IF the earth were to shudder, to spin faster at the moment of impact, even momentarily, it would make the stars (over one half of the earth at least) appear to be moving visibly toward the ground. Naturally that also would cause the other effects of Seal Six, the shaking of the earth, great earthquakes and so on.

Part Twelve – The 42 Months

Now we have come to that part of the Yom Kippur service that was most sacred and awe-inspiring to the Temple worshippers and priests, the actual atonement (or, expiation) of their collective sins. However, what was most significant and sacred to the Jews is in fact - in the book of Revelation - passed over almost without a mention!

Why is that? It is because the afternoon of Yom Kippur in the Temple was taken up with blood sacrifices, various sprinklings, and burning offerings to God. However, for John of Revelation, for Heaven and for us all as believers, there IS no blood sacrifice to be

offered except that of the Lamb already slain for the sins of all the world. Furthermore, there is no cleansing of places and people since Heaven is in a perpetual state of perfection and so are those who dwell there.

The only problem left to be resolved by the judgement of God is that of apostasy in religion and satanic worship in mankind, and the end will come in due course. Meanwhile there are three and a half years of servile worship for those on earth.

Therefore, as the daily service ends in the Temple and the particular offerings of Yom Kippur begin, the division of time in Revelation and on earth as far as we are concerned is actually marked by **the beginning of the 42 months** - the earthly reign of the Beast! (<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-chart1.html>)

The Three and a half Years = Yom Kippur Sacrifices

The book of Revelation is not entirely chronological, because John strives to explain the same sequence of events from different angles and involving different groups of people. For example, the description of the pregnant woman being harassed by the dragon, and the results of her travail, are a parallel description of the events of the six seal judgements.

Therefore, we need to stitch the different visions together by using key markers of the same events. One example is the repeated reference to a specific time interval of three and a half years. We can judge when this occurs and who is involved by considering them as one time period spoken of in four different ways:

1. After the male child of the Woman is caught up to heaven, and the dragon is cast out as a consequence, he persecutes all who are left of the righteous of Israel (The faithful Remnant, or Woman). She however is carried away to be protected and cared for for **"a time, times and half a time"** (Rev 12:14)
2. This time of protection is also spoken of as **"one thousand two hundred and sixty days"** (Rev 12:6)
3. Having failed in his task, Satan gathers the world as his worshippers and is given authority to do so for **"forty-two months"**. (Rev 13:5)
4. The outer courts of the Temple of God and the holy city, Jerusalem, are trampled down by Gentiles for **"forty two months"** (Rev 11:2)
5. The two witnesses who preach against the satanic beast have a ministry of **"one thousand two hundred and sixty days"** (Rev 11:3) Their death and resurrection appears to coincide with the destruction of Jerusalem (see 11:8) where they have been preaching, for the description of a great earthquake, a tenth of the city falling and seven thousand killed appears to mirror the events of the seventh and final bowl in Rev 16:18-19. Thus their ministry stretches from the beginning to the end of the reign of the beast, the full 42 months.
6. This period of time is also mentioned in Daniel 12:11 *"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety / 1290 days"*. Many believe the 'abomination that makes desolate' is the false Christ proclaiming himself to be God, in the Temple. (2 Thess 2:3) Thus his satanic reign begins at this point. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 24:15 and linked the event to the final destruction of the city.

Now we have reached, in our study of the Yom Kippur ceremonies in the Temple, the very place relating to this 42 months.

With the normal daily sacrifices over, we have seen the persecution and rapture of the saints, the war in heaven, and the resulting crash-down onto the earth of Satan and his fallen rulers. From now on events on earth appear to mankind to have stabilised, as this powerful prince of darkness sets about restoring the climate and environment and creating world peace. No wonder they bow down and worship and proclaim him as God!

Beasts in the Temple and in the Wilderness

It would be tedious and not very enlightening to go through all the various sacrifices, blood sprinklings and comings and goings in the Temple during the afternoon of Yom Kippur. There is little of relevance, except the three main beasts involved in the redemption, and the offering of incense in the Holy of

Holies - an event so meaningful and sacred that it happened but once a year, and only by the hand of the High Priest.

God commanded - see Numbers 16 - that on this important day **five animals** were to expiate all sin and uncleanness: **a young bullock, two rams, and two identical goats**. Of these we are concerned only with the sin-offerings, the bullock and the two goats and most Christians are familiar with this aspect of Yom Kippur - the scapegoat!

At the very point in the service that these animals appear, later to be ceremonially killed, John tells us of the BEASTS that he sees arising from the sea (where the 'great mountain' has fallen earlier), and the earth.

What is different about the bullock and goat that were sacrificed in the Temple is this: their bodies were NOT to be offered on the Temple's altar, but were later taken away and burnt OUTSIDE THE CITY in the "Place of Ashes". The sages are not sure whether this was to the East or the North of the city, but no matter - the point is that they did observe this command which was in fact prophetic, for the two beasts of Revelation are indeed **burned outside the city** (Rev 19:20). They are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire. So, do we see reflected in the two Yom Kippur sin-offerings the two beasts of Revelation?

Numbers 16:27 says:

"the bull and goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up. The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, afterward he may come into the camp."

"Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp". Leviticus 4:12 When the Temple was built, such sacrifices were carried and burnt outside the city of Jerusalem; there were three places for burning; one was in the midst of the court, where they burnt such sacrifices as were unfit and rejected; the other was in the mountain of the house called Birah, where they burnt such as any accident befell them, after the carrying of them out of the court; and the third place was outside Jerusalem, called the Place of Ashes [Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 7. sect. 3, 4.]: this was a type of Christ being brought out of the city of Jerusalem, and suffering outside the gates of it, (Hebrews 13:11 Hebrews 13:12) : "unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out; the ashes of the burnt offerings". This, according to Ainsworth, answered to the place where Christ was crucified, being a place of skulls, or dead men's ashes, (John 19:17). Gill's Bible Commentary.

The Bullock & Twin Goats

The prophetic signpost of the beasts of Revelation and the Harlot who rides the beast points to BABYLON. However, not a literal empire but a MYSTERY Babylon whose belief system and satanic power has enslaved the world.

Both the political power from the sea, and the religious power from the land are Mystery Babylon.

