

# Jesus and the feasts

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## **Introduction**

### *How they speak to the church today*

Having chosen Israel as His special people of the Old Testament covenant, the Lord God gave them the Law, which included feasts, offerings and sacrifices.

A great deal of the Old Testament scripture talks about Jesus the Messiah and looks forward to His coming.

In this study we will look at how the seven ordained feasts look to Jesus, His sacrifice for us, and His coming again.

The feasts are split into two sections. Four are in the spring and three in the Autumn.

The starting place is Passover, which is still vital to the Jews, and is the forerunner of The Lord's Supper celebrated by the church - though many churches do not recognize the link.

The sequence of the feasts also represents our journey as believers. Passover represents the gift of eternal life for those who believe - deliverance from the bondage of sin.

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The Jewish calendar:

Nisan            Spring feasts

Iyyar

Sivan            Pentecost

Tammuz

Ab

Elul

Tishri           Autumn feasts

Heshvan

Kieslev

Tebeth

Shebat

Adar

Adar Sheni (Intercalary)

# Chapter 1

## Passover

To understand the feast of Passover we need to review its history.

When the land of Israel suffered severe drought Jacob's family looked to Egypt for grain and for survival.

Joseph, the second youngest, was already in Egypt and through amazing circumstances had risen to be second only to Pharaoh at the age of 30. As governor of the land he had organized the stockpiling of vast amounts of grain because he had been warned about the coming famine in a dream.

Then the whole family settled in Egypt where they were made welcome and greatly blessed by the Lord. Time went on and the Israelites grew in number, becoming a mighty presence in Egypt:

*'The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.'* Exodus 1:7.

However, the new king over Egypt turned against the Israelites in the land, fearful that in war they might join with Egypt's enemies. So the Egyptians started to deal more and more harshly with the Israelites.

Along comes Moses who meets the Lord at the burning bush. Moses is commissioned to lead the now deeply suffering Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses has a number of meetings with Pharaoh, asking for release for the Israelites. Pharaoh refuses and through Moses the Lord works a number of miracles to persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites.

Moses has a word from the Lord for Pharaoh, *'The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness."'*

Pharaoh refuses and the plagues follow one by one:

First water turns to blood. Pharaoh refuses.

Then frogs. Pharaoh refuses.

Then lice. Pharaoh refuses.

Then flies. Pharaoh refuses.

Then pestilence on Egypt's livestock. Pharaoh refuses.

Then boils - refused

Then hail - refused

Then locusts - refused

Then darkness over the land - only the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh still refuses.

Finally, we come to the 10<sup>th</sup> and last plague which is the subject of Passover;

*'Then Moses said, 'Thus says the Lord, "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt and all the firstborn of the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the Lord does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.'*

Exodus 11:4:7

The Lord makes it clear to Moses that Pharaoh will still not take heed – *'that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.'*

So in Exodus chapter 12 verses 1 to 14 we come to the institution of Passover:

*'Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying,*

*"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

*Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, On the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.*

*And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count of the lamb.*

*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

*And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. They shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted it in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire – its head with its legs and its entrails.*

*You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.*

*And you shall eat it with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.*

*For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will exercise judgement: I am the Lord.*

*Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

*So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.'*

So we see the institution of Passover in dramatic circumstances. The deliverance from Egypt is looked upon as a pivotal point for Jews in the same way that Calvary is a pivotal point for Christian believers. Both speak of redemption; for Israel from oppression in Egypt, for believers redemption from sin for eternity.

This marked a new beginning for Israel, God commands that now Nisan becomes the first month of the year for Israel. Exodus 12:2

Now we will consider how Passover looks forward to Jesus, the Messiah.

### **Jesus celebrates the Passover.**

On the night before He was crucified Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples.

Mary had already anointed His body for burial - it is recorded in John 12:3, Mark 14:3, and Matthew 26:7. When we put the three accounts together we find the oil of spikenard was poured on His head and feet. Jesus celebrated the Passover on the 4<sup>th</sup> day thereafter, which reflects the setting aside of the lamb for four days in the account in Exodus.

