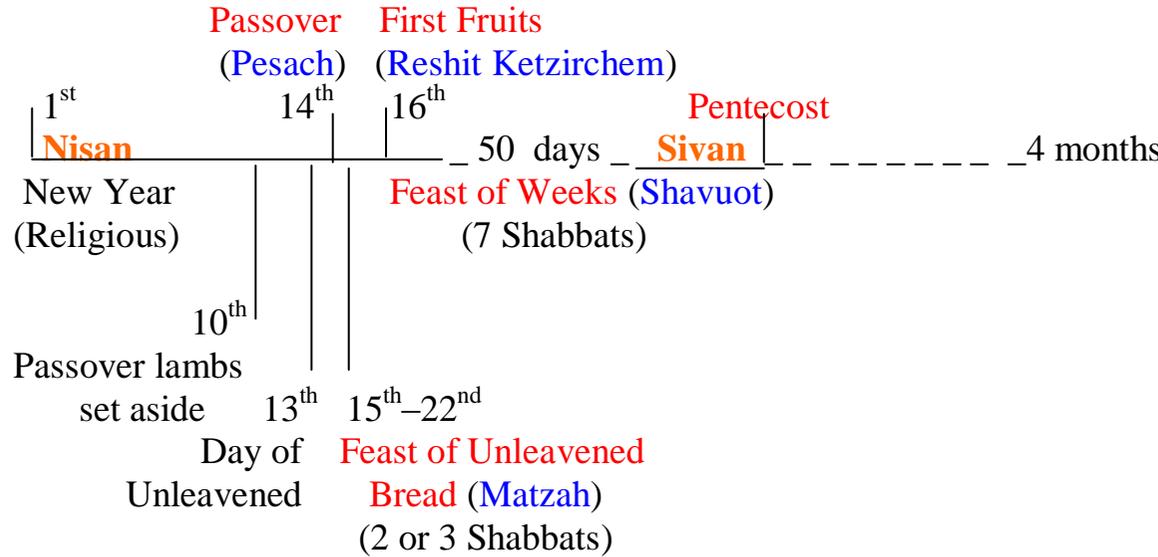


# THE APPOINTED FEASTS OF THE LORD

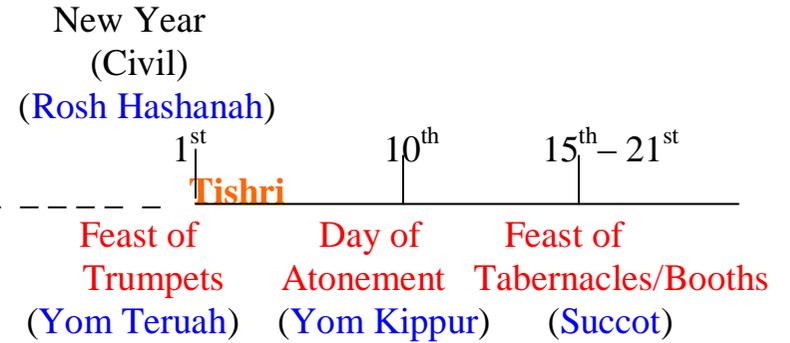
## SPRING FEASTS



HARVEST of Sown Crops  
(Barley & Wheat)  
**Rev.14: 14-16**

FULFILLED AT JESUS  
FIRST COMING

## AUTUMN FEASTS



HARVEST of Fruits  
(Summer fruits, Olives & Grapes)  
**Rev.14: 17-20**

TO BE FULFILLED AT JESUS  
SECOND COMING

# The Appointed Feasts of the Lord

## Introduction

In **Leviticus 23** God instituted seven annual Feasts, seven being the number of perfection/completeness.

Throughout John's gospel we read the phrase 'His time had not yet come' (**John 2: 4, 7: 8, 30, 8: 20**) but as we come towards the Cross we read 'His hour had come' (**John 12: 27, 13: 1, 17: 1**) and 'My appointed time is near.' (**Matthew 26: 18**) showing that Jesus was intent on fulfilling the first four feasts at the appointed times. There is every reason to believe that the remaining three feasts will be fulfilled when God sends His Son a 2<sup>nd</sup> time.

The Jewish agricultural/religious calendar begins in March/April (lambing time)...the Jewish month starts on the new moon and since the moon follows a 29.5 day cycle, these months move within our calendar.

In the first month there are three feasts:

- (1) Passover (on the full moon)
- (2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread (which lasts seven days)
- (3) First Fruits – the start of the grain harvest (barley, then wheat)

These three feasts cover a period of 8 days, starting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month, and were fulfilled by Jesus at His 1<sup>st</sup> Coming...they are linked to the salvation of mankind, see **Revelation 14: 14–16** and **John 4: 35**

Another one occurs in the third month (May/June) and lasts one day: (4) The Feast of Weeks...the Jewish name for this Feast is **Shavuot** (the plural of **Shabbat**, as it has seven Sabbaths leading up to it); we call it Pentecost. It occurs after counting off fifty days, starting from First Fruits...it is the celebration that the harvest of grain is complete...and is linked to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit – the start of the spiritual harvest in which we are still involved.

The other Feasts are in the seventh month (Sept/Oct):

- (5) The Feast of Trumpets (which occurs on the new moon)
- (6) The Day of Atonement
- (7) The Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (which lasts seven days) – celebrating the completion of the fruit harvest (olives and grapes) and remembering the wandering in the wilderness for forty years.

These feasts are to be fulfilled by Jesus at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming and are linked to the judgement of mankind, see **Revelation 14: 17–19**

In **Leviticus 23** God says to Moses three times (verses **2, 4** and the first half of **37**) “**The LORD's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed times are these.**” God by repeating Himself three times in these verses is emphasizing the importance of His words. Notice first of all, that these are God's Feasts...not the Jews, not Israel's, but our God's Feasts. The feasts of the Lord are therefore **appointments** that He intended keeping, and were given as **rehearsals** (holy convocations) – feasts that had to be rehearsed, ultimately to be fulfilled by Jesus. He simply entrusted the feasts to Israel, commanding the people to **proclaim** them throughout the Earth (which they did not do). He also instructed Israel to rehearse these festivals **at the appointed times** because of their tremendous prophetic significance...God sent His Son, Jesus, to come and fulfil the first four of these annual feasts literally, and on time, after the people of Israel had rehearsed them for 1500 years.

Verse **3**...the weekly Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel (**Exodus 31: 13, 17; Ezekiel 20: 12, 20**)...  
And is nothing to do with Gentile believers

## **Build up to the Spring Feasts**

**In the 1<sup>st</sup> month, Nisan:** On 10<sup>th</sup> Nisan, the Monday before Jesus died on the Friday ('Palm Sunday' as some parts of the 'Church' celebrate it) He rode into Jerusalem (**Matthew 21: 1–11**, **Zechariah 9: 9**). The Jews were expecting Jesus to remove the Romans, the way the Maccabee family had removed the Syrians (Antiochus Epiphanes IV) back in 165 BC; they wanted Jesus to give them prosperity (**Psalms 118: 26**) and set up the Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth. On that Monday the crowd of Jews were celebrating as they thought the Kingdom of God was about to be established and that he would drive the Romans out of Israel. **Hoshanah** (Hosanna) means 'Save us'. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian of that time, 2 million people, from all over the world came to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus, instead of getting rid of the Romans, clears the Courtyard of the Gentiles (**Luke 19: 45–46**) where Annas (former High Priest) and his family had their business ventures (Pharisees did not approve of them and called it "the Bazaar of the sons of Annas").