*In Revelation 13:2 the Holy Spirit has reversed the historical order of the four beast nations of Daniel 7:3, which are: **Babylon, Media-Persia, Greco-Macedon, and Rome**. The symbols used are, a beast for Rome, a leopard for Greco-Macedon, a bear for Media-Persia and a lion for Babylon. The reversal of the historical order of the nations is employed to direct us back to the rituals, rites and ceremonies of Babylon, the first prophetic beast, for the interpretation of the chapter. In ancient Chaldee we see the type of this beast from the earth, he is a god called Nebo in Babylon, Nub or Nun in Egypt, but among the Romans Numa, for Numa Pompilius, their priest-king who occupied the same position as the Babylonian Nebo. Among the Etrurians, from whence the Romans learned their augury and rites he was called Tages, and of this Tages it is particularly recorded that, just as John saw the two horned beast come up out of the earth, so was the child, Tages, miraculously born out of a furrow or hole in the ground. In Egypt this god was represented as having the head and horns of a ram, in Etruria he was similarly represented as a divine child wearing the ram's horns. The name, Nebo, the grand distinctive name of this god, signifies: The Prophet, and as such he gave out oracles, practised augury, pretended to miraculous powers, and was adept in magic. He answers in all respect to the description given in Revelation 13:11, and was reputed to do great wonders by bringing fire down from heaven in the sight of men. This is also exactly the same way the Etrurians (Tages) were known, and it was they it is said, who taught the Romans augury and all the other superstitions and wonder working jugglery connected to it; see in Ovid, Metam, lib. XV. ll. 558-559, p. 760 [Source]*

This composite beast is in terms of politics the Roman Empire (to John at least) but in terms of religion and origins is of **Babylon**, whose mythology and gods successive empires adopted, including Rome (and later on, Roman religion!). Therefore the BULL is most appropriately used in the Temple services. The BULL and the BAAL of Babylonian religion were intertwined:

1 Kings 18:26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

*The supreme god in the pantheon of the Canaanites was El, and the next god in rank was **Baal**, the storm god, who was celebrated as lord of gods and creator of man. The chief role in Canaanite religion was assigned to Baal, the god of rain and fertility. **He took the form of a bull**, the symbol of strength and fertility. Remember that the Israelites mimicked this bull-worship - Jeroboam I set up bulls at Dan and [Bethel] so that the people of the Northern Kingdom would not go back to Jerusalem to worship [1 Kings 12:25ff]. Also, Exodus 32:1-29 tells of Israel's worship of "the golden calf," or the bull. The degrading nature of image worship is revealed in the fact that the "worship" ended up as a primitive sex orgy (see 1 Cor. 10:7-9), with 23,000 slain as a result of this debauchery. [Source]*

The two animals that - in the Temple - represented the sins of the priests and people were the BULL and the GOAT. Both were burned with fire outside the city (as indeed was the Harlot as being part of the same system Rev 17:17).

Baal's cult animal was the bull, though at times and in different places he was also associated with **goats** and even flies. He is sometimes shown in Near Eastern art standing on the back of a bull, [Source] as in this Phoenician stele to the left.

But notice that another animal associated with Baal was the GOAT with which we are more familiar today as a symbol of satan. This was the other animal sacrificed at the time of Yom Kippur.

The Harlot, Bride of Satan

We tend to see the Harlot as a different entity to the beasts, yet we have an exact parallel to the Church (or Israel if you prefer) and God. As Israel was the wife of God, so the Church is joined to her Head Jesus Christ as one Body.

Redemption comes from our being identified as **One with Christ**, sharing the same name, righteousness and destiny. When God looks on his Son he sees us abiding there; equally when he looks upon us he looks at the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ with whom we have joined as one spirit.

That is exactly why the Apostle Paul referred to our relationship with God as a kind of marriage, the perfect union of Adam and Eve, of Man and Woman. Two become one! Therein lies our salvation. **Ephesians 5:31-32** *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* **1 Cor 6:17** *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."*

But here we have in Revelation another woman, once faithful but now adulterous, having fallen away from her true Lord. To John of Revelation she was undoubtedly apostate Israel, persecuting Jesus Christ and the believers. Today she is apostate religion of every kind, the fallen woman. And instead of being one with God, she is now ONE WITH THE DEVIL.

Both she and the Beast that she straddles are crimson, as is the "father-god" who possesses and inspires them - the red Dragon. They are in that sense a composite beast, and she is so closely related to (married to) her beast lover that the two become ONE. Thus, we do have the two beasts of Revelation seen here in the wilderness, and while the leopard-like beast is political Babylon, she is Mystery Babylon the religion. The lamb-like beast with horns is the Prophet of Babylon and ALL are satanic!

The Twin Goats

There were of course TWO goats used at Yom Kippur. They were intended almost to be two parts of one animal, being as near identical in appearance, age and size as possible. They were therefore two aspects of the same symbol - the sin of Israel.

BOTH goats were killed, one by fire and the other by being driven away to the wilderness carrying the sins of the people. This demonstrates the two-fold redemption by the blood of Jesus: the **covering** of sins by the blood sacrifice and the entire **removal** of the body of sin by death and resurrection. They are therefore two aspects of the SAME redemption!

NOTE: We know that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of both goats of Yom Kippur. As the "Goat for the Lord" he was sacrificed and died outside the city. As the "Scapegoat" he bore the sins of all mankind, and carried them far away to the 'heart of the earth' from which they originated. [Matthew 12:40] But what we should realise here, as relevant to this study, is that the scapegoat did not survive. The Scapegoat of Jesus did NOT escape death! The bible demanded that sin be removed as well as atoned, and Jesus "descended into the lower parts of the earth" Eph 4:9 for that purpose. He perfectly fulfilled this Old Testament type. By the way, far be it from me to suggest that - as some say - Jesus had to suffer in hell for three days to atone for our sins. What I have said does not imply that doctrine. Jesus entered the place of the righteous dead (not hell) as a Victor! It was his perfect obedience and his shed blood that brought about the atonement.

Beasts in the Wilderness

Revelation 17:3 John needs to be taken into the wilderness to witness the fate of the beasts, because nobody in the Temple worship of Yom Kippur would be able to see the fate of the Azazel goat. The scapegoat in those days was conveyed to a distance so far outside the city (further than a Sabbath-day journey) that it could never find its way back.

Leviticus 16:8, says: "*Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel.*" One goat was "for the LORD" and the other was "for Azazel" - or simply the one word Azazel - which seems to imply by a parallel meaning, that the other goat was "for sin, or for the devil" or even just "the devil". The Azazel goat was to return sin back to the devil where it belongs, and realising this, the Jews cast it down violently as if to throw it back into the PIT. What the angel says about it in Revelation 18 is very similar.

The Sin-Offering Goat

The "**goat for the Lord**" is killed inside the Temple at Yom Kippur and its blood is presented to God. It is a sin-offering that satisfies the perfect justice of God. Importantly, unlike the bullock and the Azazel, no attempt is made to lay hands upon this sacrificial goat to transfer the sins of the people. No confession is made over this goat. Its role was to shed its blood. This goat was the Lord's but the other (Azazel) was the PERSONIFICATION OF SIN itself! **It became sin!**

If there are those who object, what else does the scripture mean in that "He - Jesus - BECAME sin for us" and in His Body removed our sins by taking them "into the depths of the earth" where they belonged. 2 Corinthians 5:21 "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" If Jesus our Saviour did not become sin, you could not become righteousness. You could be forgiven, and cleansed, but could never have freedom from sin! (In other words, you would still be under the LAW.)