To celebrate the Passover Jesus takes unleavened bread, blessed it and gave it to the disciples - *'take eat this is My body, given for you, do this in remembrance of Me.'* Luke 22:19

The bread is unleavened. That is the instruction in Exodus. In scripture, leaven is a 'type' representing sin, so it had to be removed otherwise redemption would not be possible. Jesus had no sin, making our redemption possible.

So the bread which represents His body was always unleavened, something we may have lost sight of in the way many churches celebrate today.

Then Jesus took the cup, *'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for you'* Luke 22:20.

Ever wondered why there was no mention of wine in the Passover instructions in Exodus. Here is the answer, the cup is the cup of the New Covenant, and therefore not relevant to the typology of Passover. Wine is reserved to represent the blood of Jesus after the crucifixion because it represents the New Covenant.

And so Passover was superseded by The Lord's Supper.

**John the Baptist** was sent ahead of Jesus to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

*'When he saw Jesus he said, Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'* John 1:29

Jesus was born in Bethlehem within the shadow of the Midgal Eder (A tower in Jerusalem called 'the tower of the flock.) Jews long believed that the Messiah would be revealed from here. The tower overlooked the fields close to the city where the lambs for religious sacrifice were pastured.

The shepherds who came to the stable to see Jesus would have been those who raised the sacrificial lambs.

One might ask the question – why did the deliverance from Egypt require the blood of the lamb to be set like a protective mark or barrier against the angel of death? God is altogether just and to satisfy justice there had to be an atoning sacrifice.

This is because *'there is not a just man upon earth, that does good, and does not sin.'* Ecclesiastes 7:20

The lamb was the sacrifice, and the blood forming a cross on the doorposts and lintel was the sign of the Israelites reliance on the Lord. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). In the typology of the Passover, the lamb represents Jesus, whose blood had to be shed so that God the Father could look upon us, see Jesus blood, and because of our reliance thereon, transfer us from death to life.

**The Apostle Paul**, writing to the Corinthians, *'For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.'* 2<sup>nd</sup> letter 5:7

### **Remembrance**

Paul's instructions regarding what is now called 'The Lord's Supper.' (11:20) .....

*'For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.'"*  
1 Corinthians 11:23-26

In most churches 'as often as' has been looked upon as an instruction to do this often rather than the alternative rendering, 'whenever.' For example, if I say as often as I send you a birthday card I remember and proclaim your birthday, it does not mean I do it often!

Passover was, and is, a very important memorial or remembrance for Israel. Jesus celebrated the Passover and in the course thereof brought out its full meaning. It is His blood which brings deliverance and salvation – something we, like Israel, should celebrate in remembrance, as a memorial.

Passover was (and is for Jews) a very important festival that required detailed preparation. The Lord's Supper equally requires preparation. – that is a preparation of our hearts as we come to remember His sacrifice and what it cost Him.

The Israelites looked forward to Passover – it is for them undoubtedly the major festival of the year, along with Tabernacles which we come to later.

For Christians we are called to the Lord's Supper as a remembrance – *'this do in remembrance of Me.'*

However, we are not called to live in and dwell in Jesus' death – we have been transferred from death to life. We are called to live in the glory of the New Covenant, which is, *'Christ in you the hope of glory.'*

I have deliberately used Paul's words, 'the Lord's Supper,' from 1 Corinthians 11:20 to avoid the various names given by different churches to their practices.

Important aspects of the Lord's Supper have largely been lost. Many congregations use ordinary bread containing leaven – surely an unintended insult to the sinless Lamb of God.

Have we lost the concept of it being a very special remembrance and turned it into a ritual – daily, weekly or monthly, or whenever often devoid of real meaning.

A memorial is a special occasion.

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul gave a warning:

*'Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.'*

*For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.'*

When we take the bread do we recognize what we are doing. Jesus body was given for our health and well being,

*'Surely he has borne our griefs (lit: sicknesses, diseases) and carried our sorrows (lit: pains). Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.'* Isaiah 53:4-5

Paul advises us that he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgement to himself , not discerning the Lord's physical body.

Not recognizing that Jesus took our sicknesses, diseases, pains and iniquities in His own body when we celebrate the Lord's Supper is unworthy.