Passover was the time to pay the Temple tax (1/2 **Shekel**) but you couldn't use Roman coinage as it had an image on it, so it had to be changed into the Temple coinage (plus service charge!) by the money changers working for the Chief Priests. The priests went through 74 tests on the animals to check they were perfect and often the Chief Priests would fail the animals so that the person would have to buy the sacrificial animals owned by the priests at an inflated price... Jesus cleared out the **Chameitz** (leaven [yeast]) from the Temple (**Psalms 69: 9**).

The Jews only believed there was one Coming of Messiah...but Isaiah indicated two types of Messiah: a suffering servant (**Isaiah 42→53**) and a conquering king (**Isaiah 61→66**). At His 1<sup>st</sup> Coming the Messiah was 'son of Joseph' (the suffering servant) and at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming the Messiah will be 'son of David' (the conquering King).

Here are some similarities between Joseph and Jesus:

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers into the hands of the Gentiles – God used this to save the Jews and the ancient world physically; Jesus was betrayed by his brother Jews into the hands of the Gentiles – God used this to save Jews and Gentiles spiritually. Joseph was betrayed for pieces of silver, so was Jesus (**Matthew 26: 14–16**); Joseph goes from a place of condemnation to a place of exaltation in one day, as does Jesus. Joseph is condemned with two criminals and he predicts one lives and one dies, Jesus is crucified with two criminals, He says one criminal will go to Hell and one to Heaven (**Luke 23: 39–43**). Joseph upon exhortation, every knee bows (**Philippians 2: 9–11**). Joseph's brother didn't recognise him at their first coming, but at the second they did, Jesus was not recognised by the nation on His first Coming (**John 1: 11**) but at the Second Coming they will. The 'son of David' is yet to come.

On that day Jesus, the real Passover Lamb, came into Jerusalem following the route that the flock of lambs from Bethlehem, destined for the Temple, had taken earlier that day (**Exodus 12: 1–6**). For the days up to Passover the Sanhedrin checked those lambs for 'spot or blemish' to determine which one would be chosen as the Passover lamb to be sacrificed on Passover day (Jewish households ate the Passover lamb after twilight on Passover evening, but the Passover lamb was not sacrificed in the Temple until the following afternoon at 3 p.m.). They tested Jesus, also from Bethlehem, in the same way over this period...there were two purposes for His testing: (a) to try and turn the people against Him (b) to find a specific charge (particularly under Roman law)

He was tested by:

(1) Priests and Elders (Sadducees and Pharisees) – on a question of Authority (**Matthew 21: 23–22: 14**) Jesus had cleared the temple twice (once in **John 2** to signal the start of His public ministry and now in **Matthew 21** to signal the close of His public ministry), those who had authority over it asked Him who had given Him permission to do this. Jesus, showing He also has authority, asks them a question about John the Baptist...they don't answer His question because if they say what they believe, the crowd will turn on them and not Jesus...so He doesn't answer their question...He has passed the first test. Jesus goes on to illustrate His view of the leadership by using three parables: that of the two sons: to show that sonship is proved by obedience – the sinners will enter the Kingdom not the Pharisees. The Householder: the Jewish leaders killed the prophets and they will now kill the Son (c.f. **Isaiah 5**). The parable of the Wedding: those invited, like the Pharisees, will not enter the Kingdom but others will.

(2) Pharisees and Herodians – on a political question (**Mark 12: 13–17**) about paying taxes to Rome. The Pharisees hated Rome, the Herodians loved Rome, but these two political enemies came together to try and catch Jesus out. Pharisaic thinking was: to pay tribute to Caesar was to ‘accept’ Caesar as king, and to ‘accept’ Caesar as king, was to deny the Kingship of God (so they paid their taxes indirectly). Jesus dumbfounds them with His answer that there is divine authority and delegated governmental authority...He’s passed the second test

(3) Sadducees – on a question of Theology (**Luke 20: 27–39**) concerning resurrection. The Sadducees were Greek in their thinking, that is, they applied logic and reason and required proof if they were to accept any argument...to them if you could not prove something, it did not exist (scientific thinking of today!) For instance **Hebrews 11: 3** states that God created the Universe out of nothing – that is both unreasonable and illogical in the mind of a ‘Greek thinker’ (you cannot apply logic and reason to God and the things of God). So the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, angels or the Holy Spirit...and they would only derive doctrine from the first five books of the Bible, ‘the Torah’, and use the Prophets and Writings for illustration. They come to Jesus with a hypothetical situation based on the Mosaic Law which said that if a man who was married died without having any children, his brother could marry the same woman in order to keep the bloodline to the next generation (**Deuteronomy 25: 5–10**). The Sadducees ask: ‘if this happened seven times, and the seven brothers and the (barren) woman died, whose wife would she be in the resurrection’ (they are trying to make Jesus look foolish). Jesus answers that the power of God at the resurrection brings about a transformation to immortality so there is no need to reproduce, so no need to marry – just like the angels, who are eternal beings have no need to reproduce (it does not say they cannot reproduce). If you think about it, the only reason we as people have children is to keep the human race going...if we did not, the human race would die out! However, when we gain eternal bodies (men will still be men and women will still be women) we will not need to reproduce as we live for ever. Jesus then appeals to the Abrahamic Covenant: “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob” (**Exodus 3: 6–7**, and not from **Job 19: 25–26** or **Daniel 12: 2** or **Isaiah 26: 19**). Here again Jesus is using scriptural allusion: if God makes a promise to an individual and that promise is not fulfilled in that person’s lifetime then God is under an obligation to resurrect them to fulfil His promise. The land of Israel was promised to all three men personally and all they had in their lifetime was a cave in a field, so God must resurrect them to fulfil His promise. God has a living relationship with the Patriarchs, so there is resurrection. He’s passed the third test

(4) Pharisees – on a question of Theology (**Mark 12: 28–32**) about which commandment is the greatest? A seemingly innocent question from a hostile scribe...but Jesus has been claiming to be the Son of God and that, to a Pharisee, would make God more than one. Jesus answers with **Deuteronomy 6: 4–5** as the scribe expected, so to the Pharisee, Jesus could not then be the Son of God, as God is one (see the scribe's emphasis about the oneness of God in verse **32**). However, the Hebrew word for ‘one’ in the Old Testament passage is **Echad** – meaning a ‘compound one.’ For example, an egg: which is made up of the yoke, the white and the shell (three parts but one whole). Our Godhead is made up of three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – they are equal to each other, they love each other equally but have different functions within the Godhead. I believe that God gave mankind marriage as a picture of the Godhead: when a man and wife come together God sees them as one (an echad)...they are equal before God, hopefully they love each other equally and they have different functions within the marriage. Any children born to a good believing partnership will be able to look at their parents to get an idea of what the Godhead is...this is why Satan attacks believers marriages, he does not want children seeing that picture. Jesus has passed the fourth test.