Jesus, the Perfect Sin-Offering, shed his blood to cover the sins of mankind, but he did not stop there. He then presented it - that is Himself - before the Throne of the Father just as did the High Priest with the goat's blood. Hebrews 9:11-12 says: "*Christ came as High Priest --- Not with the blood of goats and bullocks but with his OWN blood He entered the Holy of Holies once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*" He was destined to be both goats at the same time. He both shed his blood AND died as an Outcast.

In summary, the live sin offering was a means whereby the unexpiated sin of the community could be gathered up and returned to its source, Azazel, to await the final Judgement and eternal destruction. Returning to the Apocalypse, there is a striking resemblance between Azazel and Satan.

[\[http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/media/Azazel_Examined_Extract.doc\]](http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/media/Azazel_Examined_Extract.doc)

So in Revelation. There were two goats. BOTH were destined to die! One died in the fire but the other died by being cast off a high place, and both these are the fate of Babylon.

The Red Cord

Here is another striking similarity between the Azazel "devil-goat" and Revelation's beasts: the crimson cord or cloth. After the lot had been cast to choose which of the two identical goats was to be designated as "scapegoat" Azazel, it was identified by having a woolen crimson tag tied around its horns.

A portion of this red cloth was also removed from the goat and tied to the Temple door. Tradition says that each year the red cloth on the Temple door turned white when the goat in the wilderness died to signify the atonement of Yom Kippur was acceptable to the Lord. Sin had been removed. Isaiah the prophet had said: "*Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [crimson], they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [white] wool*" (Isaiah 1:18).

Whether or not the Jews realised it, this crimson cord, the colour of blood, was a further representation of the sins of the people. Now when we are presented with the Dragon of Revelation - Satan himself - and also the Beast in which he incarnates, and also the woman who rides him - ALL are crimson! This cannot be a coincidence. They are all marked out as AZAZEL, the devil incarnate, ultimately to be cast into the pit from whence they came.

What is Azazel?

Through the translation of the bible into English we have named this second goat the "[scapegoat](#)", That is, the goat that escaped. But in the original Hebrew of the text, the word is simply AZAZEL. Nobody knows what this word means exactly and there is much speculation. One writer comments, "*Ehrlich succinctly summarized the situation saying, 'Azazel—No one knows who he is or what he is. What previous scholarship said about him has no substance and cannot be relied upon.' This is also true at the present time, almost a century later.*" For an in-depth discussion please go to [THIS PAGE](#).

Also serious bible students should read this http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/media/Azazel_Examined_Extract.doc exploring the whole Azazel/Revelation concept in depth

The Jews made the word fit the action and came up with "the goat that goes away", and this is the meaning picked up later by the Septuagint, Vulgate and some other ancient sources. They see the first part of the name Azazel to come from the word עז (ez), meaning **she-goat**, and the second part, they say, comes from the verb אזל (azal), meaning to go away. There's one problem with this. In Leviticus 16 the word עז (she-goat) is never used but always ריעש (sa'ir), meaning **he-goat!**

But an equally valid translation of the Hebrew word, adopted by many Jewish thinkers, is Azaz-El which means "fierce god, or strong god" and is therefore more applicable to the devil. By John's day, and the time of Herod's Temple, the Azazel was seen as synonymous with the devil that tempted mankind to sin ([See for example an interesting account here.](#))

But as far as scripture is concerned, the word implies the removal of corruption. Strong's concordance gives the meaning as "complete removal". Wikipedia says "*In the Bible, the goat for Azazel was a goat that was designated (Hebrew אֲזָזֵיִל la-aza'zeyl) to be outcast in the desert...*"

The scapegoat was cast out as corrupted, depraved and full of sin, and it is not intended to remain alive. It personifies all the sins of the people, and could not be allowed to perhaps wander back into the city precincts in that condition. It is intended to waste away and die in the wilderness or at the very least be lost eternally. By John's day the death of the goat was made certain by throwing the goat off a cliff.

In Revelation 18:21 we see a strong angel pronouncing the doom of Babylon, both the political power and the apostate religion, in a way strikingly similar: by hurling a great stone into the sea. (Rather akin to the "great mountain" that was hurled into the sea when the dragon was cast out.). But this destruction of Babylon is a reflection of the passage in Jeremiah 51.

Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon--all that had been recorded concerning Babylon. He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud. . . . When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates. Then say, `So will Babylon sink to rise no more, because of the disaster I will bring upon her. And her people will fall.'" (Jer 51:60-61, 63-64) The curse on Babylon in Jeremiah's day is echoed in the words of the mighty angel: With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again (v. 21). The parallel is striking because Jeremiah had written of Babylon's judgment on a scroll, and a scroll was used to introduce all the judgments in the book of Revelation. ... The image of the millstone has yet another source, closer to John's time than the prophecies of Jeremiah. Jesus said to his disciples that if anyone "shall offend" (KJV) or "put a stumbling block" (NRSV) before one of Jesus' "little ones," it would be better for that person "to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck" (Mk 9:42). [[Source](#)]

Surely the words of Jesus about putting a stumbling block before Jesus' disciples or "causing them to sin" apply so perfectly to Mystery Babylon! She not only deceived the disciples and the rest of the world with her false teachings but persecuted and slaughtered them as well, "for in her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth (v. 24). She is "drunk with the blood of the saints" and "those who bore testimony to Jesus" (17:6). Because she offended the "little ones" who belong to Jesus, she is thrown into the sea, to sink like a stone and never be seen again.

Raise Your Right Hand!

Before we leave the subject of the two goats we need to see yet another parallel between the Yom Kippur service and the book of Revelation - a particular practise in choosing of the lots for the two goats. "*And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the Tent of Meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel...*" (Lev. 16) A wooden lottery box was kept in the Temple, within which were the two lots. On one lot the two Hebrew words meaning "For the Lord" were written, and the other was inscribed with single word "For Azazel."

The High Priest thrusts his hands into the lottery box and stirs the two lots within, to make sure all is equal. It was considered an auspicious sign from Heaven if the lot "for the Lord" was drawn by his right hand; thus he mixes the lots about so that he will not recognize them.

So the High Priest raised up the two lots from the box, one in his right hand and one in his left. Only once he held them up did he learn which hand held each lot. If his right hand held the lot of "For the Lord," the assistant would declare "*Master! High Priest! Raise up your right hand!*" And hearing this cry, all those assembled would know that this favorable sign has indeed transpired.

There is an amazing reference in the Talmud concerning this: "*Forty years before the destruction of the Temple* (ie. from the death of Jesus onwards) *the lot did not come up in the right hand...*" [Talmud Bavli, Yoma 39b]

But at this point in Revelation we have an angel holding up his right hand. (Rev 10:5)

The same "strong angel" who had prophesied the seven thunders and given the little book to John (also a prophecy?) now holds up his right hand and (since there are no lots cast in heaven) swears by the Lord that the doom of Babylon is certainly coming - and soon! That means, the choice has been made, those who are to die are must die, those who are to be saved will be saved. For he announces the time of completion as that of the **seventh trumpet** - so now we must hurry on to see those events.