Then Paul advises further; *'For this reason many are weak and sick among you , and many sleep.'*

Jesus blood is for cleansing us from sin and for the wonderful New Covenant of His indwelling presence. *'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood.'*

Many are weak, sick and even sleep partly because in this generation we seem to have lost sight of the reality and the power of the Lord's Supper, turning it into a powerless and often meaningless religious ritual.

## **Conclusion**

The feast of Passover certainly looks forward to the coming Messiah who brings the greater deliverance than that from physical Egypt.

For the believer, Passover represents step 1 in our journey, by placing our trust in what Jesus accomplished at Calvary we are born again and enter into all the blessing of the New Covenant life.

## **Note**

The Passover lamb was roasted in fire as were the sin offerings of the Old Testament. As the lamb represented Jesus our sin offering it had to be fire, not raw and not boiled.

Fire is a symbol of God's judgement - in this case His judgement of human sin.

## Chapter 2

### Unleavened bread

The deliverance out of Egypt, at the time of Passover, was the most dramatic of events. That it was uniquely the work of the Lord meant that there was no human input – it was the Lord's Passover.

The delivering work of the Lord's Passover could involve no sin. Had man designed it then sin would have been present.

The concept that there was no sin in the design and implementation of Passover is very important because of its prophetic look forward to the Messiah.

So the Lord ordained the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As we have already established, leaven was a type for sin. We see that in the New Testament in Matthew 13:33:

*'Another parable He spoke to them: The Kingdom of heaven is like, leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.'*

This parable has given rise to various interpretations but the only one that fully fits is this:

The woman is Eve who introduced sin to the world. Sin then permeated the entire world.

The three measures of meal represent the three great time cycles each of 2,000 years - that is the time from creation to the age of the Jews (1), the age of the Jews (2), the age of grace in which we live (3). Sin permeated all of time.

An alternative that also fits is that the three measures represent the body, soul and spirit of man. The point is that the leaven permeates and affects the whole. Sin abounds. Everyone human falls short due to sin and needs the deliverance we see typified in Passover.

Israel was instructed by God, before the Passover, to remove all leaven from their dwellings. Their dwellings had to be thoroughly searched and cleansed of all leaven. In the now ritualized celebration of the Jewish Passover this element still remains - so much so that some leaven is hidden for the children to search for and find.

That leaven represents the influence of evil is reflected in rabbinical writings and in the New Testament.

*'Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.'*

1 Corinthians 5:7

To mark the importance of the momentous deliverance from Egypt God gives the instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread to be kept from year to year:

*'And Moses said to the people; 'Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. On this day you are going out in the month of Abib. (Now called Nisan)*

*And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give to you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month.*

*Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord.*

*Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in your quarters.*

*And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.*

*It shall be a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.'* Exodus 13:3-10

## **Jesus is the bread that comes from heaven.**

Jesus is perfectly represented in this feast as He is completely free from sin - *'in Him there is no sin.'*

1 John 3:5 Jesus body is the unleavened bread.

Soon after the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus proclaims, *'I am the bread that comes down from heaven.'* *'I am the bread of life.'* *'I am the living bread.'*

Jesus made the difficult instruction, *'unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.'* John 6:53

In this passage in John's gospel Jesus makes a comparison between Himself, as the bread of life, and the manna, which the Jews ate in the wilderness. Many fail to see the symbolism - The manna in the wilderness came direct from heaven and met their immediate need for food - but did not give eternal life. Jesus comes down from heaven and meets our desperate need for release from the bondage of sin and is the very food of eternal life.

*'For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.'* John 6:55

We will go back to Jesus earlier words, *'Most assuredly I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and fishes. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because the Father has set His seal upon Him.'*

Jesus is using the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 to teach about Himself as the true bread, - *'For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world'* - then Jesus says *'I am the bread of life.'*

The key to understanding Jesus, when He talks of eating and drinking His flesh and blood, we will find in the account of Him meeting the woman of Samaria at the well.