Jesus has passed all the tests and is fit to be the Passover Lamb

There is a problem with the translation of **Matthew 26: 17** as it suggests that the Passover comes AFTER the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which disagrees with **Leviticus 23: 5–6**. **Matthew 26: 17** should read “...at the beginning of the day of Unleavened the disciples...” (also **Mark 14:12** and **Luke 22: 7**). The Feast of Unleavened Bread starts the day after Passover (see **Leviticus 23: 5–6**).

‘Day of the Unleavened’: for weeks before the Feast of Unleavened Bread the woman of the house gives the home a thorough spring clean ready for the Feast and in the final week before the Feast the Jewish home is purged of leaven. **Deuteronomy 16: 3–4** no leaven (yeast) in the home for 7 days – removed before the Feasts...when completed the father prays “*Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to remove all leaven*”.

The ‘Day of the Unleavened’ is the day before Passover.

## So the order is:

10 <sup>th</sup> Nisan	Passover lambs brought into the Temple for testing
13 <sup>th</sup> Nisan	Day of Unleavened
14 <sup>th</sup> Nisan	Passover/Preparation Day (for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, <a href="#">John 19: 31–42</a> )
15 <sup>th</sup> Nisan	The first day of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread – a Sabbath, which in the year Jesus died coincided with the weekly Sabbath and so was called a ‘high day’ ( <a href="#">John 19: 31</a> )
16 <sup>th</sup> Nisan	Feast of First Fruits and 1 <sup>st</sup> day of the Feast of Weeks
21 <sup>st</sup> Nisan	The last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread – a Sabbath
6 <sup>th</sup> Sivan	The last day of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) – a Sabbath... ‘First Trumpet call’ is sounded

As Christians, should we keep these festivals at their appointed times?... [1 Corinthians 5: 6–8](#) – these believers from a pagan background had obviously been instructed about the Biblical feasts of [Leviticus 23](#) and followed them.

The ‘Church’ has Good Friday (Jesus did die on a Friday afternoon at 3 p.m.), it has Resurrection Sunday a.m. (which coincided with the Feast of First Fruits in 30AD)...but because the ‘Church’ sticks to those days of the week and does not follow the lunar variations, it is only once every thirty years or so that they coincide with Passover, First Fruits and Pentecost as celebrated by the Jews...at the appointed times.

For example, 2011: Passover was on Mon/Tues 18/19<sup>th</sup>, Good Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April; First Fruits on Wed/Thur 20/21<sup>st</sup>; Resurrection Day 24<sup>th</sup> April; end of Shavuot on 8/9<sup>th</sup> June, Pentecost for the ‘Church’ 12<sup>th</sup> June....Does it matter?

## PASSOVER – Pesach ([Leviticus 23: 5](#))

. References to Passover: [Exodus 12: 1–51; 34: 25](#), [Numbers 9: 1–14](#), [Deuteronomy 16: 1, 2, 4b–7](#), [Joshua 5: 10–11](#), [1 Kings 23: 21–23](#), [2 Chronicles 30: 1–22; 35: 1–19](#), [Ezra 6: 19](#), [Ezekiel 45: 21](#).

This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live ([Exodus 12: 42](#)). Why has this got to be an everlasting ordinance when God knew that Jesus would come to fulfil it 1500 years later? Answer: because God’s plan of salvation will never change, and this festival has such a clear Gospel message: Almighty God saves man out of the Egypt of sin and bondage through the atoning death of Jesus, the Passover Lamb.

Passover occurs March/April on the full moon. At Passover the [Song of Solomon](#) is read in the synagogues. Jesus told the parable of the Wise and Foolish virgins ([Matthew 25: 1–13](#)) that mirrored what was being read in the synagogue that Passover week. [Song of Solomon](#) is God’s instruction book about sexual behaviour in the married couples’ bedroom; after all it was the Lord who gave us sexuality.

Passover practice has changed due to circumstances...there is no Temple today.

**Today** the Jewish woman lights the candles each Sabbath and at the start of Passover – it gives light to the Passover (just as Mary did in giving birth to Jesus, so giving us the Light). In the modern Passover everyone’s head is covered; the oldest man puts on the [kittle](#) (jacket) and [mitre](#) (hat) – to represent the priesthood. He teaches everyone around the table the meaning of the Passover by reading the [Haggadah](#) (the telling), the reading takes 2 to 3 hours. The reading is started by the youngest son asking 4 questions:

Why is this night different from all other nights, for on all other nights

- (1) We can eat leavened or unleavened bread but on this night only unleavened?
- (2) We can eat all manner of herbs but on this night only those which are bitter?
- (3) We do not dip into salt water but on this night we dip twice?
- (4) We can eat sitting or reclining but on this night we all recline?

Answers:

- (1) On Passover we moved out with the dough unleavened
- (2) To be reminded about the bitterness of slavery in Egypt
- (3) Symbolic of the planting and growth of the plant – planted in Egypt but came out a nation
- (4) We recline to the left because those who are free could recline at their table – slaves had to eat sitting

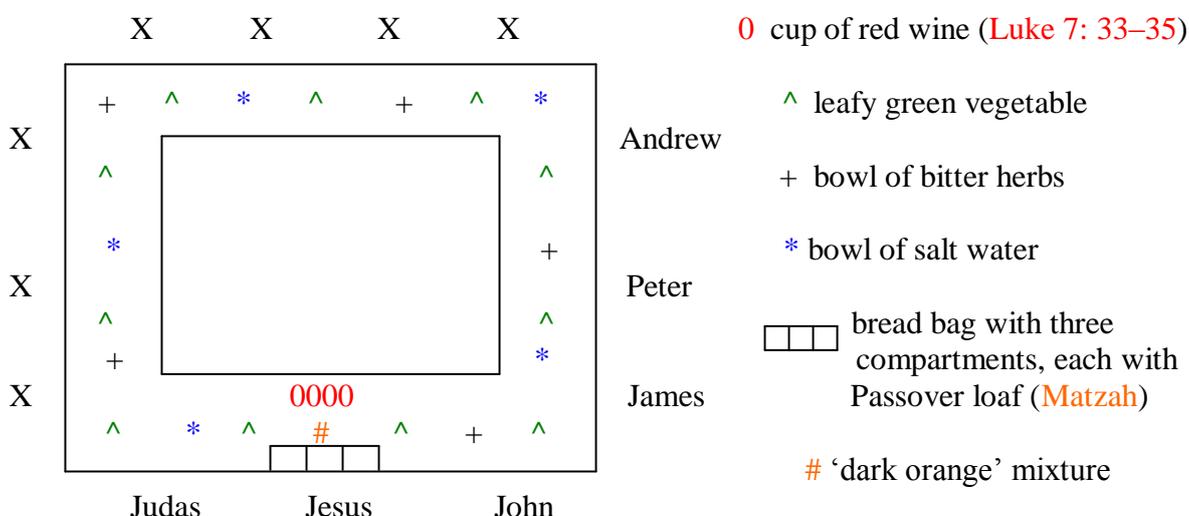
In the centre of the table there is a special Passover plate with six indentations, in two of them are:

A roasted egg, dipped into salt water then eaten...to remember the sacrificial lamb offered up on the afternoon of Passover (the Jewish day starts at sundown). A shank bone of a lamb...it is not eaten – it represents the Passover Lamb eaten in the evening (substituted by chicken)...Messianic Jews do eat lamb! One extra place is set, which remains empty, no-one eats the food or drinks from the large cup of wine set there – this place is set for the prophet Elijah, who is to come before the Messiah comes (**Malachi 4: 5**). The Rabbis believe that if Elijah does come, it will be on the night of Passover (c.f. the anti-Christ declares himself God at Passover in the Temple [**2 Thessalonians 2: 4**]. Elijah is one of the two witnesses [**Revelation 11: 3**] who comes back to Jerusalem at the midpoint of the Tribulation). After the 4<sup>th</sup> cup of wine is taken, the youngest son checks to see if Elijah is coming...he tells the leader Elijah isn't coming, so the leader then closes the ceremony with the words "next year in Jerusalem." Because since Elijah hasn't come neither can the Messiah come, so they won't be going to Jerusalem until the next year at the earliest.