That will be the time (just before the final destruction) that the "mystery of God" will have been completed, so says the mighty angel.

There has been some discussion about the precise nature of this mystery. The closest we can come is other passages in scripture that hint of it, such as Colossians 1:25-27 and Romans Rom 15:15,16 where "*the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations*" is the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of salvation.

Jesus physically returns to Earth having completed the full number of Gentile believers: "*For I would not, brothers, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*" (Romans 11:25-26)

In short, the entire Yom Kippur afternoon ceremony shows us the emergence and prophesied destruction of sin and the devil as personified by the beasts of Revelation. Next - the three narrative interludes given us by John while we wait for the news that Azazel has reached the wilderness.

Part Thirteen – Three Interludes

At this point in both the Yom Kippur ceremonies and the book of Revelation, something unique and surprising happens. It marked the highest point of awe for the Jewish worshippers and priesthood, the entrance of the High Priest into the innermost part of the Temple, the Holy of Holies. He went there alone, and only once a year, dressed in pure white linen.

Though this is not expressed in so many words in Leviticus 16:2 ... the high priest went into the holy of holies but once a year, on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month Tishri; not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no less than four times; the first time he went in to offer incense; the second time with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the censer (s); and if he entered a fifth time, they say he was worthy of death; [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible]

The offering of incense (as in the ordinary morning service some hours earlier that day) was an awesome event, made even more spectacular and awe-inspiring by the elaborate rituals involved, and doubly sacred because this time - unlike the last - the High Priest would disappear by himself into that very holy place once dedicated to the Presence of God. (By the time of Herod, tragically, the Holy Place was but an empty void.)

Why all this waiting around?

As the sanctuary slowly filled with the smoke of the incense, the people waited. It is during this time in Revelation that John diverts from the prophetic flow of events and gives us some background information and summaries. These I have called INTERLUDES.

They are contained in Chapters 11 to 19. They almost take the place of an interval in a theatrical performance, and that interval was not just the time it took for the High Priest to offer the incense, but also the other blood offerings and sprinklings.

And there is one other reason for waiting, for all concerned: **nothing further could be done that afternoon until word came back that Azazel, the scapegoat, had reached the wilderness.** We can imagine that this took quite some time, probably several hours, since the goat had to be conducted far out of the city and scouts had to signal back by waving flags to inform the priests that the deed was done. (We shall shortly find this event also in Revelation).

THE SCOUTS' SIGNALS: Back inside the Holy Temple, after having delivered the scapegoat into the hands of his colleague, the High Priest must wait to receive word that the scapegoat has reached the desert, for he is not permitted to begin the next stage of the day's service until then.... scouts were positioned at high points all along the route to the cliff. As the goat was led from one station to the next, these scouts would signal each other by waving cloths. When the scapegoat had been sent off, the news was relayed back to the Temple through the scouts' signals. [Temple Institute]

Three Interludes, "while we are waiting"

The interludes each cover a general view of events both past and future, compressed into stories. The first concerns John himself, as he prepares himself to "prophesy again", perhaps in the evening service that will shortly follow this part of the service. At that time, the day's rituals will be concluded and all prophecy will be ended.

First Interlude, Chapters 10-11 The Book, the Temple & Two Witnesses

John eats the little book that is given him by the strong angel, and then measures the Temple as instructed. (Rev 10:9-11:2) Afterwards he tells the story of the Two Witnesses that are to appear on earth and preach during the reign of the beasts. (Rev 11:3-13) Their fate does seem to line up with that of Babylon and is described in similar terms. In the same hour that they are raised from the dead, there is a "*great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, seven thousand were killed and the rest gave glory to the God of Heaven.*" Rev 11:13

Now that is interesting, because very similar or identical events takes place at both the seventh and final TRUMPET and the seventh and final BOWL judgements. (Compare 11:19 with 16:18) Please note that the description of the **three woes** at the end of the Two Witnesses's ministry (11:14-18) is actually part of their story and does not happen at this exact point in time. Just as with the story of the sun-clothed Woman, John is compressing a lot of historical data and presenting it as an overview.

We know where we are in terms of Yom Kippur because in Chapter 11: 19 we are told: THEN "*the Temple of God was opened in heaven and **the ark of his covenant was seen in his Temple***". The Ark of the Covenant was of course in the Holy of Holies. That places the event in the **afternoon** of the day, just as the High Priest enters to offer either the blood sprinklings or the incense. And that indeed - as you read above - is where we are in the ceremony! NOT at the final judgement, just yet!

Why does Heaven have an Ark?

It is a strange feature of heaven that it supposedly contains - according to John's account - a hidden inner sanctuary and the ark of the covenant, which were in truth only earthly symbols of heavenly realities. Surely John has seen the Throne of God in heaven, and the four living creatures, all of which are the reality of the Temple's Ark? Yet, because this prophecy is set into the framework of a Temple service, and specifically that of Yom Kippur, it must be that the appropriate action (the Holy of Holies being opened) is reflected in the revelation!

There is to be one further opening of the Temple [or, the "tabernacle of the testimony"] in heaven, during the evening offering of incense, again just at the appropriate time in the service.

The first Temple opening is into the Holy of Holies (and therefore in the **afternoon**, as we saw above) but the second one in Chapter 15 is contemporary with the bowl judgements and the final three trumpets (the three woes). That takes place during the **evening** offering of incense, NOT in the Holy of Holies but at the golden altar in front of the veil. See chapter 9:13. The voice that

calls for the final and definitive bowls of God's wrath is heard from *"the four horns of the golden altar which is before the Lord"* and that is the Incense Altar in the Holy Place, not the Holy of Holies.

Thus we are foreseeing the events of the evening service - we will come to that in due course. Please see the <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-chart1.html>.

Second Interlude, Chapters 12-14

This second summary concerns **Israel, the Woman clothed with the sun**. Once again we have a compressed overview of events right through the time-period, starting in the night hours of tribulation and ending with the overthrow of Babylon who persecuted her. The Woman's story begins during the opening of the seals, with increasing pressure and persecution. Jesus used the word "birthpangs" to describe this time period, and here Israel is in labour, in travail, trouble and tribulation increasingly.

Her story progresses through the rest of the seals with Israel delivering the male child who is caught up to heaven, and she is subsequently conveyed to a place of safe-keeping "on the wings of an eagle" (12:14). *Has anybody considered whether America - whose national symbol is an eagle - might send planes to convey some of Israel's refugees to safety? Just a thought!*

Mixed in with the story of the Woman is that of her enemy, **Satan or the Great Red Dragon**. Again we see an overview of his fate - firstly watching and waiting for the climax of deliverance both for the Woman and Child. Then he takes his opposition to the very back door of God and tries to prevent the catching up of the believers, but is fought back and cast out along with his fallen angels.

Thereupon, enraged, he persecutes the Woman, who is rescued as we said.

