

**Revelation and the** [**Seven**](seven.html) **Congregations**

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Paqid Adon Micah ben Hillel, &

Paqid Adon Poriel ben [Avraham](avraham.html)



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**FOREWORD**

**By: Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

Many tomes have been published [offering](korbanot.html) a commentary on the Book of the Apocalypse of Yochanan (John) Chapters 1:1 – 3:22 dealing with [seven](seven.html) symbolic Nazarean [Jewish](gen-jew.html) congregations in Asia Minor. Some of these tomes are big, others small, some are of substance, others are just inconsequential and money making enterprises. None to this day, however to my [knowledge](knowledge.html) have dealt with this rich mystical passage with [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [eyes](body.html). In fact, [one](one.html) of the problems that characterize all the commentators so far is that they are limited by their theological straightjackets of their pagan liturgical [calendar](calendar.html) and [festivals](festivals.html), as well as an extreme ignorance of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Festivals](festivals.html) and how the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people understand and use their Scriptures.

Whilst this essay does not claim to be a profound scholarly exegesis of the verses in question, it surely does offer any student of the Bible a bold perspective by which to understand this extremely complex portion of this great [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mystical book. Some of its great pearls of wisdom are only basically explored and other important secrets are just brought to the surface in the form of mere allusion.

Before [one](one.html) enters to examine this profound [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mystical book, [one](one.html) [needs](needs.html) to understand that [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mystics [speak](mashal.html) and write using symbolical language to describe cosmic realities that affect all. [One](one.html) also [needs](needs.html) to have a good grasp of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) liturgical year and its sacred [festivals](festivals.html), including the weekly [Sabbath](sabbath.html). Lastly [one](one.html) [needs](needs.html) to understand the very reality which is turned into a symbol in order to better comprehend that symbol.

Professor Walter J. Veith[[1]](#footnote-1) aptly describes the reason why these [seven](seven.html) congregations were symbolized in order to use these as the medium in which a very special message from [HaShem](hashem.html) is conveyed to all Nazareans wherever they be and at whatever period in history they might live. He states:

The [seven](seven.html) congregations to which the [seven](seven.html) [letters](letters.html) were addressed were those of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. These cities stood along [one](one.html) of the ancient postal Roman roads of that day, and, beginning at Ephesus, would have been visited in the order in which they are named. The distance between them is about 50-60 kilometers; a full day's [journey](stages.html), on [foot](heel.html).

Also, when the Roman Emperor sent out governors each year to outlying provinces, these would *make the circuit*, stopping in certain towns to hear cases and grievances. The governor who oversaw Asia Minor would land in Ephesus, continue to Smyrna, then Pergamum, etc. through all of the [seven](seven.html) congregations mentioned in the book of the Apocalypse.

If we take these congregations as symbolic of a Divine circuit in definite period of [time](time.html) with [seven](seven.html) stopovers, then we can see that these are types of [seven](seven.html) human [spiritual](physical.html) conditions for which [HaShem](hashem.html) offers the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) observant soul [seven](seven.html) clinics, or [seven](seven.html) respite centers, i.e. [seven](seven.html) [festivals](festivals.html), along his/her pilgrimage throughout the circuit of the year, in which to receive healing and nourishment for the soul. Another such Divine circuit in [time](time.html) is presented to us by the [Septennial](shmita.html) readings of Scriptures concluding with a [Sabbatical](shmita.html) year. Each of these Divine circuits and its [seven](seven.html) recharging stopovers are also intimately related to the [seven](seven.html) ministries or [gifts of the Spirit](spirit.html) to any Nazarean [Jewish](gen-jew.html) congregation[[2]](#footnote-2).



This understanding, of course, has more to do with bringing [heaven](heaven.html) down to earth, and making presently fallen and unjust realities conform to heavenly realities. The idea that these [seven](seven.html) congregations represent [seven](seven.html) points in Christian history[[3]](#footnote-3) is therefore totally erroneous, presenting a flight from reality, and a rejection of the [five](five.html)-fold divine task given to man, “to be fruitful, to multiply, to replenish the earth, to subdue it, and to have dominion over it through the observance of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandments](cmds613.html).”[[4]](#footnote-4)

[One](one.html) of course, [needs](needs.html) to abide by the critical counsel of Hakham Shaul (Apostle Paul) given in his Epistle to the Romans:

“What then is the advantage of being a [Jew](gen-jew.html)? Or what is the benefit of [circumcision](circumcz.html)? Much in every way! For indeed [first](one.html) and foremost, that they [the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people] were entrusted with the oracles of [HaShem](hashem.html).” - Romans 3:1-2

Any other approach that is not based on the “oracles” (i.e. [Jewish](gen-jew.html) oral traditions) of interpreting sacred writings is absolutely doomed to failure, and will be found lacking the authenticity, intellectual and [spiritual](physical.html) satisfaction of those who believe in [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Word and observe the [commandments](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html).

The book of Revelation is an interesting [one](one.html). It’s the last book in the Nazarean Codicil, making it the last book in many bibles. The last word in the book is ‘Amen’, which has a sort of inspirational feeling to it, which is further accentuated by its aforementioned position within the Good Book.

However, to most people the book is quite incomprehensible. That’s largely because it is suppose to be. Revelation was written at the [Sod](sod.html) level of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) hermeneutics, which is the deepest and most complex of the [four](four.html) levels. It is, what you might call, the strongest form of encryption you’ll find in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) literature. This is either really troublesome or really exciting depending on how you look at it.

So then, depending on your point of view, this [study](study.html) will be troublesome or exciting as well, because the goal of this [study](study.html) is to begin to uncover the rich garden of secrets this book contains; makes me sprout a green thumb just thinking about it.

However, we will limit our scope to understanding what relationship Revelation has to the biblical [festivals](festivals.html) and the [Shmita](shmita.html) ([Triennial](shmita.html) / [Septennial](shmita.html)) Torah-reading [cycle](cycles.html). With this we will fence in our garden.

We have previously learned that whenever you see a [number](nchart.html) of items, like [seven](seven.html) [festival](festival.html) Sabbaths, you can be assured that it will [teach](teacher.html) you about another group of [seven](seven.html) items, like the [seven](seven.html) congregations. In this paper we will be looking to use this technique to understand the book of Revelation. We started by building tables which show the relationships between the congregations and the [festival](festival.html) Sabbaths.

As we [studied](study.html) the connections between the [seven](seven.html) congregations and the [seven](seven.html) [festivals](festivals.html), we found that there seems to be a correlation only with the [Nisan](feasts.html) [cycle](cycles.html) of the [triennial](shmita.html) or [Shmita](shmita.html) Torah reading [cycle](cycles.html). This [cycle](cycles.html) starts in [Nisan](feasts.html) and ends, [three](three.html) and a half years later, in [Tishri](feasts.html). Therefore, our tables reflect the [festival](festival.html) Sabbaths as starting in [Nisan](feasts.html). Additionally, the [festivals](festivals.html) are normally viewed as starting with [Pesach](passover.html), in [Nisan](feasts.html). Let’s look at the connections between the [festivals](festivals.html) and the [seven](seven.html) congregations.

So [first](one.html) we are introduced to the deep symbolism of the Menorah. It says:

***Revelation 1:4-20*** *Yochanan (John) to the* [*seven*](seven.html) *congregations that are in Asia:* [*Grace*](grace.html) *to you, and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is* [*coming*](coming.html)*, and from the* [*Seven*](seven.html) *Spirits that are before His throne*

...

*What you do see, write in a scroll, and send to the* [*seven*](seven.html) *congregations that are in Asia; to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.*

...

*I saw* [*seven*](seven.html) *golden lamp-stands, and in the midst of the* [*seven*](seven.html) *lamp-stands,* [*one*](one.html) *like to a son of man*

...

*having in his right* [*hand*](mashal.html)[*seven*](seven.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html)

...