The disciples had gone to the town to buy food. Jesus met the woman – the full story is in John 4:1-38. When the disciples return with food they urge Him, *'Rabbi, Eat.'* But Jesus replies, *'I have food to eat of which you do not know.'* The disciples ask, *'has anyone brought you food?'* Jesus replies, *'My food is to do the will of My Father.'*

So we are introduced to spiritual food. As believers we must eat the spiritual food represented by Jesus flesh and blood. It is only our full association with His sacrifice that brings freedom from sin and brings eternal life.

Spiritual food, doing the will of the Father, is seen in the feast of unleavened bread – no sin. This is step 2 of our journey – ceasing from our own works and following His instructions, both written and verbal.

For us as believers, the feast of unleavened bread speaks of our new position in Christ as we read in 1 Corinthians 5:7 - Paul saying, *'You are truly unleavened.'*

Being truly unleavened is doing the works the Father has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10) and not doing our own thing.

## Chapter 3

### Firstfruits

In the land the Israelites were instructed to keep the feast of firstfruits.

*'And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying. Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, "When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.*

*And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. Its grain offering shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma and its drink offering shall be of wine, one fourth of a hin.*

*You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."*

Leviticus 23:9-14

This is the barley harvest and the first sheaves are used as an offering to the Lord.

The fact that this feast also points to Jesus is very apparent and is explained by Paul to the Corinthians:

*'But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits ; afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.'*  
1 Corinthians 15:20-24.

### **Firstfruits and the burnt offering**

Part of the feast of firstfruits was the burnt offering which accompanied the waving of the sheaf to the Lord. Burnt offerings were used for sin and for consecration. And so the reason for the burnt offering in this feast is because it depicts the acceptable offering of Jesus blood for our sin and our consecration to the Lord.

So we again see Jesus depicted in the feasts. We also see the feast representing part of our journey as believers – in Christ we are freed from sin, acceptable to God the Father, and consecrated to Him.

The three feasts we have seen so far all take place in Nisan:

Passover is the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Unleavened bread is 15<sup>th</sup> for 7 days

Firstfruits on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Paul at Troas

There is an interesting account of the Apostle Paul at Troas where the brethren have gathered to break bread. Paul is speaking well into the night. Eutychus becomes drowsy and falls out a window three floors up and dies. Paul raises him from the dead. Acts chapter 20:7-12.

This happens on the first of weeks (Most bibles require correction. 'Day' in verse 7 is in italics - meaning it is not present in the Greek and 'week' in the Greek text is plural 'weeks'.) This is incredibly important as the first of weeks (The Jewish festival) is the day of the offering of the firstfruits.

They have gathered to celebrate Jesus resurrection. He rose from the dead on the first of weeks - Mark 16:2 (Same comment about the Greek text applies here as well. All references to 'week' in Mark 16 are 'weeks' in the Greek.)

After raising Eutychus from the dead they break bread - it was midnight, marking the time Jesus rose from the dead before meeting Mary in the garden by the tomb.

What a glorious account of the celebration of Jesus rising from the dead as our firstfruits.

For our journey we can see three steps:

Passover = new birth

Unleavened bread = put off the old sinful ways

Firstfruits = In Christ we are part of the firstfruit so put on the New man in Christ. Live in the reality of '*Christ in you the hope of glory.*'

There is now a gap before we come to the feast of weeks (Pentecost.)

## **Chapter 4**

### **The feast of weeks**

#### **Peace, power and rest**

The first three feasts of the Passover season have brought us peace with God, sins forgiven, made acceptable, consecrated to Him. We enjoy that peace when we live in the 'new man' having put off the 'old man.'

Paul goes through a list of sins ending with *'do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.'* Colossians 3:9-10

The legal title document to our peace with the Lord has been represented through the three feasts we have seen so far. But for man to be able to live in the realization of his new position, power is required. So we come to the feast of weeks – Pentecost, the believer's second major encounter with the Lord.

Here is the biblical instruction:

*'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.'* Leviticus 23:15-16.

***This is the time of the wheat harvest.***

There are specific instructions regarding, two loaves baked with leaven, 7 lambs, a bull and two rams , grain and drink offerings, which together make a burnt offering, a sin offering and a peace offering.