A Parody of the Ministry of Jesus

The timing of both these events - the Woman's flight and the Dragon's reign - is identical, locating us at the beginning of his satanic reign: three and a half years. It is a parody of the ministry of Jesus the true Messiah in its timing and events. Jesus was incarnate, ministered for three and a half years, was killed and resurrected, thereafter to be raised to Heaven. The Dragon on the other hand is firstly cast OUT of the "heavenlies", is incarnate by possessing a dead body (thus a kind of resurrection) (<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday13.html#note>) ministers afterwards for three and a half years and is then thrown DOWN into the Pit.

In Chapter 13, John continues his story by describing the results of this casting-out of the heavenlies. He describes the Beasts that arise as a result - one from the sea, ridden by his mistress the Harlot - the other from the land.

Notice that the mighty angel who descends with the little book puts one foot on the sea and the other on the land, as if proclaiming dominion over both the realms of the Beast. (Rev 10:2)

Third Interlude, Chapter 17-19 The Fate of Babylon Prophesied

In these chapters we have John taken away from the Temple scene to the wilderness where the Azazel has been dispatched. An angel - interestingly, one of those who is commissioned with the task of pouring out the bowls of wrath - tells John who the beasts are and what will happen to them. The bowls have taken us in reality to the final judgement, (16:19) but the angel backtracks to explain these things in more detail to John.

Without going into extensive details, we note that the angel explains who is the Harlot (Mystery Babylon) and the two Beasts, and what their fate is.

We have to realise that John in Heaven is taken to one side for a real-time explanation of visionary events! What he has seen are prophecies, but the angel needs to point out their significance.

We know this is a real-time, heavenly commentary on John's vision, because the angel gives a complete overview of all the events of the 42 months, along with their completion. We note such verses out of their time context such as 17:14 *"these WILL make war with the Lamb..."* and 17:8 *"the beast WILL ascend out of the bottomless pit..."* which are outside the prophetic timeline.

In Chapter 18 the angel gives a long account of the fate of Babylon, and another voice adds that the only sensible decision for Christians receiving this prophecy is to *"come out of her, lest you share in her sins"*. (18:4).

The voice from Heaven speaking these words is no doubt that of Jesus the Saviour himself, because he addresses the readers as "MY people".

The fate of Babylon, which is to be avoided by all who love God, is to be thrown down like a millstone into the sea. (Rev 18:21) We touched on this previously, referring to the similar prophecy in Jeremiah 51:63. However, at this precise point - and not by accident - the narrative takes us back to the Temple rituals where the High Priest has been waiting for news that Azazel has indeed been "cast down", and now he receives word from the scouts that the event has occurred - so the rest of the day's activities can resume.

Back to Yom Kippur

After these diversions and explanations, we are taken back to the Yom Kippur service in the Temple. While waiting for the scouts to report back, only certain tasks were undertaken, including the removal of the two carcasses of the bullock and goat. Nothing else can be done, while we wait for news.

But now (14:8 and then 18:2) instead of a scout waving a flag to announce the fall of Azazel to the High Priest and the crowds thronging the Temple, we have an angel flying in the heavens reporting that "Babylon has fallen!"

Because of that fact, the service can continue and thus the FINAL JUDGEMENT can come!

(<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday14.html>). As another angel says, "the HOUR has come!" and this would be a good time to re-think your worship of the Beasts, because of the terrible fate in store for them and their worshippers. (14:6-10)

NOTE: My belief, based upon a number of scriptures, is that the person who ultimately becomes what we call the Antichrist, as world leader, firstly appears as a very clever, popular and charismatic politician or spokesman who is then assassinated or otherwise killed, and "miraculously" raised from the dead so that all the world wonders and worships him, but in fact he has at that moment become bodily possessed by Satan, who energises him for his reign on earth.

Part Fourteen – Back to the Beginning

We have arrived at the final stage of the Yom Kippur ceremonies. The atonement sacrifices have been dispatched, and sin is removed! Now all that remains is to conduct the normal evening service before going home. The joy of Tabernacles is approaching for the faithful, but before that, terrible punishment is to befall satan and his followers.

The final part of Yom Kippur itself [before evening worship] is the reading of the Torah. The High Priest changes his garments, takes off his linen robes, and puts on the usual golden vestment. He then proceeds to the Women's Court where the people wait to worship and respond to his blessings. He is handed a scroll and begins to read.

Another Sinai Moment

There is one significant thing to note. It is that the High Priest "stands up", so we are to imagine that he has previously been seated, we know not how nor where. Jesus did the same in the Synagogue:

Luke 4:16: So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written... Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Jesus **stood up** to read, then **sat down** to teach. This might appear to be a minor point, but it is important enough to be mentioned in rabbinical literature. Why did the High Priest stand to read? The Jews also were puzzled by this ruling. We as Christians would

perhaps remember the biblical meaning of "standing up". We know that it means God is about to DO something, as opposed to being seated in repose.

Jesus our High Priest is SEATED at the right hand of God, having completed his work of salvation. However, when he STANDS, it means that His latter-day work as Coming King and Judge is about to commence.

Also, it means that God is about to SPEAK to mankind! Just as He descended to the Mount and spoke with Moses, giving him the Law, so at the end of time Jesus will descend to the Mount, to give mankind God's Rule.

Zechariah 14:4-5 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.

High Priest Reads from the Torah

In the Temple at Yom Kippur, the High Priest goes through to the Women's Court and is handed a scroll. In reality this was the Torah, but in Revelation will Jesus read the now-unsealed scroll containing the Atonement Decree? Is this scroll about release of the captives, the return of the land, and the judgement of wickedness? We are not told. We can only surmise. But it is certain that he STOOD to read:

We noted that the High Priest stood to read the Torah, the king who did so was praised by the rabbis, and when Jesus read in the synagogue, he too stood. While this might seem simply a logistical ideal enabling the reader to project his voice and receive the congregation's attention, the rabbinic discussions would suggest otherwise..... Standing to read the Torah is much more than a logistical necessity or an expression of respect. According to this interpretation, by standing, the reader emulates, not Moses who stood to receive the Torah, but God who revealed it. The ritual reading of the Torah then, is not simply an act of study, but a reenactment of Sinai itself. The tradition recorded in the Palestinian Talmud does not go quite this far, but it does rebuke the reader who leans against the table while reading, saying that this is forbidden because "just as [the Torah] was given with fear and reverence, so too we need to treat it with fear and reverence." ...the public reading is ... a reenactment of Sinai and is to be treated as such. ["Study of Scripture to a Re-enactment of Sinai" Ruth Langer, Theology Department, Boston College]

Just as in the Temple, the people gather to worship and respond to the word of God. In Revelation 14 we see the one-hundred and forty-four thousand sealed of God raising their voices in a song of worship, accompanied by musicians.

Wine and Grain

With the reading of the Torah finished, the High Priest can continue the evening service.