Jesus' Last Passover **Matthew 26: 20–30, Luke 22: 17–23, Mark 14: 18–26, John 13: 3–30**...Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April

The Passover meal – preparations are made by Peter and John. They had to buy the Passover lamb in the Temple, where it was killed. The priests poured the blood into a bowl then it was poured out at the base of the Altar and they sing **Psalms 113–118**. The lamb is skinned and the entrails removed. Parts of the lamb were burned on the Altar. The lamb is then taken and roasted.

They also prepare the other Passover items – three loaves of unleavened bread (which have red stripes on it and holes in them), special red wine (naturally fermented, no added sugar – 'the fruit of the vine'), bitter herbs and onions, lots of leafy green vegetable, salt, and a mixture of apples/nuts/honey/lemon juice/red wine and the spice – cinnamon. Jesus was to eat this Passover within the walls of Jerusalem (not in the tent city outside the walls) as it was His final one and He had made special arrangements to do this. Jesus will fulfil this Passover with His death. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming the Passover will be celebrated again.



When they enter the Upper Room each man will recline on his left elbow on a couch to show they are free, not slaves. The whole purpose of the Passover is to remember what happened on that night in Egypt. Jesus picks up the 1<sup>st</sup> cup of wine – the cup of Thanksgiving and prays a prayer of thanksgiving. He takes a drink and passes it around the table. At this point a slave or young woman should bring a bowl of water for each man to wash his hands before eating. There is no woman or slave in the room and none of the disciples will demean themselves to do such a menial task.

Jesus takes of His outer garment and gets the water and towel...but instead of washing hands He washes their feet (on dusty roads, wearing sandals, it is your feet that get dirty, not your hands! Jesus is very practical). He does this to teach them humility in service. They now dip their leafy green vegetable into the bitter herbs twice and eat it, to remember (i) their slavery in Egypt and (ii) Pharaoh's edict to kill all Jewish baby boys. Jesus now picks up 2<sup>nd</sup> cup of wine – the cup of Plagues (there is no reference in any Gospel to this cup). He will dip His finger into the wine and let a drop fall to the table, He will do this 10 times, naming the plagues of Egypt, in order. He then takes a drink and passes it around the table for each man to clear the taste of the bitter herbs from the mouth. Jesus now mentions that one of the disciples will betray Him...the disciples call out asking "is it me?". Jesus says "it is the person who dips into the same bowl as Me" because they are now going to dip the leafy green vegetable into the Salt water and eat it to remember the crossing of the Red Sea...only Judas and one other disciple will dip into the same bowl as Jesus. Those who have heard that comment now know it is one of two men. Judas asks quietly "is it me?" and Jesus equally quietly answers "yes, it is you".

Jesus now takes out the middle loaf of bread, breaks it in two, wraps one half in a linen napkin and hides it away until after the meal. With the other half He is going to make 13 small sandwiches with the 'dark orange' mixture as the filling. This is to remember the making of bricks in Egypt (the colour of the mixture is the same as that of the bricks made). At this point Peter, getting impatient, calls across to John "ask Him who it is." Jesus tells John it will be the person He gives the first sandwich to. The person who receives the first sandwich is being treated with honour. Jesus hands the first sandwich to Judas...Jesus is honouring Judas. Jesus continues to make the other 12 sandwiches and at some point turns to Judas and tells him "what you do, do quickly" and Judas leaves the room. Some of the disciples have not heard any of the relevant conversations so they think Judas, as the group's treasurer, has been sent to give money to the poor or buy provisions for the feast.

Peter and John now carve the roast Lamb with their two knives (which they later say are swords [[Luke 22: 36–38](#)]) and they eat the main meal.

After the meal Jesus retrieves the half loaf that was hidden away, brings it back to the table, unwraps it and will give each man a piece to take away the greasy taste of the lamb. Before He does so He gives this bread special significance by saying, "This is My body given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." Then Jesus takes the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of wine – the cup of Redemption. To the Jews this cup remembers the blood of the lamb daubed on the lintel and doorposts of their homes the night the angel of death passed through Egypt. Jesus changes the significance of this cup of wine when He says, "This is My blood of the new Covenant shed for you and for many for the remission of sins."

They then sing six [Psalms, 113 → 118](#), known as the [Hallel](#) (which means praise)...this is where we get our word Alleluia from: Hallel-u-Yah (Praise to Yah[weh]). After [Psalm 117](#) they stop and Jesus picks up 4<sup>th</sup> cup of wine – the cup of Praise, they all take a drink to enable them to sing [Psalm 118](#) well, as it is a Messianic Psalm. Having completed it, Jesus then talks to the disciples, recorded in [John 14](#), and then they leave the Upper Room.

The bread bag with the three loaves is still part of the modern Passover but if you ask an Orthodox Rabbi the significance of what they do he will not be able to tell you...but a Messianic believer will.

There are three loaves in one bag ...there is one Godhead with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is the middle loaf that is taken out – the incarnation of Jesus. It is broken in two – Jesus was broken for us. One half is wrapped and hidden away – Jesus was wrapped in burial cloth and put in a tomb. It is retrieved and unwrapped – the resurrection of Jesus (it is this piece that we eat at Communion). The bread is unleavened – Jesus was without sin. It has red stripes – by His stripes we are healed. It has holes in it – He was pierced for our transgressions.

[Exodus 12: 46](#) forbade the breaking of the bones of the lamb, [John 19: 36](#) states that none of Jesus' bones were broken. The shedding of the blood had to be followed by the application of the blood for it to be effective (daubed the lintels) – we have Jesus blood sprinkled on the doorposts of our hearts...and are brought into God's family. Jesus and Passover connected by Paul ([1 Corinthians 5: 6–7](#))

[It was a sad day when the Council of Nicea in 325 AD decide to replace the Lord's Passover for reasons that are clearly anti-Semitic: "It is unbecoming beyond measure that on this holiest of Festivals, we should follow the customs of the Jews. Let us henceforth have nothing in common with these odious people"](#). When the 'Church' took its roots out of its Jewish heritage and planted them in Greek philosophy, it took that one piece of bread, which had been hidden, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of wine and created Communion, so separating itself from the Jewish Passover. It also moved the Festival, so changing the date of Pentecost. [Should we go back to putting Communion into the setting of a meal?](#)

## **UNLEAVENED BREAD** – Hag Hamatzot (Leviticus 23: 6–8)

References to Unleavened Bread:

Numbers 28: 17–25; Deuteronomy 16: 3–4a, 8; 2 Chronicles 30: 21–27; Ezra 6: 22; Ezekiel 45: 21–24; Mark 14: 1.