*the* [*secret*](sod.html) *of the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html) *that you have seen upon my right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*, and the* [*seven*](seven.html) *golden lamp-stands: the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html) *are prophets of the* [*seven*](seven.html) *congregations, and the* [*seven*](seven.html) *lamp-stands that you have seen are* [*seven*](seven.html) *congregations.*

Rule 1 of [Sod](sod.html): Ignore [numbers](nchart.html) at your own peril. Rule 2 of [Sod](sod.html): When something is repeated, that means it’s important.

We have [three](three.html) apparent sets of [seven](seven.html). We have [seven](seven.html) congregations, [stars](mazaroth.html), and lamp-stands. They are clearly being planted near each other in this garden for a reason. As it says in the Torah:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:9*** *You shall not sow your vineyard with* [*two*](two.html) *[different] kinds of* [*seed*](flower.html)*.*

So, in our garden, [seeds](flower.html) planted together are not different, but are in fact the same. But what are we to learn from this juxtaposition of symbols? Let us dig deeper.

In the next [two](two.html) chapters, Revelation deals mainly with the [sins](sin.html) of each of the above [seven](seven.html) congregations. Those congregations and their [sins](sin.html) are as follows:

1. **Ephesus**, Rev 2:4 ‘But I have [this] against you, that you left your [first](one.html) love!’
2. **Smyrna**, Rev 2:10 ‘Stop being afraid of what you are about to be suffering’
3. **Pergamos**, Rev 2:14 ‘that you have there [some] holding to the [teaching](teacher.html) of Balaam’ (Parasha Balaq)
4. **Thyatira**, Rev 2:20 'you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess to [teach](teacher.html) and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, **and** to [eat](eating.html) things sacrificed unto idols'
5. **Sardis**, Rev 3:2 ‘I have not found your works having been completed before My [HaShem](hashem.html).’
6. **Philadelphia**, No obvious [sin](sin.html)
7. **Laodicea**, Rev 3:16 ‘So then, because you are lukewarm, and not hot nor cold...’

So now we must analyze these and unearth their hidden meanings. Of course, as we said earlier, we’ve limited our scope and thereby biased ourselves towards understanding Revelation’s relationship to the biblical [festivals](festivals.html) and the years in the [Shmita](shmita.html) Torah-reading [cycle](cycles.html).

It just so happens that there are [seven](seven.html) [festival](festival.html) Sabbaths and [seven](seven.html) years in a [Shmita](shmita.html) Torah-reading [cycle](cycles.html). I wonder if there is any relationship between these. To answer this question, we must [first](one.html) list the [festivals](festivals.html). They are:

1. [Pesach](passover.html), [first](one.html) day
2. [Pesach](passover.html), last day
3. [Shavuot](shavuot.html)
4. [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) ([Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h)
5. Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html)
6. [Succoth](succoth.html), [first](one.html) day
7. [Succoth](succoth.html), last day

If you are familiar with the [festivals](festivals.html), you may have thought that the list would be like so:

1. [Pesach](passover.html)
2. [Shavuot](shavuot.html)
3. [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) ([Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h)
4. Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html)
5. [Succoth](succoth.html)
6. [Chanukah](chanukah.html)
7. [Purim](Purim.html)

However, it will become apparent later on why that list does not fit with the [seven](seven.html) congregations and their [sins](sin.html). However, the mindful reader will note the symmetry of the [first](one.html) list.

Our hypothesis is that the [festivals](festivals.html) act like a medicine of sorts. Each [festival](festival.html) enacts a [tikkun](tikkun.html), a reparation, of the [sins](sin.html) each of these [communities](community.html) sinned. Of course, even today we commit these [sins](sin.html), and so we require regular treatment via the [festivals](festivals.html) to atone for those [sins](sin.html).

To be a medicine, the [festivals](festivals.html) must specifically target the source of the [sins](sin.html), reversing their effects. So then, the next thing we must do is test our hypothesis and observe whether there is some truth to it. In the process, we'll be able to test whether we are mingling unlike [seeds](flower.html) together with this hypothesis.

The book of Revelation opens with the words: *The Revelation of* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *HaMashiach*. This meshes perfectly with Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 20:1 as it introduces the revelation of the Torah: *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *all these words, saying*… We can also see that this accords with Yochanan (John) 1:1 where the mystical term used to describe [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is *The Word*. The Word is also a [connection](connection.html) to the Torah.

Each of the [seven](seven.html) [communities](community.html) is introduced with a salutation to the [Angel](angels.html) of the Congregation. This is no accident. The [Angel](angels.html) of the Congregation was the public minister of the [synagogue](synagog.html). He was responsible for public [prayer](prayer.html), or appointing those who read from the Torah, and he sometimes preached if there were no others to discharge this office. This man did not read the Torah publicly, but, every [Shabbat](sabbath.html) ([Sabbath](sabbath.html)) he called out [seven](seven.html) of the [synagogue](synagog.html) (on other days fewer) whom he judged fit to read. He stood by those that read and carefully made sure that they read correctly. He would correct them if they made an error. It is for this reason that he was also called an ‘overseer’. Thus, if [HaShem](hashem.html) has a message for a congregation He would entrust it to this man in order to ensure that it was read in the [synagogue](synagog.html).

Each of the [seven](seven.html) [communities](community.html) were in a trade route which we shall call a *milk run*. In the same way, we encounter each of the [seven](seven.html) [festivals](festivals.html) as we trace a path through the year. The following chart illustrates this concept:



**EPHESUS**

[First](one.html) is the [sin](sin.html) of Ephesus:

***Revelation 2:1-7*** 1 *`To the prophet of the Ephesian congregation write: These things says he who is holding the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html) *in his right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*, who is* [*walking*](walking.html) *in the midst of the* [*seven*](seven.html) *lamp-stands--the golden:* 2 *I have* [*known*](daat.html) *your works, and thy labor, and your endurance, and that you art not able to bear evil ones, and that you have tried those saying themselves to be shliachim (apostles) and are not, and have found them liars,* 3 *and you did bear, and have endurance, and because of my* [*name*](name.html) *have toiled, and have not been weary.* 4 *`But I have against you: That your* [*first*](one.html) *love you did leave!* 5 *remember, then, whence you have fallen, and reform, and the* [*first*](one.html) *works do; and if not, I come to you quickly, and will remove you lamp-stand from its place--if you may not reform;* 6 *but this you have, that you do hate the works of the Nicolaitans, that I also hate.* 7 *He who is having an ear--let him hear what the Spirit says to the congregations: To him who is overcoming--I will give to him to* [*eat*](eating.html) *of the* [*tree of life*](eternal.html) *that is in the midst of the* [*pardes*](remez.html) *(paradise) of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

The [sin](sin.html) here is specifically that we have “left our [first](one.html) love”. But what does it mean, symbolically, to leave [one](one.html)'s [first](one.html) love?

I suppose it would be even better to [first](one.html) ask, why would [one](one.html) leave his or her [first](one.html) love? Bordom? Finding fault with him or her? Perhaps [one](one.html) found something else [one](one.html) loves even more? Any [one](one.html) of these seems like a reasonably good guess.

Perhaps then, the symbolism is that our love changes based on our perception of [HaShem](hashem.html). That is, we no longer see Him as our [first](one.html) love and lose the [connection](connection.html) that comes with that perception of Him.

If so, which [festival](festival.html) would this allude to then? It certainly isn’t Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), the tone of voice isn’t right for that [festival](festival.html); Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) is a [time](time.html) of judgment and we don't have any indication that this passage relates to judgment. The same is true, in part, for [Yom Teruah](teruah.html).

[Pesach](passover.html) appears to be a good fit. On [Pesach](passover.html) we prepare ahead of [time](time.html) by searching our house for [leaven](chametz.html)[[5]](#footnote-5) and purging it; it is a [time](time.html) of introspection whereby we reveal our most hidden inclinations and faults. Later, we recall the miracles that [HaShem](hashem.html) did when He took us [out of Egypt](thebirth.html), redeeming His people from the harsh, laborious slavery which they endured for over 200 years. We recapture the passion that we had at that [time](time.html) for our Savior and we rekindle our love for Him.