After a few more sin-offerings [two rams and seven sheep] the offerings of WINE and GRAIN are again given on the main altar. At this same point in Revelation we see the HARVEST of the GRAIN and the GRAPE. (Rev 14)

We are told that the "*clusters of the vine of the earth are fully ready*" and the wine of Babylon's blood is about to be shed, reaching "*up to the horse's bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*" (Rev 14:20). Such is the fate of Babylon and also - says the angel - those who worship the beast and receive his mark for "*he himself shall also drink of the WINE of the wrath of God, which is Poured out full strength...*" Rev 14:10)

Final Three Trumpets

As we learned from the morning service, the pouring out of the wine libation was the signal for the TRUMPETS to blow. Four trumpets have already blown, during the morning service, leaving just three to complete the wrath of God accompanied by the outpourings of these wine bowls. Comparing the events of the final three trumpets and the bowls we do see that they are nearly identical and together spell the complete doom of satan's kingdom.

After the first set of four trumpets, the final three are described as "woes" = "*WOE, WOE, WOE to the inhabitants of earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!*" (Rev 8:13). As I have suggested on

<http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday3.html#woes>, the three-fold sound of WOE, a moan of human lament, is near identical to the trumpet sound in the Temple. You can listen to the different sounds of the shofar on <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday3.html>

We need to remember that the TRUMPETS and BOWLS are simultaneous in the Temple worship. Here again in the evening service the last two trumpets [we shall consider the final trumpet shortly] are about the final great WAR (Armageddon) and the fall of Babylon, and at the same time the escalation of world events like the toxic water, scorching sun, pains and sores, darkness and blasphemy - begun in the "morning trumpets" - comes to a head.

Both **Trumpet Six and Bowl Six** deal with the river Euphrates, making a way for war to begin. Both the seventh trumpet and bowl bring about the END of satan's reign and mankind's rebellion.

Again, as in the morning the blowing of the trumpets is the signal for the people to lift up their voices in praise to God. In Revelation 15 we find the saved of God (whether earlier or by means of the sickle harvest) in worship (Rev 15).

The Temple Opened

It is time for the evening incense, normally about the "ninth hour" which equates to our 3pm but because of all the necessary activities of Yom Kippur it will now be much later, nearly dusk. So once more the "Temple in heaven" is opened. (Rev 15:5). The High Priest during the evening service offers incense, this time on the Golden Altar before the Throne. Then:

"The Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one was able to enter the Temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed" (Rev 15:8)

These final prayers rising up to God, symbolised by the incense in the Temple, result in a finality of judgement on the earth. As a result, one of the four living creatures (perhaps taking the place of Overseer of the Priests) hands the seven bowls of plagues to the seven angels who stand ready to pour. When they do, it is the final act of The DAY.

Vial or Bowl?

It is astonishing that John uses in Revelation the very word (vial or bowl) that describes the shallow vessel used in the Temple for making a wine libation! It could not be more striking that John intended us to see the angels as priests at the altar.

The Greek word translated VIAL is taken directly from the Greek PHILE and in the secular Greek dictionary is described as "*a flat shallow cup or bowl, especially a drinking-bowl, for libations*", Latin = Patera. Also, a funeral URN or VASE, from its broad flat shape. The "*Bowl of Mars*" was a comic metaphor for his SHIELD.

The Final Trumpet

The 'Great Trump' ended the Feast and the service. It meant the doors were shut, and nobody could thereafter obtain atonement. It is on Yom Kippur when the Great Trumpet, known in Hebrew as the **Shofar HaGadol** is blown. It is the Jewish belief that the gates of Heaven are open during the days of repentance to receive prayers for forgiveness and that they close after the Neilah service. When the final blast of the shofar is heard, they believe that those who have observed the day with sincerity have been inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life. Those who have not are excluded from atonement.

Neilah is the closing or final service of Yom Kippur. The Neilah Prayer on Yom Kippur is the fifth and final prayer of Yom Kippur. It means "the locking". On an ordinary day Jews prayed three times – evening, morning and afternoon. On Shabbat, holidays, and Rosh Chodesh they added an additional fourth prayer, musaf. Only on Yom Kippur are there five periods of prayer.

In Revelation we also have five distinct times of corporate praise:

1. Chapter 5 - the worship of heaven and all creation because the Lamb is found worthy
2. Chapter 7 - the worship of the great multitude around the throne
3. Chapter 14 - the new song of the 144,000 on Mount Zion
4. Chapter 15 - the song of Moses and the Lamb from the victors
5. Chapter 19 - all heaven and the multitudes praise God

These are five times of public worship. I have not counted praise by the angels themselves, nor the four living creatures and 24 elders. I am sure that if I looked at the separate instances of praise and worship in Revelation, from both people and angels, then compared them to the service in the Temple, I would find them very similar if not identical. However, I do not have the time or energy to do that!

But what we do need to know is that this is the FINAL trump, announcing the coming of Jesus Christ, and ending the time of probation. Thereafter, the saved are at home with the Lord, and the unsaved are trapped outside, where there will be *"weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"*. This phrase appears SEVEN times in the New Testament. Each time it indicates the condition of earth and fallen mankind at the time of Jesus' coming. For example Matthew 8:12, Matthew 22:13, Matthew 24:5, Luke 13:28 *"There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves being thrown outside."*

The door is firmly shut against hypocrites and unrepentant sinners. They will have been caught unawares, just like those at the time of Noah and Lot:

Genesis 7:16 Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it [the Ark] behind him.

Genesis 19:10 But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.

Luke 13:25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'"

The Neilah service was especially solemn because it was regarded as the LAST opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation.

"While the gates are being shut, the people, exhausted by fasting and praying all day long, make another supreme effort to penetrate the gate of mercy and obtain the favor of gracious Providence." Source: Julius H Greenstone ' Jewish Feasts and Fasts' (1946) p 47

The awareness that the fate of each individual is being sealed at the end of the day is reflected in the change of wording during the Neilah prayers. *"The prayers often repeated during the ten days of penitence, in which the worshipper asks to be **inscribed** in the book of life, are changed during Neilah for the prayer to be **sealed** in the book of life."* Ibid P. 87

The service ends with a crescendo. When the sun begins to set, the congregation rises and cries out: *Shema Yisrael! Hear, O Israel!* Then it renews the pledge of loyalty to God, and **calls for the establishment of His kingdom**. A long, resounding blast of the shofar signal the end of the Day of Atonement. Since we are nearing the conclusion of the book of Revelation, we can say for certainty that God's KINGDOM has indeed arrived.

Time To Go Home

All that remains for both the Yom Kippur festival and the Last Day is the homecoming procession, so we will continue to the last page to see a fascinating account of that.

Part Fifteen – Coming Home (Conclusion) –

The day has finally arrived! The day that we have all longed for, because it is the triumph of our Lord, and the wedding day for which we all prepared. And now yet another aspect of Yom Kippur dovetails into the prophecies of Revelation. After this high holy day of Yom Kippur comes TABERNACLES, which commemorates the presence of God with his people on earth during the wilderness wanderings. So we are not surprised to see this referred to in Revelation:

Rev 21:3 "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them and be their God."