Leaven is a symbol of sin and is particularly associated with the sin of pride. Middle Eastern women make bread by holding back some of the dough from the batch before baking and using it to “raise” the next batch...in the same manner sin goes from one generation to the next.

We must purge the leaven of sin out of our lives (by **1 John 1: 9**) and out of the Church, by Church discipline (**Matthew 18: 15–20**). We must examine ourselves before taking Communion as believers (**1 Corinthians 11: 27–32**)

Why is leaven taken as a type of sin?

- (i) It is a small thing that spreads secretly and quietly and effects the whole bake
- (ii) It causes the bread to rise, to be puffed up (**1 Corinthians 5: 1–2**)

Six types of leaven to watch for:

- (1) Old leaven (**1 Corinthians 5: 7**): don’t drag into the new life what was in the old life
- (2) Leaven of Malice & Wickedness (**1 Corinthians 5: 8**): Malice – carrying bad feelings against somebody in your heart...we must love one another (**John 13: 34**)
- (3) Leaven of Pharisees’ hypocrisy (**Luke 12: 1**): their righteousness was all show/pretence. The moment we begin to deliberately pretend our spirituality, it starts to spread to every aspect of our lives
- (4) Leaven of Herod (**Mark 8: 15**): a great compromiser, there is a tendency today to compromise the gospel and our standards with the excuse “it’s the only way to reach people” – the gospel does not need a crutch
- (5) Leaven of the Sadducees (**Matthew 16: 6, 11–12**): the modernists of their day were guided by Greek thinking. We must stick with the truth of the Bible
- (6) Leaven of False doctrine (**Galatians 5: 7–9**): beware of legalism or other false doctrines

**Exodus 13: 7–9** “ Eat unleavened bread during those seven days. On that day tell your son ‘I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt. This observance will be like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the Torah (Teaching) of the Lord is to be on your lips. For the Lord brought you out of Egypt with His mighty hand”.

Is it any wonder that the Devil, through the anti-Christ, will come with his counterfeit mark on man’s hand and forehead (**Revelation 13: 16**).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread has two and sometimes three Sabbaths. It immediately follows Passover (**Exodus 12: 8–20**) – a type of Christian living (**1 Corinthians 5: 7**). This feast was for those born into the family or purchased and circumcised (**1 Corinthians 6: 20**)

## **FIRST FRUITS** – Reshit Ketzirchem (Leviticus 23: 9–14)

References to First Fruits: **Numbers 28:**

**26–31. 1 Corinthians 15: 20–23.**

The first day after the first Sabbath in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the High Priest would go down into the Kidron valley at dawn, throw a hoop and cut the sheaf of grain within it (at the time of the Barley harvest [**Exodus 9: 31–32**]) and bring it into the Temple for a wave offering...an acknowledgement of God’s goodness, and a promise of the harvest to come.

Jesus rose from the dead at sunrise on the third day (**Luke 24: 1**), the day celebrating First Fruits, as our First fruits guaranteeing the rest of the resurrection harvest (**1 Corinthians 15: 22–23**). He fulfilled the sign of Jonah promised to the Jewish leadership (**Matthew 12: 39**) but they ignored it and made up the ‘stolen body’ theory (**Matthew 28: 11–15**). We are to give God our first fruits and so acknowledge His goodness towards us (**Proverbs 3: 5–10**)

## **FEAST OF WEEKS – Shavuot** (Leviticus 23: 15–21)

Other name: **Pentecost**. References to

Shavuot: **Exodus 23: 16; 34: 22, Numbers 28: 26, Deuteronomy 16: 9–12, Acts 2:1–4; 20: 16, 1 Corinthians 16: 8**

There is no Greek word for the Hebrew ‘Shavuot’ so they put in the Greek word ‘Pentecost.’ (Pentecost actually refers to the last day of the feast). **Acts 2: 1** “**and when the day of Shavuot was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**” Pentecost: the end of the wheat harvest...the Holy Spirit came to start the Spiritual harvest. It has three offerings: Burnt, Sin and Peace...a type of Jesus, who gave Himself as the offering. It is celebrated with great thanksgiving at the conclusion of the grain harvest.

Two loaves (both leavened) offered...one for the sinful Jews and one for the sinful Gentiles? The Holy Spirit came to dwell in and on the disciples after Jesus had been glorified. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit and give thanks in every situation, be submissive to one another and praise God.

On Pentecost 1500 years earlier the Torah (teaching, instruction, guidance to lead one to the mark) was given on Mt. Sinai. When Moses came down with the two tablets on which God had written with His finger, the tablets were broken because of the sin and rebellion of the people (**Exodus 32: 19–23**). When Jesus came the first time, He also was ‘broken’ for the rebellion of man. The tablets were re-written by the finger of God (**Exodus 34: 28**), and Jesus equally did not remain ‘broken’ and disposed of, He rose and lives in those who have received Him (**John 1: 12**), and His teaching is written on their hearts. According to the Rabbis, the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai as a marriage contract and they interpret **Exodus 24** as being a wedding ceremony. Israel was instructed to purify herself for three days – that is also what a bride had to do in preparation of meeting with her bridegroom. The **Chupah** (wedding canopy) that is traditionally made of the bridegroom’s prayer shawl resembles the cloud that hung over Mt. Sinai. This signifies, in Jewish tradition, the wife coming under the spiritual authority of her husband as she joins him under the canopy. “**When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words, they responded with one voice...**” (**Exodus 24: 3**) and like a bride would say “I do”, Israel answered, “**Everything the Lord has said, we will do**”. Sadly, many of them, like us, forget that this “doing” has to flow from a **love relationship**. God separated from Israel (**Isaiah 59: 2**) and divorced her (**Jeremiah 3: 8**) but has promised to remarry her (**Hosea 2: 16, 19–20**)

On Pentecost, when the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given, 3000 were saved, the first harvest, compared with the time the Torah was given when 3000 died (**Exodus 32: 25–28**).

**Leviticus 23: 22** “**When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien**”. God made provision for the Gentiles to **SHARE** in the harvest of the Jews, to reap the benefits also. An amazing confirmation is to be seen in that the Jews study the book of **Ruth** in the synagogue during the festival (a rich Jewish man takes a poor gentile bride. Like Ruth we have been grafted into God’s natural olive tree as a wild olive (**Romans 11: 17**), so making her bigger, no longer aliens but reaping the blessings (**Ephesians 2: 11–13**))

### **Jesus has fulfilled these first four Feasts at the Appointed times:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Nisan                   | Passover – Jesus took into Himself the sins of the world, paid the price, and died physically at exactly 3p.m. as the Passover Lamb         |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> Nisan | Feast of Unleavened Bread – Jesus was sinless   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> Nisan                   | First Fruits – Jesus rose at dawn on First Fruits...the promise of the resurrection harvest of saints to come                               |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Sivan                    | Pentecost – Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on His ‘called out ones’...the start of the Body of Christ, the start of the spiritual harvest |

We wait for the final 3 feasts to be fulfilled in the future. Meanwhile we are involved in the harvest fields around the world Page 8

## **The Interval**

Almost four months then elapse – a silence that symbolises the approximately two thousand years between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus. The latter is portrayed by the final three annual festivals, which occur during the seventh month.