Support for this argument can be found in the Tanakh[[6]](#footnote-6) where it states:

***Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 2:2*** *Go and* [*cry*](mashal.html) *in the* [*ears*](body.html) *of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, saying, Thus says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your* [*espousals*](betroth.html)*, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.*

The [community](community.html) at Ephesus is introduced as being spoken by the [One](one.html) who holds the [seven](seven.html) [stars](mazaroth.html) in his [hand](fourteen.html) and walks in the midst of the [seven](seven.html) golden candlesticks. The [seven](seven.html) [stars](mazaroth.html) were defined in verse 1:20 as being the [angels](angels.html) of the [seven](seven.html) [communities](community.html). The candlesticks are the [seven](seven.html) [communities](community.html). Thus we can see that this admonition to the [community](community.html) at Ephesus is directed to the [Angel](angels.html) of the [Community](community.html) in order to insure that it be read to the members of the [community](community.html). This suggests that the praise and condemnation is to be absorbed by the [community](community.html), not by an individual.

So the [first](one.html) day of [Pesach](passover.html) seems to naturally sprout from this passage from Revelation where we followed [HaShem](hashem.html) into the wilderness during [Pesach](passover.html). This was the [time](time.html) of our [first](one.html) love. Thus the congregations at Ephesus present the [tikkun](tikkun.html), for the [sin](sin.html) of leaving our [first](one.html) love, by reminding us to return to our [first](one.html) love by following after [HaShem](hashem.html), His Torah, and the teachers of the Torah.

So, how do we return to our [first](one.html) love? How do we return to [HaShem](hashem.html)? The answer is the best kept [secret](sod.html) of the [Jews](gen-jew.html). [Yeshua](yeshua.html) gave us the answer in a very succinct manner. He said, “If you love me, keep my [commands](cmds613.html)” [[7]](#footnote-7). Thus we learn that we need to observe [Pesach](passover.html) according to the [halacha](walking.html). We need to [clean](purity.html) the [leaven](chametz.html) out of our houses, celebrate the [seder](haggada.html), and [eat](eating.html) [matza](chametz.html).[[8]](#footnote-8)

[Leaven](chametz.html) is a symbol of the yetzer hara[[9]](#footnote-9), the evil inclination. We took on the yetzer hara when [Adam](adam.html) and Chava [ate](eating.html) from the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil. It was the result of [eating](eating.html) of the tree of doubt. The yetzer hara is what caused us to move away from [HaShem](hashem.html) and pretend that we could hide from Him. By eliminating the yetzer hara, we return to our state before [Adam](adam.html)’s [sin](sin.html). We can return to our [first](one.html) love, we return to [HaShem](hashem.html).

So, how does the [seder](haggada.html) contribute to the [tikkun](tikkun.html)? The main focus of the [seder](haggada.html) are the miracles. What was the purpose of the miracles? Chazal, our Sages, [teach](teacher.html) the miracles were designed to [teach](teacher.html) the Egyptians that [HaShem](hashem.html) is [HaShem](hashem.html). Now surely if it convinced the skeptics; what do you suppose would be the effect on those who already believed? The best way to relate to this, is to imagine the state of a man who falls over a cliff and is miraculously saved by being levitated back to the top of the cliff. Even a confirmed skeptic would become religious after an [experience](experience.html) like that. Now, imagine that you experienced the mighty miracles that [HaShem](hashem.html) sent as [plagues](plagues.html) on the Egyptians. I suspect that this would cause us to return to our [first](one.html) love.

Finally, [Pesach](passover.html) would not be [Pesach](passover.html) without [matza](chametz.html). [Matza](chametz.html) is the [food](food.html) we [ate](eating.html) on that [first](one.html) [Pesach](passover.html) because the bread did not have [time](time.html) to rise, as we learn from the [haggada](haggada.html)[[10]](#footnote-10). [Matza](chametz.html) symbolizes [redemption](redemption.html) according to Maharal[[11]](#footnote-11). The [time](time.html) of our [redemption](redemption.html) was the [time](time.html) of our following [HaShem](hashem.html) into the wilderness. It was the [time](time.html) when we followed our [first](one.html) love. When we [eat](eating.html) [matza](chametz.html) we renew the [redemptive](redemption.html) relationship we had with [HaShem](hashem.html) when we followed Him into the wilderness.

**SMYRNA**

Next is Smyrna. Some sources on the internet and otherwise believe that Smyrna has no [sin](sin.html), and that might work nicely if we were to correlate the symmetry of the [festivals](festivals.html) with the list of congregations, but unfortunately Smyrna does have a [sin](sin.html).

***Revelation 2:8-11*** 8 *`And to the prophet of the congregation of the Smyrneans write: These things says the* [*First*](one.html) *and the Last, who did become dead and did live;* 9 *I have* [*known*](daat.html) *your works, and tribulation, and poverty--yet you art rich--and the evil-*[*speaking*](mashal.html) *of those saying themselves to be* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*, and are not, but are a* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *of the Adversary.* 10 *`Be not afraid of the things that you art about to suffer; lo, the* [*devil*](demons.html) *is about to cast of you to prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation* [*ten*](ten.html) *days; become you faithful unto death, and I will give to you the crown of the life.* 11 *He who is having an ear--let him hear what the Spirit says to the congregations: He who is overcoming may not be injured of the second death.*

Initially, the [sin](sin.html) is not obvious, but with close examination we can see there is indeed a [sin](sin.html). The [sin](sin.html) of the [community](community.html) at Smyrna is fear of [future](future.html) suffering and tribulations.

“Wait”, you may say, “how can fear be a [sin](sin.html)?! That’s ridiculous.” It may sound that way, but the fear here is a paralyzing fear that keeps [one](one.html) from doing what is correct. If [one](one.html) believes in the sovereignty of [HaShem](hashem.html) and believes that He is the source of everything, especially suffering, then [one](one.html) would never have such a fear. So then the fear here reveals that Smyrna did not fully understand [HaShem](hashem.html)’s sovereignty, and they are being chastised regarding that.

You may say to me, “But it doesn’t say that [HaShem](hashem.html) will bring suffering, but rather the [Devil](demons.html) will!” I would then respond, “And who made the [Devil](demons.html)?” Everything is from [HaShem](hashem.html), and anybody that believes otherwise is committing the [sin](sin.html) spoken of here.

If we are to correlate this congregation and [sin](sin.html) to a [festival](festival.html) that acts as a [tikkun](tikkun.html), a reparation, of that [sin](sin.html), then the seventh day of [Pesach](seventh.html) would fit well. We [know](daat.html) from a previous [study](study.html) that the passage of the Israelites through the Yam Suf (Sea of Reeds), on the seventh day of [Pesach](seventh.html), was a [time](time.html) of tribulation analogous to being born. This was the [birth](thebirth.html) of the [nation](nations.html) of Israel. On the seventh day of [Pesach](seventh.html), the Israelites were at the Yam Suf, and their belief in [HaShem](hashem.html)’s sovereignty was tested there, and we remember that testing on that day. This presents a [tikkun](tikkun.html) for those going through the stress of [birth](birth.html) by causing us to focus on the miracles and goodness of [HaShem](hashem.html) and not on the tribulations.

The Egyptians were pursuing us from behind while the Yam Suf blocked our forward movement. We were being squeezed [one](one.html) last [time](time.html). Suddenly the [birth](thebirth.html) canal opened with the splitting of the Yam Suf. As we hurried down that canal, the Egyptians pursued us with the intent to bring us back to slavery after having their way with us [first](one.html). This was a death [experience](experience.html). Remember the fear that the Israelites felt as they were waiting to cross the Yam Suf?

