

Could Christ Return During the Fast-Approaching Jewish High Holy Days?

The Jewish fall feast of Rosh Hashanah is a two-day celebration that begins their spiritually significant 10-day holy season, "The Days of Awe." This year, this lunar-based season of repentance and forgiveness begins at sundown on Sept. 29. It is to be celebrated (Lev. 23:23-25) with no work and with the blowing of shofars (ram's horns).

The second fall feast, 10 days later, is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). In antiquity, this was the day each year when the Jewish high priest offered the sacrifice that made atonement for (covered over) the sins of the people of the nation of Israel (Lev. 23:26-32). Today, on Yom Kippur, observant Jewish people will fast and ask the Lord to forgive their sins.

The Evil Factor

Author David Servant has written that "evil is endemic to human life and proves the Bible view that the human race is under a curse and cannot extricate itself from evil but must have a Redeemer."

This evil condition of all mankind is affirmed by the apostle Paul in the book of Romans. In Chapter 1, he explained that mankind "suppress[ed] the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18b, LEB) and then illustrated man's evil inclinations with a dirty-laundry list that sounds like the talking points of modern-day news anchors (1:28-32).

Then, in Chapter 3, Paul summarized the evil factor and declared that no one is good in God's sight: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23, NASB).

The Forgiveness Factor

Even though everyone is cursed by this evil factor, God has provided a free gift of “eternal life” (Rom. 6:23b) which can free us, before God, from the guilt and consequences of sin and equip us to walk free from the power of this indwelling evil (8:8-17).

We can conquer the evil within us by first confessing that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and our Lord (Master). For “if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (10:9-10, MEV).

Then, our righteous belief must be lived out as “living sacrifices” to God. We worship Him with our “reasonable service,” by renewing our minds (12:1-2) and reforming our practices (vv. 9-21).

The Future Factor

Some believe that Christ’s future return is connected to this fall season of Jewish observance, which is focused on repentance and forgiveness.

Jewish biblical scholar Marvin Rosenthal, has explained that in ancient Israel the priestly shofars (trumpets) had two specific purposes. First, they were used to call a solemn assembly of the people for gathering before the Lord’s presence (Lev. 23:24-25; Num. 10:2-3, 7, 10; Ps. 81:3). Second, the trumpet was used to sound an alarm for war and judgment (Num. 10:9, Jer. 4:19, Joel 2:1).

With that in mind, the trumpet mentioned in the New Testament, at the time of Christ’s Second Coming (1 Thess. 4:13-17, 1 Cor. 15:52, Rev. 11:15-18), seems to call repentant and obedient souls to the only Savior, Redeemer and Lord—Jesus of

Nazareth. So, a future celebration around Christ's presence, starting with the blowing of a heavenly trumpet, will be part of each believer's future.

The Final Factor

Could Christ return during the 2019 Jewish High Holy Days? After all, we are not told the hour or the day when He will return. But, what about a 10-day period known as the "Days of Awe"? Could this year's Yom Kippur (the Jewish Day of Atonement) be the final one and Christ returns as atoner, Redeemer and judge?

I don't believe so. Here's why:

1. The negative world events and religious persecution we are seeing now are "the beginning of sorrows," trials and tribulations. But, as Jesus said, "the end is not yet" (Matt. 24:6-8b).
2. We are told there are specific events, along with a season of great, unprecedented suffering and awesome cosmic chaos, which will precede His return (Matt. 24:15-31, 2 Thess. 2:1-4, Rev. 6-7). None of those things have happened, so "the end is not yet."
3. Among the unfulfilled features leading to Christ's return is the emergence of a political power, known as the "beast from the sea" (also known as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the lawless one, the Antichrist). He will expand his power, erect an image of himself in Israel, ask men to bow to his authority, and kill multitudes who refuse (Rev. 13:1-8)—all in a period of time of a little over 3 1/2 years. That has not begun to happen, so "the end is not yet."
4. Two witnesses will dramatically prophesy in Israel for a period of 3 1/2 prophetic years (1260 days). Then, they will be killed, resurrected and ascended to heaven in a cloud, all in the sight of their enemies, around the world (Rev. 11:1-14). This is followed by the seventh

trumpet judgment, which will release the seven bowl judgments of God's wrath. These events have not begun to happen, so "the end is not yet."

Consequently, I conclude that since these things have not begun to happen, and since "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9), I submit this simple, scriptural formula for last days living: "God's people must learn to endure. They must also obey His commands and have faith in Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, CEV).

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