This long hot summer between the two sets of feasts corresponds to the time of ‘this present Age.’ With the restoration of Israel (1948) and Jerusalem under Jewish control (1967) the four months of ‘silence’ (2000 years) is coming to an end and the stage is being set for Jesus’ return.

“It is the last hour...” (1 John 2: 18) said nineteen centuries ago! Israel is like God’s timepiece for the nations – the clock was stopped (c.f. basketball game) in 70 AD when the city and temple were destroyed ...the clock started ticking again in 1967

The Holy Spirit is represented by rain, which goes into the water table and forms living water. There are two rainy seasons in Israel – the former and latter rains, Spring and Autumn rains.

Why do you have an abundance of Jews saved in the early days and also in the last days? In 1890: rebirth of Hebrew [Eliezer Ben Yehuda], 1897–1913: Zionist Congresses [Theodor Herzl]. The harvest of Jewish souls is the emblem of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Why do you have an abundance of gifts of the Spirit in the early days and also in the last days but very little in between?...the Holy Spirit is poured out.

The summer in Israel gets progressively worse, climaxing in the very hot desert winds, very oppressive. The lowest ebb for the Jewish people across the centuries was the Holocaust – the next generation saw Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus in their tens of thousands.

Calamity comes in the last days but so does an outpouring of God’s Spirit to give the peoples of the nations one more chance to repent. Israel will be given a second chance to accept her Messiah nationally (Jewish individuals don’t have a second chance as but Israel corporately does). God is Sovereign as to where His Spirit moves. Wildfire revivals have happened in Indonesia, Singapore, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil etc; God is turning His grace from the rich countries to the poor countries, from the Protestant countries to the Catholic ones and increasingly from the Gentiles back to the Jews.

Different nations will have spiritual rain, and so a harvest, at different seasons. There are favourable and unfavourable winds – different spiritual climates. In Israel, West, North and Northwest winds bring rain ...God’s favour; East, South, Southeast and Northeast are not good winds...bring persecution (it was a Northeast wind that destroyed Paul’s ship – type of tribulation) (Job 27: 21, Psalm 48: 7, Isaiah 27: 8)

### **Build up to the Autumn Feasts:**

In the sixth month, Elul, the fig, olive and grape harvest begins. The last two fruits are prepared for use through a process of CRUSHING in order to get the pure oil and wine (Revelation 19: 15, Isaiah 63: 1–4). In Elul, the Jews begin to search their souls over sin, when the heavy dews begin and the hot wind takes its toll. The first sign of the rainy season is when the wadis begin to fill through flash floods ...the Holy Spirit strikes like wildfire in the last days...notice that the winds get contrary the closer you get to the Feast of Trumpets...the spiritual climates effecting the Church get worse and worse before the return of Christ

Elul, the month before the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) – is when Moses ascended up Mount Sinai for 40 days, descending on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), 10<sup>th</sup> Tishri. The Jews associate the sounding of the Shofar (a ram’s horn which is blown like a trumpet) with the month of Elul (Exodus 19: 16–20). In the synagogues the Shofar is sounded each morning (and evening) except on Shabbat...it is sounded to remind the people of their need for repentance because the day of judgement is approaching. They read Psalm 27: 1–4 at the start and end of the services and the Rabbis ask the same two questions: “When is it that the Lord is my light?” – Answer: on Rosh Hashanah; “When is the Lord my salvation?” – Answer: on Yom Kippur

For Christians to be ready for Him to come back we must understand the Autumn Feasts...set the trumpet to our mouths – warn the unsaved

**In the Seventh month (Sept/Oct), Tishri:**

## **FEAST OF TRUMPETS** (Leviticus 23: 23–25)

Other names: **Yom Teruah, Yom Hadin** (the Day of Judgement). References to Feast of Trumpets: **Numbers 29: 1–6**

The original **Rosh Hashanah** (New Year) was 1<sup>st</sup> Nisan (March/April, **Exodus 12: 1–13, Leviticus 23: 5**)...the Rabbis moved it to 1<sup>st</sup> Tishri, the Feast of Trumpets! This feast inaugurates a very solemn period of time. The real meaning of this Feast is “woe upon woe” not ‘Happy New Year’. In the first service of Trumpets – the evening service, no prayers of forgiveness are heard, all repentance must precede the day of judgement.

God is proclaimed as King, Judge and Redeemer in that order and then the Shofar (trumpet) is sounded. In the second service, in the morning, Orthodox men come dressed in the white clothes in which they will be buried, to remind them that when the great Judgement comes there is death and they must be ready to come to judgement at any time.

The Shofar is used in association with judgement (more than celebration), [**Joshua 6, Exodus 19: 18–19**]:

warns of **imminent danger**, in this case, the coming judgement of God  
announces a **resurrection**  
announces a **coronation**

It is a day of tremendous soul searching and repentance in Jewish homes and the synagogues (**2 Thessalonians 2: 11–12**). The Scriptures read in the synagogue also points to a resurrection (**Genesis 22**), with a call to all those that are asleep to awake and arise from the dead (**1 Thessalonians 4: 16**)...a rapture. Following this rapture, when the bridegroom arrives unexpectedly, will come a wedding and a coronation.

The trumpet is blown for destruction/judgement (**Amos 3: 6, Ezekiel 33: 3–6, Hosea 8: 1–3**). The Shofar is blown four times: one long blast, three short blasts (= long blast), ten short sounds then one long blast, to remind them that judgement is coming.

In the afternoon, the third service, the ceremony of **Tashlikh**, is held near a large body of water or stream and **Micah 7: 18–20** is read ...they take stones and confess their sins over the them and then hurl them out into the water quoting the verses...repentance precedes salvation.

The Feast of Trumpets is a call to repentance over a ten day period before The Day of Atonement. **Psalm 81** is included in the readings at the feast. In the synagogue at the morning service they read **Jeremiah 31: 1–19** then **1 Samuel 1: 1–2: 10** (as Samuel was at the end of one period and the start of another, as will Jesus be, on His return).

## **The Days of Awe** – **Yomim Noraim**

A time of intense searching of the soul and deep repentance by Jews, if they fell short of being found righteous at the Feast of Trumpets and correspond to the God’s Wrath (the Great Tribulation)

## **DAY OF ATONEMENT** – **Yom Kippur** (Leviticus 23: 26–32)

References to Day of Atonement: **Leviticus 25: 8–12, Numbers 29: 7–11, Hebrew 9: 11–10: 18; 13: 10–16. Leviticus 16: 29–31**...it is to be an everlasting ordinance. As long as there is a seventh month and a tenth day, the Jews and all those who align themselves to the Jews, must celebrate Yom Kippur. **Leviticus 16**, which deals specifically with this Feast, is right in the middle of the Torah and deals with the “covering of sin”.

On Yom Kippur the book of **Jonah** is read in the synagogues – Jonah is a type of Jesus

Deny yourself (**amah**) – **humble**/oppress/suffer/afflict yourself... denying yourself food and drink removed i.e. fast. Our will is that active part of our soul, it dominates the soul...by fasting we overcome our will, humble our soul (**Psalm 35: 11–13**). The Jews don't bathe or have sexual relations, among other things, on this day...the gratification of self is the source of sin. They realise that it is symbolic – but it works. Yom Kippur was the only fast required of everyone. The 'Fast' refers to Yom Kippur in **Acts 27: 9** (Luke [Paul] writing to a non-Jew was still measuring time by the Jewish feasts).