***Shemoth (***[***exodus***](exodus.html)***) (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 14:10*** *And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Yisrael lifted up their* [*eyes*](body.html)*, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

This shows us that the fear in Smyrna and the fear of the Israelites at the Yam Suf were the same. They were both afraid of tribulations.

Consider also that when we crossed the Yam Suf we were being baptized into Moshe:

***1 Corinthians 10:1-2*** *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*

Baptism is a death [experience](experience.html). It symbolizes our death and [resurrection](techiyat.html). As we remember the tribulations of the seventh day of [Pesach](seventh.html), we realize that [HaShem](hashem.html) is taking care of us and that our current tribulation will also turn out [HaShem](hashem.html)’s way. His mighty [hand](fourteen.html) saved us then, and His mighty [hand](fourteen.html) will [save](salvation.html) us now. As we celebrate this [festival](festival.html) [Shabbat](sabbath.html), we see that the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for our fears is the subject of our Torah studies and the our [prayers](prayer.html).

***Shemoth (***[***exodus***](exodus.html)***) (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 14:10-14 10*** *And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Yisrael lifted up their* [*eyes*](body.html)*, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Yisrael cried out unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. 11 And they said unto Moses: 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore have you dealt thus with us, to bring us forth* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*? 12 Is not this the word that we* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *unto you in Egypt, saying: Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it was better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.' 13 And Moses said unto the people: 'Fear you not, stand still, and see the* [*salvation*](salvation.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, which He will work for you to day; for whereas you have seen the Egyptians to-day, you shall see them again no more for ever. 14* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.'*

By recalling the testing at the Yam Suf and by acknowledging [HaShem](hashem.html)’s sovereignty such that we no longer fear the tribulation, we repair the [sin](sin.html) that they sinned at the Yam Suf (Sea of Reeds). Part of the [tikkun](tikkun.html) involves an acknowledgment that [HaShem](hashem.html) has a plan for our [Shabbat](sabbath.html) rest, but it comes after the labors and tribulations of the [six](six.html) days:

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 4:1-13*** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the* [*Masorah*](mishna1.html) *(*[*gospel*](mishna1.html)*) preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faithful obedience in them that heard it. 3 For we which have faithfully obeyed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. 4 For he* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was* [*first*](one.html) *preached entered not in because they had not faithfully obeyed: 7 Again, he limits a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a* [*time*](time.html)*; as it is said, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Yehoshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* ***9 There remains therefore a rest to the people of*** [***HaShem***](hashem.html)***. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as*** [***HaShem***](hashem.html) ***did from his.******11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*** *12 For the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any* [*two*](two.html)*-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the* [*heart*](body.html)*. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of him with whom we have to do.*

Thus, we see that the tribulation at Smyrna was for the sake of entering His rest. The seventh day of [Pesach](seventh.html) bids us to enter into [Shabbat](sabbath.html), the seventh day.

**PERGAMOS**

The next [two](two.html) congregations are interesting ones to look at. Let us begin by looking at the congregation of Pergamos:

***Revelation 2:12-15*** *12 And to the prophet of the congregation in Pergamos write; These things says he which hath the sharp sword with* [*two*](two.html) *edges; 13 I* [*know*](daat.html) *your works, and where you* [*dwell*](dwelling.html)*, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and you hold fast my* [*name*](name.html)*, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan* [*dwell*](dwelling.html)*. 14 But I have* ***a few*** *things against thee, because you hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who* [*taught*](teacher.html) *Balaq to cast a stumbling block before the children of Yisrael, to* [*eat*](eating.html) *things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So you also have them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

[Shavuot](shavuot.html) was the [time](time.html) of the receiving of the Torah. This was the [time](time.html) when we were able to understand the quality of our relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html). This provides the perfect [tikkun](tikkun.html) to the [sin](sin.html) of the congregations at Pergamos which had descended into [idolatry](idolatry.html) and fornication. When we reflect of the relationship and intimacy with [HaShem](hashem.html), as we had at [Sinai](stages.html), we see the correction to following after a relationship and intimacy with false gods.

***Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:8*** *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

The primary [mitzvot](cmds613.html) for [Shavuot](shavuot.html) is the [tikkun](tikkun.html) leil [Shavuot](shavuot.html) (studying all night) and [hearing](mashal.html) the [Ten](ten.html) [Commandments](cmds613.html). By immersing ourselves in the Torah the night before [Shavuot](shavuot.html), we replace our [idolatry](idolatry.html) with attachment to [HaShem](hashem.html) as we remember this day of our [betrothal](betroth.html). We remember the awe we had as we heard the giving of the [Ten](ten.html) [Commandments](cmds613.html), our [betrothal](betroth.html) gift. This is the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for [idolatry](idolatry.html).

When we reflect of the relationship and intimacy with [HaShem](hashem.html), as we had at [Sinai](stages.html), we see the correction to following after a relationship and intimacy with false gods.

The [community](community.html) at Pergamos is the [third](three.html) to be named in the list of the [seven](seven.html) congregations mentioned. Next in the list after the seventh day [festival](festival.html) [sabbath](sabbath.html) of [Pesach](passover.html) comes [Shavuot](shavuot.html) ([Pentecost](shavuot.html) – the [Feast of Weeks](shavuot.html)). It was on [Shavuot](shavuot.html), the [sixth](six.html) of the month of [Sivan](feasts.html), that Moshe Rabbenu (Moses) received the Torah from [Sinai](stages.html), who then transmitted it to Yehoshua ben Nun (Joshua);[[12]](#footnote-12) this was the same torah that the children of Israel received. On [Shavuot](shavuot.html), [one](one.html) of the [events](feasts.html) that happened [forty](forty.html) days after this date was the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf; in other words, [idolatry](idolatry.html). Also, the [first](one.html) few [commandments](cmds613.html) of the [Ten](ten.html) [Commandments](cmds613.html) deals with serving [HaShem](hashem.html) and not created things, so this would seem a perfect fit with Pergamos.

The Nicolaitans[[13]](#footnote-13) were [known](daat.html) to follow after the example of Balaam. As their [name](name.html) connotes, they exacted [authority](authority.html) over the people and cast stumbling blocks before them. The Nicolaitans prodded and incited the people of Yisrael to [idolatry](idolatry.html) like the Erev Rav, the mixed multitude (which Onkelos designates as *strangers*, in his Targum), which came [out of Egypt](thebirth.html) with the Israelites.

Thus, the [Tikkun](tikkun.html) for the problem at Pergamos is to attach and cleave ourselves back to [HaShem](hashem.html), the leaders of the [communities](community.html) and [study](study.html) Torah. This is the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for adultery / [idolatry](idolatry.html) we [experience](experience.html) during [Shavuot](shavuot.html) [as Pergamos].

**THYATIRA**

Let us move on to the next [community](community.html), Thyatira.

***Revelation 2:18-20*** *18 And unto the prophet of the* [*community*](community.html) *in Thyatira write; These things says the Son of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, who has his* [*eyes*](body.html) *like unto a flame of* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and his* [*feet*](heel.html) *[are] like fine brass; 19 I* [*know*](daat.html) *your works, and tzedakah (charity/generosity), and Avodah (service/worship), and emunah (faithful obedience), and your patience, and your works; and the last [to be] more than the* [*first*](one.html)*. 20 Notwithstanding I have* ***a few*** *things against your, because you suffer that woman Jezebe[[14]](#footnote-14)l, which call herself a prophetess, to* [*teach*](teacher.html) *and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to* [*eat*](eating.html) *things sacrificed unto idols.*

Here we find something similar to the trouble we find in Pergamos. Why is it that both of these [communities](community.html) have a few [sins](sin.html) that are keeping them from complete approval? And why are both their [sins](sin.html), [idolatry](idolatry.html) (fornication) and breaking the [laws](law.html) of kashrut ([eating](eating.html) things sacrificed to idols), similar to the other? We [know](daat.html) that there are [seven](seven.html) congregations, and with a careful look into the book of Revelation, even a child will be able to understand that the [events](feasts.html) mentioned in the book will be executed within a [cycle](cycles.html) of [seven](seven.html) years.