So very closely does Revelation follow the Yom Kippur feast day that aspects that have puzzled the Jewish Rabbis for centuries become clear in the light of the bible. One of these is the joyful nature of the procession that accompanies the High Priest out of the Temple and back to his home after the service has ended. Another is the custom of courtship and marriage connected to Yom Kippur.

The Homecoming Procession

The High Priest has spent the day wearing very expensive special linen garments, which are now discarded never to be worn again. Having put on his golden vestments, washed his hands and feet, burnt the evening incense on the golden altar, lit the lamps on the candlestick for the night, and washed his hands and feet once more, he finally put on his ordinary layman's dress, and was escorted by the people in procession to his own house in Jerusalem.

Jesus Triumphantly Escorted to Jerusalem

At the conclusion of this awesome day, after all the service was completed and the day had waned, the High Priest was accompanied by the entire multitude of worshippers back to his own home. "*When the High Priest exited from the holy place unharmed, he made a celebration for his loved ones*" ((Yoma 7, 1). In the High Holiday Prayer Book for the Day of Atonement it says, "*How radiant was the appearance of the High Priest, when he exited in peace from the holy place! Like **flashes of light that emanate from the splendor of the angels** - such was the appearance of the High Priest.*"

Like "flashes of light"! How very prophetic. Here is how Habakkuk described the coming of the Lord: "*God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight; He has **rays flashing from His hand**, and there is the hiding of His power. Before Him goes pestilence, and plague comes after Him....*" Hab 4:3-5

Revelation 19 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that **she should be arrayed in fine linen**, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the **marriage supper of the Lamb**. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God.

Feasting and Dancing

Once again we can see how Revelation speaks of the festival of Yom Kippur, because these prophecies are portrayed in the time of the Second Temple as the joyful feasting and dancing that took place at the end of the day and the following day. Even the Marriage Supper of the Lamb finds a mirror-image in those first century traditions:

*The evening closed with a feast. If this ending of the Day of Atonement seems incongruous, the Mishnah records something yet more strange in connection with the day itself. It is said that on the... Day of Atonement, the maidens of Jerusalem went in white garments, specially lent them for the purpose, so that rich and poor might be on an equality, into the vineyards close to the city, where they danced and sung. The following fragment of one of their songs has been preserved: Around in circle gay, the Hebrew maidens see; From them our happy youths their partners choose. Remember! Beauty soon its charm must lose - And seek to win a maid of fair degree. •When fading grace and beauty low are laid, Then praise shall her who fears the Lord await; God does bless her handiwork - and, in the gate, "**Her works do follow her,**" it shall be said.' [Edersheim, The Temple p 327}*

Notice above the intriguing similarity in this Yom Kippur song to Revelation 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; **and their works do follow them.**"

First-hand Account

This letter was written by a man who actually witnessed the services at the Second Temple on the Day of Atonement. Here is an extract as it is translated in "Shevet Jehudah" by Solomon Aben Virga, who translated it from a letter written by Versovius to King Alfonso the Pious.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY VERSOVIUS TO KING ALFONSO THE PIOUS
WHO COPIED IT FROM A WRITTEN REPORT SENT BY MARCUS, CONSUL OF
JERUSALEM, TO ROME.

The second service [that I witnessed] was the entrance of the high-priest in the sanctuary. Of the service itself they did not tell me, but of **the procession to and from the Temple**. Some of it I have also seen with my own eyes, and it surprised me so greatly that I exclaimed: "Blessed be He who imparts His glory to His nation!"

At the corner of every street stood the heads of the colleges, who spoke to him thus: "High-priest, enter in peace. Pray to our Creator for our preservation, so that we may occupy ourselves with the study of His Law." When the procession reached the mount of the Temple they halted and prayed for the preservation of the kings of the house of David, then for the priests and the Temple, whereat the *Amen* exclamation, because of the great crowd, was so loud that the birds overhead fell to the ground.

All that took place at the procession to the Temple; **but at the procession from the Temple his honor was double**, for the entire population of Jerusalem marched before him, and most of them with burning candles of white wax, and **all attired in white**; all windows were draped with varicolored kerchiefs and were lighted dazzlingly, and, as the priests told me, the high-priest, during many years, because of the great crowds and rush, could not reach his house before midnight; for although all fasted, nevertheless they did not go home before they convinced themselves whether they could kiss the hand of the high-priest.

On the following day he prepared a great feast, to which he invited his friends and relatives, and made that day a holiday, because of his safe return from the sanctuary."

Two Feasts

In Revelation we see not just a feast prepared for the Bride at her wedding (Rev 19:9) but also one for the birds (19:17) who are called to "*the supper of the great God*", the flesh of the slain in that last battle. Jesus referred to the last days feast a number of times.

Matt 8:11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matt 22:2-4 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'"

Courtship, Marriage and Dancing for Joy

Jewish weddings today are considered to be a kind of personal Yom Kippur, and both Bride and Groom may wear white. The Orthodox bride will wear white to symbolize that she has been to the mikvah in preparation for the wedding. The groom wears a kittel (a short white linen robe) over his suit to indicate his spiritual readiness for marriage. (The groom may also wear the kittel to Yom Kippur, Passover Seders, and finally as a shroud.)

So it is firmly established that there is a connection with courtship, feasting and marriage! When John wrote the book of Revelation he understood and revealed the PROPHETIC truths of these traditions, truths that later Jewish thinkers could not grasp. From <http://thetorah.com/yom-kippur-dancing-maidens/> we read:

If there was ever a surprising dimension to Yom Kippur the following Mishna wins the prize. In Tractate of Taanit, the Mishna describes a maidens dancing in the vineyards to attract the attention of the unmarried men. (See text below) How are we to understand this very surprising form of celebration on Yom Kippur?

The Yerushalmi (*Taanit* 4:11) claims that it makes perfect sense to have a courting ritual on Yom Kippur, since this is the day of atonement. Although this statement seems almost inexplicable, the Chida (Rabbi Chaim Joseph David Azulai, 1724 – 1806) connects this statement with another one in the Yerushalmi (Bikkurim 3:3), that a bride and groom are forgiven for all their sins on their wedding day.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler in *Michtav M'Eliyahu* (vol. 4, 180-181) questions this astounding practice on Yom Kippur. How could Yom Kippur be a day of dancing and dating? ... Rabbi Israel Lipschitz, in his commentary on the Mishna, *Tiferet Yisrael* (*ad loc.* Yachin 63), finds the notion of maidens dancing/ singing in the vineyards on Yom Kippur to attract men to be ludicrous. Therefore, he explains the practice as, in fact, an allegory reflecting Israel singing to God.