At the time of Jesus – Rabbinic written traditions tell us about the practice of The Day of Atonement, **Leviticus 16: 6**...after the Feast of Trumpets the High Priest left his home and lived on Temple Mount. The 'Fast' lasted 25 hours, then the High Priest was fed a very light meal. Early next morning the people started to arrive and would remain standing for the next 12 hours in the sun (they had already fasted for 12 hours). Five times the High Priest would go down into the baptistery and also wash his hands and feet ten times.

The High Priest rose between sunrise and daylight (30 minutes) and went into the baptistery, put on very fine white linen garments to slaughter the daily offering, to sprinkle the blood, offer the incense and the drink offering, then back to removing the garments, down into the baptistery, then more clean white garments, washing of hands and feet (**Leviticus 16: 4**). The High Priest makes the offering of a bull for his own household's sins, going through the washing and immersion process again, then repeats the whole procedure with the goat for the people's sins (**Leviticus 16: 6–10**). No one is allowed to touch the High Priest until he has completed all work and has changed back into his High Priestly robes

This is the only time in the year when the personal name of God, YHVH is spoken and the people bow down on their faces. The scapegoat is taken 7.5 miles from Jerusalem to an uncultivated area; it has a rope tied round its neck, the other end attached to a large stone. The stone is thrown over the edge of a ravine taking the goat with it...news of the goat's death is swiftly reported back to the High Priest. They did not follow the instructions in **Leviticus 16** to release the goat!

While the scapegoat is being taken away the other goat is spat on, kicked, beaten with sticks and cursed before it was sacrificed (c.f. Jesus). Its throat was slit in one motion and the necessary blood collected for taking into the Holy of Holies. Before going in with the bowls of blood the High Priest takes in incense to provide a screen between the man and the place where the Ark of the Covenant had stood.

**Leviticus 16: 18–19**...he performs the washing/immersion again and then puts on golden garments before sacrificing the ram and seven lambs, he then repeats the immersion. This takes up the 12 hours.

The High Priest goes behind the curtain four times:

- (1) with incense, a ladle and the altar of Incense,
- (2) bull's blood for his own household's sins,
- (3) goat's blood for the nation's sins,
- (4) finally, to retrieve the incense, ladle and altar of incense

The blood of animals if accompanied by faith and repentance would annually cover the sins of the people until the Messiah came and removed them, related in the **Talmud** (Rabbinic tradition/law).

A scarlet cord was hung on the curtain before the Holy of Holies in the Temple and if the sins of the people were covered on Yom Kippur, the scarlet thread would turn white (**Isaiah 1:18**), if not covered it would remain scarlet. It had turned white for hundreds of years... but for the 40 years before the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD the thread remained scarlet (according to Rabbinic writings), the Jewish people no longer had a covering of their sins after Jesus' death in 30AD.

**Today** most Jews keep the strict fast (the very observant stay up all night reading Scripture); The evening service (1<sup>st</sup> service), starts at sunset. **Kol Nedrei** (all vows) is said three times – softly at first, getting bolder for the release from vows to God (not to other humans). The afternoon (final) service starts with the reading of **Lev.18**, all of **Jonah** and the last three verses of **Micah 7: 18–20**. Towards the end of the service **Isaiah 57** and **58** are read. **Isaiah 53: 10–12** is included in the Day of Atonement liturgy.

**Isaiah 53: 1– 9** is **never** read in the Synagogue – the Rabbis are hiding the truth from the people. Page 11

Jesus' first appearance after His resurrection is to a woman, Mary of Magdala ([John 20: 15–17](#)). She is told not to cling to Him...like the High Priest, between the first and last immersions on the Day of Atonement, He is untouchable until He has completed His work of taking His blood into Heaven and sprinkling it in the Sanctuary before the Mercy Seat and has the 'offering' accepted by God the Father. Having completed the task, Jesus comes back to Earth and people can now touch Him ([John 20: 19–20](#))

### **Comparison between the Day of Atonement and Jesus:**

- (1) Appointed Purpose: their sins are covered for a limited period by the blood of bulls and goats – the blood of Jesus has taken away our sin, cleanses us ([Hebrews 9: 13–14](#))
- (2) Appointed Program: the only time in the year the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with blood – Jesus died once and for all ([Hebrews 9: 25, 28](#))
- (3) Appointed Place: there was only one place that the sacrifice for the Day of Atonement could be made – Golgotha was the place Jesus paid the price for us ([1 Peter 2: 24](#))
- (4) Appointed Person: the High Priest, Aaron and his successors, dressed in the robe of a servant, not in his High Priestly clothes – Jesus is our High Priest ([Hebrews 9: 11](#))
- (5) Appointed Price: the price of blood ([Hebrews 9: 12](#))
- (6) Appointed Participation: salvation is not by works, the High Priest did all the work, the people did nothing, they were to show sorrow for their sins

Application to us...it is our job to humble ourselves ([James 4: 10, 1 Peter 5: 5b–6](#)). We have to live in a right relationship with the body of Christ. We all sin – so we must seek forgiveness.

### **FEAST OF BOOTHS/TABERNACLES – Succot** ([Leviticus 23: 33–44](#))

References to Booths

/Tabernacles: [Exodus 34: 22, Numbers 29: 12–34, Deuteronomy 16: 13–15, Nehemiah 8: 13–18, John 7: 1–10: 21](#)

It is a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving as the fruit harvest is completed. People live in booths for seven days to remind them of their camping out in the Wilderness. The booths are made of natural materials such as branches of trees and you must be able to see the stars through the 'roof' at night.

In the synagogue, [Ezekiel 38–39](#): the defeat of Gog and Magog and the establishment of the Lord's supreme rule, and [Ecclesiastes](#): that everything in this world is vanity, are read.

Dwelling in booths represents holding this world lightly, looking at the leaves changing colour showing how transitory our life is; trust in the Messiah – the Word of the Lord endures forever.

The Jews have added to this feast:

- (1) **Ceremony of 'Outpouring of the Water'** – a priest would go down the hill to the Pool of Siloam accompanied by others playing instruments, fill a golden vessel then return to the Temple compound. Between the Outer and Inner courts there were 15 steps – on Step 1 they would sing [Psalm 120](#), on Step 2 [Psalm 121](#) etc ...the Psalms of Ascent. In the Inner court he would pour out the water into the Laver on the first six days but at the base of the Altar on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the final day of the Feast, **Hoshanah Rosh**: the day of Great Hoshanah (Hoshanah means 'save us'), followed by shouts of rejoicing. The priest would go round the Altar 7 times (once on the other days) quoting [Psalm 118](#). The people brought a **Luvav**: branches of Palm, Myrtle and Willow fastened together by a golden thread to wave before the Lord and an **Etrog**: a citrus fruit symbolising the fruit of the Promised Land.

Physically, this represented God's provision of water in the wilderness. Spiritually, the Pharisees said it represented the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Israel in the last days.