Thus far, the only differences that we find with these [two](two.html) [communities](community.html) is that the [first](one.html), Pergamos, has a giving role since they hold to the [teaching](teacher.html) of Balaam (Balaq) who is [male](male%2Bfemale.html); whilst Thyatira holds a receiving role, a [female](male%2Bfemale.html) quality, since they suffer the [teaching](teacher.html) of Jezebel. The other is that some in Pergamos hold to the [teaching](teacher.html) of the Nicolaitans.

In Judaism, once we hear about a “[seven](seven.html)-year-[cycle](cycles.html)” we immediately recall to mind the [Shmita](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html). This [cycle](cycles.html), as most [know](daat.html) it, deals with farming [cycles](cycles.html) (and farming [cycles](cycles.html) are based on the seasons), however, in the days of the Master of Nazareth, the Torah was read twice ([two](two.html), [three](three.html)-and-a-half year reading [cycles](cycles.html)) in a [Sabbatical](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) of [seven](seven.html) years.

The [sins](sin.html) of Thyatira:

1. Allow that woman Jezebel (whore of Baal) to [teach](teacher.html).
2. A woman establishes herself as the leader of the [community](community.html).
3. Seduces the slaves causing them to go astray.

4a) Sexual immorality

4b) Intermarriage

4c) [Idolatry](idolatry.html)/Apostasy

5a) [Eat](eating.html) [foods](food.html) to Idols

5b) Celebrate pagan [festivals](festivals.html) instead of [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [festivals](festivals.html)

5c) Abandon [laws](law.html) of Kashrut

Let us take a look at Jezebel[[15]](#footnote-15):

Strongs concordance, [number](nchart.html) 348, [[16]](#footnote-16) describes her [name](name.html) as meaning *Chaste* which comes from *Iy*, meaning *idea of a query*, and *Zebul*, meaning *a* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html) *place* or *residence*. [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition, however, renders the meaning of this [name](name.html), *not exalted*, based on the vowels used.

“But it is highly unlikely her parents would have given her such a [name](name.html). Read with different vowels it can be understood as meaning "Where is the Prince?" ('ay zebul in [Hebrew](hebrew.html)). In fact, early Syrian inscriptions from Ugarit demonstrate that "the Prince" (equivalent of [Hebrew](hebrew.html) "Zebul") was a popular title for the storm god of the Phoenicians. The sentence "Where is the Prince?" is even found in Ugaritic literature. It is a form of invocation, calling on the god named to appear and act. In other words, this Tyrian princess was given a [name](name.html) in praise of the chief god of her people (whom the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Bible refers to mainly by the title "Baal", meaning "lord, master"). "Jezebel" is, then, a reinterpretation, intended to mock this Queen and her god, whom she encouraged Israel to worship.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

The [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html) of Thyatira is that they allowed this *Jezebel*, a non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) woman, to marry [one](one.html) of their leaders (probably the shliach tzibbur himself). They also condoned her [teaching](teacher.html) the [community](community.html). We find this explained in 1 Melachim (Kings) 16:31, where Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) tells us that Jezebel was a Phoenician princess, daughter of Ithobaal I, the King of Tyre, and married King Ahab when he took the throne of the Northern [Tribes](tribes.html).

2 Melachim (kings) tells us that when Jezebel was murdered, her [body](body.html) was left for dogs to consume in a vineyard; only her [head](body.html), [hands](fourteen.html) and [legs](body.html) were spared by the dogs.

This led to the second error the [community](community.html) of Thyatira committed in which they allowed Jezebel to become the [Angel](angels.html) of the Congregation. In [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html), there is no role of *Queen*, in this case, she was the [Angel](angels.html) of the Congregation. Though, there are certain [laws](law.html) which pertain to the king's wife, they in no way invest her with power to rule, or lead as a king. In 2 Melachim, chapters 9 and 10, we read that Jezebel was referred to as *Gebirah*, a term which connotes power, or *Iron Lady*; different from the term *Giberet*, a term which connotes a woman in a respectful manner. Gebirah is then the feminine equivalent of Gibor, a powerful man.

It was Jezebel who [taught](teacher.html) the people of Yisrael to commit adultery / [idolatry](idolatry.html) and to abandon the [laws](law.html) of Kashrut; and Thyatira allowed the honor of Torah to be subsided.

This leads to the [third](three.html) error of Thyatira, allowing Jezebel to seduce the people astray. The Tosefta, in Sanhedrin 4:5, uses Jezebel as an example when commenting on the warning the Torah gives a king in not being wed to too many wives. The Torah, as the Tosefta says, is warning a king about wives, like Jezebel, who will seduce him into evil acts.

But how does Jezebel relate to the [Shmita](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html)? Jezebel appeared after the split between the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Yehudah. It was during this [time](time.html), after Ahab took the throne, that Eliyahu (Elijah) the prophet came to inform Ahab of a drought which would last 3½ years. Here, in Thyatira, Jezebel appears at the very split between the end of the [first](one.html) 3½ years and the beginning of the second 3½ years of the [Shmita](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html).

In relation to the Nazareans, Jezebel was the force by which the Nazarean movement was being divided into [two](two.html) camps: those who were faithfully obedient which were outnumbered, and the majority which were the idolatrous. It is at this point in [time](time.html) the idolatrous ones were beginning to show their true color. Hakham Shaul [spoke](mashal.html) of them:

***2 Thessalonians 2:3-11*** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away* [*first*](one.html)*, and that man of transgression of Torah (*[*sin*](sin.html)*) be revealed, the son of perdition; 4. Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, or that is worshipped; so that he as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sits in the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, showing himself that he is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. … 7. For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only he who now lets [will let], until he be taken out of the way.*

The author of the book of Revelation writes, in his [masorah](mishna1.html):

***1 Yochanan 4:3*** *this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

The faithfully obedient of the Nazareans were being divided and hunted in the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine. What is even more, we see that this Jezebel, by being an imposter, was the [one](one.html) which caused a split between the Nazareans and normative Judaism.

The [sins](sin.html) that the congregation of Thyatira committed are to undermine the Biblical leadership of the [community](community.html), establish foreign ideals and non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) rule.

Does not Thyatira share similar [sins](sin.html) to that of Pergamos? Could it possibly be related to the next [festival](festival.html), [Yom Teruah](teruah.html)? Here, some tradition must be shared. The Rabbi's have stated that if it were not for the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf, and if the children of Israel were truly receptive of the Torah, at Mount [Sinai](stages.html), on [Shavuot](shavuot.html), then the fall [festivals](festivals.html) would not have existed in the same way they are now. In fact, the spring [festivals](festivals.html) would have been emphasized more than the fall [festivals](festivals.html); however, it works the other way around today because of these errors. Thyatira rightly belongs to [Yom Teruah](teruah.html). On [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) we make [HaShem](hashem.html) the King! What is our [tikkun](tikkun.html)? We are put on the balance scales. Do we make [HaShem](hashem.html) our King or some other thing our ruler?

The [Rosh HaShana](teruah.html) machzor ([prayer](prayer.html) book) divides the Musaf (special service for the [festival](festival.html)) service into [three](three.html) parts: Malchiyot, Zicranot, and Shofarot. On [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) we celebrate the crowning of [HaShem](hashem.html) (Malchiyot) and His [Mashiach](mashiach.html) as our king. We recall how [HaShem](hashem.html) remembered (Zicranot) the mothers of the Tanach, to bring them children. There can be no attachment to foreign gods while we stand in the presence of The King. As at [Shavuot](shavuot.html), some have a custom of remaining awake during the [time](time.html) of our judgment. During these hours we [study](study.html) Torah to renew our attachment to [HaShem](hashem.html). These [two](two.html) items are the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the assemblies at Thyatira which was involved in [idolatry](idolatry.html). How can [one](one.html) be involved with a foreign god when he stands before the judge of the universe? We do these things with the power of the [shofar](shofar.html). A [shofar](shofar.html) (Shofarot) comes from a [clean](purity.html) animal which provides the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the lack of kashrut experienced by the congregation at Thyatira.