Full text of Ta'anit Ch.4 Mishna 8:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: Israel had no greater days of joy than the fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur. On these days the daughters of Israel would go out dressed in white which were all borrowed in order not to shame anyone who didn't have [a suitable white dress]. All the garments required ritual immersion [before being donned to ensure their purity from niddus]. The daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? Young man, lift up your eyes and see what you choose for yourself. Don't set your eyes upon beauty; rather, set your eyes upon family. [For] grace is false and beauty is vain; a woman who fears the Lord she will be praised. And the verse further states: "Give her from the fruit of her hands and let her deeds praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:30). So too, Scripture says: "Go forth O you daughters of Zion and gaze upon King Shlomoh [i.e., the Holy One, the King of Peace] crowned with the crown His nation made for Him on the day of His wedding and on the day of the gladness of His heart" (Songs 3:11). On the day of His wedding refers to [Yom Kippur] the [day of the] giving of the Torah [i.e., the second Tablets], and on the day of the gladness of His heart, refers to the building of the Holy Temple [inaugurated on Yom Kippur], may it be built speedily in our days (Soncino Translation).

Oh how wonderful to read that this joyful dancing and courtship (symbolic of the Wedding of Jesus to his Bride) also mentions at the same time the KINGSHIP of "The Holy One, the King of Peace" ... "crowned with the crown His nation made for Him on the day of His wedding..." and how sad, too, that this Jewish writer missed the whole point of what he was saying!

For it is granted to the Bride to be "**arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**" Rev 19:8

The Fate of the Beasts

The other significant activity relating to both Yom Kippur and Revelation at this time is the fate of the two beasts. In the Temple they are described as sin-offerings, a bullock and a he-goat, and in Revelation the two beasts stand for sin personified and incarnate, the very embodiment of sin, possessed by the Dragon who is Satan. Thus these two beasts are - at Yom Kippur - removed from the Temple precincts, carried to the place of the dead outside the city, and there burned. And, in Revelation we see the two beasts captured, and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)

It is as if all the rebellion and wickedness of the people of God has been personified, embodied, in the beasts of Revelation. They have all sin imputed to them, and they and the sin together are thrown down bodily into the pit of fire where they belong. This is almost exactly how the Jews saw the process of sin-removal at Yom Kippur. I quote:

Azazel as Satan. Most modern authors adopt the oldest Jewish interpretation of Azazel as a supernatural being opposed to God. This view is supported by both Biblical and extra-biblical evidences. ... The extra-biblical support for the identification of Azazel with Satan comes from both etymological considerations and literary sources. Etymologically, many

authors see in the name Azazel the root 'el, which in Hebrew means "God." Various combinations have been proposed. One that is favored by several scholars is *azaz+el*, that is, "a fierce god." This interpretation harmonizes with the role of Azazel in Leviticus 16 as a being the antithesis of Yahweh.

The oldest extra-biblical source for the story of Azazel is found in the Ethiopic book of Enoch which was written sometimes during the two centuries preceding the Christian era. Asael (1 Enoch 6:1) or Azazel (1 Enoch 9:4-6) is listed as the ninth of the fallen angels who eventually emerges as the leader and cause of evil and corruption (1 Enoch 13:1). Chapter 10 of 1 Enoch is of most interest to us because here God instructs the archangel Raphael to bind Azazel and cast him in the desert. Verses 4 to 8 read as follows: "And again the Lord said to Raphael: 'Bind Azazel hand and foot and cast him into darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael, and cast him therein. And place him in rough and jagged rocks and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there forever, and cover his face that he may not see light. **And on the day of the great judgment he shall be cast into the fire.** And heal the earth which the angels have corrupted, and proclaim the healing of the earth, that they may heal the plague, and that all the children of men may not perish through all the secret things that the Watchers have disclosed and have taught their sons. And the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin."

Similarities Between Azazel and Satan. Certain elements of this account, such as the binding and sending of Azazel to the desert, resemble the Biblical description of Azazel. Similarly the casting of Azazel into the fire looks very similar to the casting of the Devil in the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10. Several commentators have noted the similarities between the Jewish traditions regarding the fate of Azazel as found in 1 Enoch and in the Talmudic tractate *Yoma*, and the eschatological fate of Satan in Revelation 20.51

Ralph Levy offers the following concise summary of the literary correspondence between the two.

1. In 1 Enoch 10:4 and 13:1 Asael is bound, prior to his judgment, as is Satan in Revelation 20:2-3.
2. In 1 Enoch 10:4-5 Asael is sent through an opening in the desert referred to as 'Dudael,' and eventually to a place of rough and jagged rocks. *Yoma* 67ab has the Azazel goat thrown over a precipice in a rocky place. Revelation 20:3 has Satan the Devil dropped into a pit.
3. 1 Enoch 10:8 gives the reason for Asael's removal: to prevent his ongoing corruption of humanity. Revelation 20:3 provides a rationale for Satan's binding and removal as a measure to prevent his deceiving the nations any longer.
4. 1 Enoch 10:8 instructs that 'all sin' is to be ascribed to Asael, paralleling the Biblical Atonement ceremony in which all sins of Israel are confessed over the Azazel goat (Lev 16:21).
5. 1 Enoch 10:13 depicts the final fate of Semjaza and his companions (including Asael) as being led off into the abyss of fire for eternal torment, just as Satan is cast into the lake of fire and sulfur, together with the Beast and the false prophet, to be eternally tormented (Rev 20:10)."

The association of Azazel with Satan fits the scheme of Revelation 20 and provides a remarkable connection between the Jewish tradition of the fate of Azazel on the Day of Atonement, and its anti-typical fulfillment at the Return of Christ.

Objections to Equating Azazel with Satan. The two major objections to equating Azazel with Satan are derived from the two texts of Leviticus quoted earlier. The first text is Leviticus 16:5 where the people are instructed to present to the High Priest "two male goats for a sin offering." This is interpreted to mean that both goats constitute a single sin offering. This interpretation ignores the context which indicates that the two goats were presented before the Lord for the purpose of selecting which one would be the Lord's sin-offering goat. The second text is Leviticus 16: 10 which says: "Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it." The expression "to make Atonement over it" is interpreted to mean that Azazel atoned for the sins of the people. This interpretation ignores that in the Scripture Atonement can be made *in a saving sense* or in a *punitive sense*. In a *saving sense* when the sins of a penitent sinner are atoned for by the substitute's death of an animal (cf. Lev 4:35, ect.). In a *punitive sense* when the punishment (execution) of a guilty person atones for his offense (Num 35:33; 25:13). Just as punishment of those who shed blood rendered Atonement for the Israelite nation (Num 35:33), so the punishment of Azazel, as **representative of Satan's role in human sinning**, rendered Atonement in a punitive way. [http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/media/Azazel_Examined_Extract.doc]

Conclusion

We have reached the final hours of the DAY, both in the Temple and in Revelation. We have also reached the end of this rather long study and I pray you have been able to stay the course, and have learned something of interest.

I know that there will be many questions in your mind, as there are in mine. Since this is a difficult prophecy, the book of Revelation may never be completely unravelled. However, I do believe that John's references to Yom Kippur and Temple practises has opened the way to a much more profound understanding, both of the symbols themselves and the timescales involved.

God bless you all!

- <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday-index.html>
- <http://www.birthpangs.org/articles/biblical/theday1.html>