Jesus uses this ceremony to point to Himself as Messiah, the source of the Holy Spirit. He gives an individual invitation rather than a national one ([John 7: 37–39](#))

- (2) **Ceremony of 'The Lights'** – a kind of Feast of Lights. High towers were erected, two in the Inner and two in the Outer courts of the Temple and in the evening trainee priests would kindle fires on the top of them. The whole of Jerusalem would receive light and people would stay awake all night studying the Torah. Physically, this represented the pillar of cloud and fire that led Israel in the wilderness. Spiritually, the Rabbis said, it represented the Shekinah Glory of God's presence. Jesus states that He is the Light of the world (**John 8: 12**).

Israel had two festivals involving light...this one and **Hanukkah**, which came earlier with the Maccabees. The Jews celebrate Hanukkah (means 'dedication'), also known as the Festival of Lights. It begins on the 25th day of **Kislev** (Nov/Dec) and lasts eight days. It commemorates the rededication of the temple in 165 BC. Antiochus IV attempted to force Greek culture on the Jews, he outlawed the keeping of the Torah, persecuted the Jews, and looted the Temple in Jerusalem. In the ultimate act of profanity he then slaughtered a pig on the altar and sprinkled its blood in front of an idol of Zeus in the Holy Place. This desecration of the Temple is referred to in **Daniel 11: 31** as the "**abomination that causes desolation**." The consequent outrage led to the famed Maccabean revolt. Simon Maccabee finished the Syrian rule and was made High Priest and Prince until a prophet should correct the situation...he was not of Aaronic descent (his descendants were still 'ruling' in Jesus' day). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the desecration of the Temple, on 25th of Kislev, 165 BC (December that year), the Temple was rededicated. According to the Talmud, a miracle took place during the rededication of the Temple that accounts for the eight day duration of the feast. The Temple Priests had only one day's supply of oil, yet the lamps burned for eight days, giving the Priests time to prepare more.

Jesus was in the Temple at the time of this manmade Feast (**John 10: 22–23**)

God wants His people to have joy and celebrate His goodness:

- (i) Joy always follows cleansing (Day of Atonement before Tabernacles)
- (ii) Joy leads to sacrifice – giving is easier when you are joyful

The greatest joy is yet to come – to be with Jesus

On the eighth day, there is a Sabbath, called **Simchat Torah** (the rejoicing of the Torah): the Jewish people dance around the Torah scrolls, lovingly embracing it and kissing it; it is the start of the cycle of reading the Torah for that year

The biggest recorded celebration of Tabernacles in the Bible is in **Nehemiah 8**. The people gathered at the Water gate through which the living water was brought...the living water flows, which then drives the people to the Word of God and then the revival begins. Revival begins in the heart and mind with people falling down weeping, hearing the Word of God then worship follows the study of the Word. Revival is the 'assembly' repenting and returning to its first love...a lot of people being saved is the result/proof of revival.

**How will Jesus will fulfil these three final Feasts of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Sept/Oct)?:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tishri      Feast of Trumpets – signals the 'Rapture' of the Body of Christ**

The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar months, but no-one could be certain as to when the month started as it could be on one of two days, and the hour at which the new moon appeared was also uncertain. The Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council) sent out two reliable men to look for the new moon around the start of each month. When they agreed they had seen the new moon they reported back to the Sanhedrin and the month officially started. It was signalled around Israel by the lighting of fires on hill and mountain tops. The phrase 'that day and hour no one knows' found in **Matthew 24: 36** is a Jewish idiom referring to the sighting of the new moon, it is not to be taken literally. **Matthew 24: 29–31** refers to Jesus' Second Coming; verses **32–41** refer to the 'Rapture' of the Body of Christ..

There is only one Feast that starts on the new moon and that is the Feast of Trumpets. So Jesus is saying that the Body of Christ will leave the earth on a Feast of Trumpets. This is backed up by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15**. There are three major trumpet calls in Judaism: the 'First trumpet call' sounded at Pentecost, the 'Last trumpet call' sounded at the Feast of Trumpets and the 'Great trumpet call' sounded on the Day of Atonement. **1 Corinthians 15: 51–53** mentions the 'last trumpet call' in conjunction with the rapture of the Body of Christ, So confirming Jesus statement that His body will leave the Earth on the Feast of Trumpets some year ( in Sept/Oct).

The following two Feasts will occur some years later...

### **10<sup>th</sup> Tishri The Day of Atonement –2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus**

**Matthew 24: 29–31** mentions the 'great trumpet call' and links it to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, as does **Isaiah 27: 9–13**. This trumpet call is on the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 25: 9**). Jesus will save the surviving Jews physically and spiritually on His return (**Daniel 9: 24**) and they will become a nation of believers and finally fulfil the role of the Royal priesthood as the top nation in the world.

### **15<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Tishri Feast of Tabernacles/Booths – Jesus stands on Mount Zion...the end of 'The times of the Gentiles' and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom**

When Jesus returns to the Earth, He lands at Bozrah (in Edom) where the believing Jews have been hidden, nourished and protected by God from the middle of the Tribulation (**Revelation 12: 1, 6, 14**). Jesus comes to free them and lead them back to Jerusalem (**Micah 2: 12–13, Isaiah 63: 1–6**) ...it takes them five days to complete the journey. He approaches Jerusalem by going up through Bethany and when He stands on the top of the Mount of Olives an aftershock of the largest earthquake ever known (**Revelation 16: 17–20**, just before His return) splits the Mount in two (**Zechariah 14: 4**). He then goes up onto the Temple mount and the 'times of the Gentiles' is over (**Luke 21: 24**).

**Zechariah 14: 16–21** Feast of Tabernacles fulfils the Coming of the Kingdom...all the Jews knew this.

In the Transfiguration (**Matthew 16: 28 –17: 4**)...Jesus allows the Shekinah Glory to come through the veil of His flesh and clothing for the only time in His earthly life. Peter knows that Jesus is the Messiah, but doesn't realise at this time that there are two Comings. When he sees Jesus in all His glory, speaking with Moses and Elijah, Peter thinks the Kingdom of God is about to start, so he wants to start celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles by building three booths

All the Feasts, except the Feast of Trumpets, will be celebrated in the Millennium

Evangelism is always important, but we live in a time when God is pouring out His Spirit on Jews again, when prophecy begins to be fulfilled at a more rapid pace...then not only is each individual running out of time but also the human race is running out of time.

**Evangelism becomes especially important in the last days, and we are in the final days before the Tribulation...so**

Are we setting the trumpet to our mouth and warning the unsaved about what is happening to the world? Are we informing them about the times we live in and what it means to them?

## Appendix – Israel's farming year

<u>Month No.</u>	<u>Month Name</u>	<u>Our Months</u>	<u>Farming</u>
1	Nisan [Abib, Exodus 23: 15]	March/April	Barley harvest
2	Iyyar	April/May	Wheat harvest
3	Sivan	May/June	End of crop harvest, vine tending
4	Tammuz	June/July	First grapes, getting hotter
5	Ab	July/August	Summer fruit, summer heat
6	Elul	August/September	Olive and figs harvest, hotter still
7	Tishri	September/October	Grape harvest, end of fruit harvest, start of ploughing
8	Marchesvan	October/November	Grain planting, Latter rains
9	Kislev	November/December	Repairing equipment
10	Tebet	December/January	Spring growth, rainy season
11	Shebat	January/February	Winter figs
12	Adar	February/March	Pulling flax, Early rains

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