As it appears, the main difference between Thyatira and Pergamos is that in Pergamos, there were those that followed Nicolaus, who in turn followed the way of Balaam (Balaq), i.e. to erect a stumbling block for the people of Yisrael. In Thyatira, however, *Jezebel* was meant to assimilate [Jews](gen-jew.html) into something else and to completely usurp them. What was going on in Thyatira, which indeed tales place today, seems more insidious. The Nicolaitans seemed more interested in defeating the [Jews](gen-jew.html) and getting rid of them rather than assimilating them like Jezebel. Both, none-the-less, discovered that the only way to defeat the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people had to be done from the inside.

**SARDIS**

We now come to the [community](community.html) at Sardis. Here, we find something very peculiar about this [community](community.html):

***Revelation 3:1-4*** *1 And unto the prophet of the* [*community*](community.html) *in Sardis write; These things says he that has the* [*seven*](seven.html) *Spirits of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html)*; I* [*know*](daat.html) *your works, that you have a* [*name*](name.html) *that you live, and are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found your works perfect before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and you shall not* [*know*](daat.html) *what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall* [*walk*](walking.html) *with me in white: for they are worthy.*

So what is the [sin](sin.html) here? Initially it doesn’t appear there is [one](one.html), but close examination reveals a [sin](sin.html) so prevalent that it is the main topic of [one](one.html) of the Torah [festivals](festivals.html), that [sin](sin.html) being egotism.

The [community](community.html) of Sardis appears to have believed that they had no room for improvement in their observance of the Torah. The text implies that they believed their works were perfect, but to the contrary, “I have not found your works perfect before [HaShem](hashem.html)”!

Of course, many people fall into the trap of believing that they are *good enough*, or even *perfect*, and then they turn on the proverbial cruise-control of Torah observance and go on with their lives. This should not be so, since this can later result in [one](one.html) *leaving your* [*first*](one.html) *love*, having found something or someone else out their that captures your passion, when we should indeed continue to find [new](new.html) ways of demonstrating our love for [HaShem](hashem.html).

So which [festival](festival.html) provides the cure for this cruise-control? Out of all the [festivals](festivals.html), Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) is by far the most suited to this task. Many people see Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) as a day of turning from our [sins](sin.html), which is true, but the most important thing we repent of, on that day, is not the [sins](sin.html) that we committed, but the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) that we neglected!

On Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), a very prominent part of the service is the retelling of the Akeida, when [Abraham](avraham.html) took [Isaac](isaac.html), at [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [command](cmds613.html), to Mount Moriah to kill him. It’s a bitter-sweet story since although [Isaac](isaac.html) eventually leaves the mountain unharmed, we also [know](daat.html) that his mother Sarah dies when she finds out that he had in fact been killed there. On that day, when [Abraham](avraham.html) held the knife to [Isaac](isaac.html)’s [neck](body.html), and [angels](angels.html) above beseeched [HaShem](hashem.html) to have mercy on *His* [*moon*](chodesh.html)! [[18]](#footnote-18)

It’s a powerful story, but [one](one.html) wonders about its relevance to Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html). Perhaps we remember that day and are to say to ourselves, “Thanks to [Abraham](avraham.html), we can go to the [Olam HaBa](futures.html)[[19]](#footnote-19)”? [Heaven](heaven.html) forbid! When we say that, it implies that we only need to repent our evil deeds and then [Abraham](avraham.html) can do the heavy lifting and bring us into the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), when in fact the whole point of recalling the Akeida is to spur us to do enough [mitzvot](cmds613.html) to be as worthy as [Abraham](avraham.html) was on that day. We are to say to ourselves, “Like [Abraham](avraham.html), I will use all that is within me to show my love for [HaShem](hashem.html), never ceasing in finding [new](new.html) ways to do so!”

An obvious [connection](connection.html) for the [community](community.html) of Sardis to Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) are the white garments. On Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) we wear white kittles to reflect our repentant state on this [festival](festival.html). A groom wears this same garment at his [wedding](wedding.html). The [wedding](wedding.html) is where the [two](two.html) halves of the soul are reunited, giving rise to a [new](new.html) [creation](bara.html). This should be the ultimate for both [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) life. This is the elevation, the [tikkun](tikkun.html), that the [community](community.html) of Sardis required.

There is more to this [community](community.html) of Sardis, though. The works of the [community](community.html) at Sardis show [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death. We fast on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) to free ourselves from the [physical](physical.html) and to accentuate our [spiritual](physical.html) side. It is well [known](daat.html) that our lower self speaks to us in the [first](one.html) person (I would love to [eat](eating.html) that cake), while our higher self speaks to us in the second person, as a visitor looking in (You [know](daat.html) you don’t need those calories). Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) gives us a chance to put our lower self out on the street while putting our higher self in his house. We do this by totally denying the lower self and reuniting with our higher self via the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html).

Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) is the [time](time.html) of our [atonement](atonemen.html). It is a [time](time.html) for the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) that effect the [tikkun](tikkun.html), the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) where we deny the [body](body.html) any [physical](physical.html) pleasure. We avoid all [food](food.html) and water for the entire day, as though we were [angels](angels.html). We avoid bathing and anointing as though our [bodies](body.html) are already in their proper state. We avoid the pleasures of [sex](marriageact.html), the uniting with our spouse, in favor of uniting with The Holy [One](one.html), blessed is He! We do not wear leather shoes as they symbolize our [bodies](body.html), as they carry and support us through this [world](worlds.html). We step out of our [bodies](body.html), so to [speak](mashal.html). As we give up the [physical](physical.html) pleasures which serve our lower self, we begin to focus on our [spiritual](physical.html) self and how to elevate ourselves beyond our [physical](physical.html) [body](body.html), by focusing on our higher self. These things provide the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the [community](community.html) at Sardis which had [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death. On Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) we have preeminent [spiritual](physical.html) life while denying the [physical](physical.html).

Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) thus presents a [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the [sin](sin.html) of the [community](community.html) at Sardis whose works show [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death, by having works which show [spiritual](physical.html) life at the expense of [physical](physical.html) life.

There is also another way of viewing the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the [community](community.html) at Sardis. True life, [spiritual](physical.html) life, is found in the Torah. Those who attach themselves to Torah have attached themselves to true life. Those who [teach](teacher.html) Torah to the lawless ones, the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html), have shared true life with those that [HaShem](hashem.html) wishes to draw near. We are perfect when we take the Torah to the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). As we [gather](gather.html) for Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), we have the ability to beckon the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) to come with us to the [synagogue](synagog.html), which is called a little [Temple](temple.html) in Yehezekel (Ezekiel) 11:16. The [synagogue](synagog.html) is especially suited for the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html):

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:7*** *Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*: their* [*burnt offering*](korbanot.html)*s and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *for all people.*

Thus when we bring [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) to the [Temple](temple.html), we have brought them to the Torah and to [Mashiach](mashiach.html). This is the perfection of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), this is bring [spiritual](physical.html) life to the [world](worlds.html)!

**PHILADELPHIA**

Following Sardis comes Philadelphia, the [sixth](six.html) congregation.

NO OBVIOUS [SIN](sin.html)

***Revelation 3:7- 13*** *And to the prophet of the congregation in Philadelphia write; These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that open, and no man shut; and shut, and no man open; 8 I* [*know*](daat.html) *your works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for you hast a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my* [*name*](name.html)*. 9 Behold, I will make them of the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html) *of Satan, which say they are* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your* [*feet*](heel.html)*, and to* [*know*](daat.html) *that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, to try them that* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *upon the earth.*

[Succoth](succoth.html) begins to show us that we were able to achieve the [atonement](atonemen.html) of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html). As we enter [Succoth](succoth.html), we enter without [sin](sin.html). This [connects](connection.html) us with the assemblies at Philadelphia which had no obvious [sin](sin.html).

Part of the process of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) is to reconcile the [sins](sin.html) between brothers. We spend the entire month of [Elul](elul.html) going to our neighbors and seeking [forgiveness](forgive.html) for the transgressions that we have committed. This reconciliation of brothers is reflected in the meaning of the [name](name.html) *Philadelphia*, the [city](city.html) of *brotherly love*.

The wording of the comments to this congregation also carry an allusion to the [succah](succoth.html).

***Revelation 3:8*** *I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my* [*authority*](authority.html)*.*

We understand that [HaShem](hashem.html) returns our good works to us mida-keneged-mida, measure-for-measure. On [Succoth](succoth.html), we have a [succah](succoth.html) with an open door for visitors to come and enjoy good [food](food.html) and [teaching](teacher.html). Our hospitality is repaid by [HaShem](hashem.html) with open gates like those spoken of during the [prayer](prayer.html) service for Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html).

Thus we see Philadelphia as a [community](community.html) without an obvious [sin](sin.html), which is the state of those who received [atonement](atonemen.html) on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) with their [marriage](mashal.html) to [HaShem](hashem.html). They arrive at the bridal chamber as a [new](new.html) [creation](bara.html), sinless.

**LAODICEA**

Finally, we arrive at [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html). On this [festival](festival.html) we relax with [HaShem](hashem.html), basking in our relationship. This is an intense [time](time.html) when we enjoy and appreciate our relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html). This provides the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for the congregation at Laodicea, the seventh and final [community](community.html), which was lukewarm and saw themselves as self-sufficient.

***Revelation 3:14- 18*** *14 And unto the prophet if the congregation of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the* [*creation*](bara.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; 15 I* [*know*](daat.html) *your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. 16 So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my* [*mouth*](body.html)*. 17 Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and* [*know*](daat.html) *not that you art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the* [*fire*](fire.html)*, that thou may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint your* [*eyes*](body.html) *with eyesalve, that you may see.*

The [sin](sin.html) here is that of being lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, but what does that mean exactly? What does it mean to be lukewarm? The passage specifically says that [HaShem](hashem.html) looked at the Laodiceans’ works, their deeds. Perhaps their deeds, or lack thereof, revealed their tepidness?

There is proof in the Tanakh that this problem of tepidness is not a recent problem, but is quite ancient:

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:15*** *and if wrong in your* [*eyes*](body.html) *to serve* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *– choose for you today whom you do serve; whether the gods whom your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *served, which are beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorite in whose land you are* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html)*; and I and my house – we serve* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.'*

In describing Ahab[[20]](#footnote-20), R. Yochanan states that Ahab had honor for the Torah and according to R. Nachman, Ahab was *lukewarm*. Though, Ahab committed [idolatry](idolatry.html) by way of his wife Jezebel, he was generous with his money, and because he used to benefit scholars with his wealth, half [his [sins](sin.html)] were forgiven. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) [first](one.html) lists Ahab's idolatrous achievements; then it mentions his respect for Torah which was his good deed. R. Yochanan then states that Ahab has no portion in the [World](futures.html) to Come because he wrote upon the gates of Samaria, “Ahab denies the [HaShem](hashem.html) of Israel.”

We also see another example of tepidness when Eliyahu ha Navi (Elijah the prophet) speaks to the people of Yisrael:

***I Melachim (Kings) 18:21*** *How long do you hold between* [*two*](two.html) *opinions? if* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *[be]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, follow him: but if Baal, [then] follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

Let’s examine [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) and see what it is that we do then, hopefully revealing more about this [sin](sin.html) of tepidness.

On [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html), we have an especially joyous [time](time.html), dancing and singing whilst holding the [Torah scroll](letters.html). On this day we end the reading of the Torah and begin a [new](new.html) [septennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) with the [hakhel](hakhel.html), where the king of Israel would read the Torah to all the people. With this [festival](festival.html) we [experience](experience.html) the intensity of our relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html) and His Torah.

It seems that if we correlate our celebration with the [sin](sin.html) stated here, the deeds that reveal our tepidness are the ones related to our love of Torah. Our added pizzazz, on [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html), would seem to be for the purposes of *lighting our* [*fire*](fire.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html)’s word, thereby repairing the problem of tepidness, replacing it with whole-hearted passion.

Since [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) is the 8th day of [Succoth](succoth.html), it also has a relationship to [circumcision](circumcz.html). [Circumcision](circumcz.html) is how [one](one.html) enters the [covenant](covenant.html), and so is also a day totally dedicated to studying the Torah which is central to being part of the [covenant](covenant.html). On this day we promise to embody the Torah just like [Abraham](avraham.html), [Isaac](isaac.html), [Jacob](israelja.html), Moses, Aaron, David, Elijah, and [Yeshua](yeshua.html) did. On this day we dedicate ourselves to [tabernacle](mikdash.html) in the flesh, just as we see in the Nazarean Codicil:

***Yochanan (John) 1:14*** *And the Word became flesh, and did* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of* [*grace*](grace.html) *and truth.*

**EPOCHS?**

Many Christian authors have attempted to correllate the [seven](seven.html) churches with [seven](seven.html) epochs, or ages of the Christian [church](church.html).[[21]](#footnote-21) They use various dates for the epochs and various reasons for the epoch. This does not fit with the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) character of the Book of Revelation. This section of Revelation is not about Christian churches! This section is about [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html).

To help us understand this concept, it is worth noting that the earliest [*church*](church.html) (Greek - Ecclesia), in [time](time.html), if found in second Luqas:

***II Luqas (Acts) 7:37-38*** *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the* [*church*](church.html) *in the wilderness with the* [*angel*](angels.html) *which spake to him in the mount Sina, and our* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*: who received the lively oracles to give unto us*

Now, obviously there were no Christians in the [*church*](church.html) in the wilderness with Moshe. This [*church*](church.html) was a congregation of [Jews](gen-jew.html) and a large mixed multitude of [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). They were a congregation, a [community](community.html), a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html). They all [studied](study.html) Torah and they were all involved in fulfilling the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) (Torah [commandments](cmds613.html)). Christian churches do not do these things.

Once we understand that these [seven](seven.html) *churches* were [seven](seven.html) [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html), it becomes obvious that the epochs assigned by Christian authors are irrelavant because those epochs apply to epochs dealing with Christianity, not those dealing with [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html).

The arbitrary nature of the dates and the reasons for the dates should alert us to the fact that something is wrong. If the Christian authors had related them to the [seven](seven.html) days of [creation](bara.html), or the [seven](seven.html) millenium that correspond with the [creation](bara.html) days, then we have something substantial, that is no longer arbitrary. But, they do not do this. Instead they make up [seven](seven.html) artificial [time](time.html) periods dealing with the development of Christianity. Thus, we can see that it is not reasonable to correlate the [seven](seven.html) [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html) with [seven](seven.html) periods of Christian development.

The book of Revelation is dealing with revelations which are applicable to [Jews](gen-jew.html), to those who [study](study.html) and obey the Torah. It is this group which will be able to discern the symbols and the meaning behind the symbols.

Finally, our Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that every [seven](seven.html) in the Torah is realted to every other [seven](seven.html) found in the Tanach and in the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html). These realationships are not arbitrary, but are given by [HaShem](hashem.html) to [teach](teacher.html) us about [HaShem](hashem.html) and His ways. In this paper we have related the [seven](seven.html) [communities](community.html) to the [Sabbatical](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) and the [seven](seven.html) [festival](festival.html) sabbaths. We have barely scratched the surface of this facinating subject. There are many more connections to other sevens, including the days of [creation](bara.html) and the millenial days.

As you [study](study.html), do not seek arbitrary epochs and do not seek to relate this book to the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). Seek to relate these revelations to the [Jews](gen-jew.html) and their [communities](community.html). If you do this, then [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and Torah will truly be revealed.

\* \* \*

So now we have listed all the [communities](community.html), their [sins](sin.html), and the [festivals](festivals.html) used as treatments for the [sins](sin.html). Here are some tables giving a brief index of what we've already learned.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [**FESTIVAL**](festival.html)[**SABBATH**](sabbath.html)**(**[**tikkun**](tikkun.html)**)** | **ASSEMBLIES** | [**SIN**](sin.html) |
| [Pesach](passover.html)  | Ephesus | Left [first](one.html) love |
| [Pesach](passover.html) seventh day | Smyrna | Fear of Tribulations. |
|  [Shavuot](shavuot.html) | Pergamos | Doctrine of Balaam ([Idolatry](idolatry.html) and fornication) |
| [Yom Teruah](teruah.html) | Thyatira | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) and lack of kashrut  |
| Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) | Sardis | Egotism, [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death |
| [Succoth](succoth.html) | Philadelphia | No obvious [sin](sin.html) |
| [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) | Laodicea | Lukewarm (rich and having no [needs](needs.html)) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Third**](three.html) **Day** | **Second Day** | [**First**](one.html) **Day** | [**Shabbat**](sabbath.html) | [**Sixth**](six.html) **Day** | [**Fifth**](five.html) **Day** | [**Fourth**](four.html) **Day** |
|  [Shavuot](shavuot.html) | [Pesach](passover.html) seventh day | [Pesach](passover.html) | [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) | [Succoth](succoth.html) | Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) | Yom Teruah |
| Pergamos | Smyrna | Ephesus | Laodicea | Philadelphia | Sardis | Thyatira |
| Doctrine of Balaam ([Idolatry](idolatry.html) and fornication) | Tribulations | Left [first](one.html) love | Lukewarm (rich and having no [needs](needs.html)) | No obvious [sin](sin.html). | Works show [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) and lack of kashrut ([two](two.html) [sins](sin.html)) |
|  | Baptism in Yam Suf – Born again |  |  | Right after Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [**COMMUNITIES**](community.html) | **Age (Kohelet Rabbah 1:2)** |
| Ephesus | At a year old he is like a king seated in a canopied litter, fondled and kissed by all. |
| Smyrna | At [two](two.html) and [three](three.html) he is like a pig, sticking his [hands](fourteen.html) in the gutters. |
| Pergamos | At [ten](ten.html) he skips like a kid. |
| Thyatira | At [twenty](twenty.html) he is like a neighing horse, adorning his person and longing for a wife. |
| Sardis | Having married, he is like an [ass](chamor.html). |
| Philadelphia | When he has begotten children, he grows brazen like a dog to supply their [food](food.html) and [wants](needs.html). |
| Laodicea | When he has become old, he is [bent] like an ape. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Communities**](community.html) | **Meaning[[22]](#footnote-22)** | **Sephirot** | [**Sin**](sin.html) |
| Ephesus | Permitted | Chesed | Left [first](one.html) love |
| Smyrna | Myrrh | Gevurah | Fear of Tribulations. |
| Pergamos | Height or Elevation | Teferet | Doctrine of Balaam ([Idolatry](idolatry.html) and fornication) |
| Thyatira | Odor of affliction | Netzach | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) and lack of kashrut ([two](two.html) [sins](sin.html)) |
| Sardis | Red ones | Hod | Works show [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death |
| Philadelphia | Brotherly love | Yesod | No obvious [sin](sin.html). |
| Laodicea | Justice of the people | Malkhut | Lukewarm (rich and having no [needs](needs.html)) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 3**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)And ani was given to the poor.**rishon &** **ani**  | **Year 2**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)Sheni was taken to [Jerusalem](city.html) and [eaten](eating.html).**rishon & sheni** | **Year 1**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)Sheni was taken to [Jerusalem](city.html) and [eaten](eating.html).**rishon & sheni** | **Year 7**[**Sabbatical**](shmita.html)No tithe | **Year 6**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)And ani was given to the poor.**rishon &** **ani** | **Year 5**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)Sheni was taken to [Jerusalem](city.html) and [eaten](eating.html).**rishon & sheni** | **Year 4**Rishon was given to the Levites and [Priests](priests.html)Sheni was taken to [Jerusalem](city.html) and [eaten](eating.html).**rishon & sheni** |
| [**Shavuot**](shavuot.html) | [**Pesach**](passover.html) **seventh day** | [**Pesach**](passover.html) | [**Shemini Atzeret**](shemini.html) | [**Succoth**](succoth.html) | **Yom** [**HaKippurim**](kippur.html) | **Yom Teruah** |
| **The ascent and descent** | **The separation**  | **The** [**birth**](thebirth.html) | **The** [**resurrection**](techiyat.html) **the rebirth** | **The honeymoon** | **The return** | **The King comes** |
| At [ten](ten.html) he skips like a kid.[[23]](#footnote-23) | At [two](two.html) and [three](three.html) he is like a pig, sticking his [hands](fourteen.html) in the gutters. | At a year old he is like a king seated in a canopied litter, fondled and kissed by all. | When he has become old, he is [bent] like an ape. | When he has begotten children, he grows brazen like a dog to supply their [food](food.html) and [wants](needs.html). | Having married, he is like an [ass](chamor.html). | At [twenty](twenty.html) he is like a neighing horse, adorning his person and longing for a wife. |
| **Pergamos***Height or Elevation[[24]](#footnote-24)* | **Smyrna***Myrrh* | **Ephesus***Permitted* | **Laodicea***Justice of the people* | **Philadelphia***Brotherly love* | **Sardis***Red ones* | **Thyatira***Odor of affliction* |
| Doctrine of Balaam ([Idolatry](idolatry.html) and fornication) | Fear of Tribulation | Left [first](one.html) love | Lukewarm (rich and having no [needs](needs.html)) | No obvious [sin](sin.html). | Works show [physical](physical.html) life and [spiritual](physical.html) death | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) and lack of kashrut ([two](two.html) [sins](sin.html)) |
| Tiferet | Gevurah | Chesed | Malkhut | Yesod | Hod | Netzach |

**\* \* \***

This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David,

Micah ben Hillel,

Poriel ben [Avraham](avraham.html)

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

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Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. Cf. <http://amazingdiscoveries.org/111.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Ephesians 4:7-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For a good overview of Christian interpretation of the seven congregations in Rev. 1:1 – 3:22 please see: Mounce, Robert H., The Book of Revelation: The New International Commentary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977, pp. 83-85; as well as Ladd, George Eldon, A Commentary On The Revelation of John, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 10-14 . [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Genesis 1:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Leaven is an allusion to our *Yetzer HaRa*, our evil inclination. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. An acronym for Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim (Law. Prophets, and Writings) – the so called Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. John 14:15; 15:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Exodus 12:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Gevurot HaShem (Ch. 36 &51) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cf. Pirke Abot 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For the root meaning of this name see: Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967, Vol. IV, pp. 942-945; and Joseph H. Thayer, Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977, p.426, Entry: 3531. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Melachim (kings) alef 18:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Melachim (kings) alef 18:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For further information on this name see: Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, p.37, entry number 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Wikipedia: Jezebel [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See the Orot Sephardic [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) Machzor, pager 825. The [Midrash Rabbah](orallaw.html) on Bamidbar 2, compares Avraham to the son, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) to the moon, and Yaaqov to the [stars](mazaroth.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Olam HaBa – The coming world – Paradise. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sanhedrin 102b of the [Talmud](orallaw.html) Bavli [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Cf. for example: John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, pp. 11-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. From Strongs [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Kohelet Rabbah 1:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. From Strongs [↑](#footnote-ref-24)