We get the name 'Feast of Weeks' from the instruction to come to the 7<sup>th</sup> Sabbath and the name 'Pentecost' from the Greek for fifty - the 50<sup>th</sup> day.

The reason why the two loaves are baked with leaven, rather than being unleavened, is because human beings are going to be the recipient of the power of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is going to work through fallible humans.

## **Fulfilment**

*'When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

*Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.*

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews. Devout men, from every nation under heaven.*

*And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in their own language.'* Acts 2:1-6

A point of note is that there were 120 present. (Acts 1:15) There was an earlier occasion when 120 were gathered, recorded in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14. As the worship rose to heaven the room filled with the glory of God and the priests could not stand.

Peter addresses the 'confused' crowd. His message to his fellow Jews is that they have missed the coming of Jesus as the Messiah.

Verse 37 tells us they were devastated:

*'Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren what shall we do?'*

*38 -39: The Peter said to them, 'repent, let every one of you be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord God will call.'*

As a result of their response 3,000 were added.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was at the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour - that is 9 am. At the 9<sup>th</sup> hour, the hour of prayer - that is 3 pm, Peter and John heal the lame man sitting at the gate Beautiful.

The power of the Holy Spirit had come!

## **Jesus fulfils Pentecost**

Jesus had promised the disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit in John 16:7.

On the day of His resurrection Jesus was the firstfruits presented to the Father, 50 days later He sends the Holy Spirit, fulfilling Pentecost.

For the believer the receiving of the Holy Spirit is the step which brings the power needed for the normal Christian life.

Here we stop a moment to remind ourselves that we receive the Holy Spirit at two levels. Firstly, the moment we believe in Jesus as our Saviour we are born again. Our human spirit, which had been dwelling in the realm of death, is born again - transferred from death to life. John 5:24. And the Holy Spirit took up residence - we became indwelt by Him.

This first took place after the resurrection when Jesus breathed on the disciples and said in command form, *'Receive the Holy Spirit.'* John 20:22.

Secondly, just before Jesus was taken up into heaven He said to them *'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'* Acts 1:8

For the disciples the coming of the Holy Spirit took place in two steps 50 days apart.

We find it is common experience for Christians to also experience the two stages of the coming of the Holy Spirit – often more than 50 days apart! Regretfully, some brethren never experience the coming of the Holy Spirit in power, whilst some receive both at the same time, they are indwelt and filled at the point of salvation.

Eternal salvation is determined by being born again.

Power to live and reign in life requires the baptism of the Spirit.

**For the believer this is step four of our walk with the Lord**

## Intermission

The spring feasts, together referred to as Passover and Pentecost, are held at the time of the barley harvest and 50 days later at the wheat harvest. They have depicted four of the major steps of the Christian life. Each one has been fulfilled by Jesus.

Saved and empowered the Christian believer is equipped to live his or her life. Now it is the time of the fruit harvest before autumn and the final ingathering.

This intermission represents the time for the Christian believer to be fruitful, living life to the full, before entering into our eternal inheritance

Meantime during the fruit harvest -

*'I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.'*

*'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.'* John 15:5,7

This leads us on to consider the three autumn feasts, which are together referred to as Tabernacles.

Coming up:

Trumpets, The day of atonement, Tabernacles.

## Chapter 5

### Trumpets

The feast of trumpets is found in Leviticus 23:23-25:

*'Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.'"*

In Numbers it is described as *'a day of blowing the trumpets.'* (29:1)

On the first of this seventh month, it was declared a day of blowing - extended blowing of the trumpets.

The biblical text is very thin regarding the feast of trumpets. So we have to look a bit deeper to find significance for the feast - now recognized as Rosh Hashonoh and the Jewish New Year - but it was not so back in the days of Leviticus and Numbers when the feast was instituted.

In Numbers we find the instruction for trumpets;

*'And the Lord spoke to Moses saying: " Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.'"* (10:1-3)

On the first day of each month a trumpet was blown to let the people know the New Moon had been seen – it was the first of the month.  
(see note)

On the first day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month the blowing of trumpets was extended - a day of blowing.

(Later the silver trumpets were replaced by the ram's horn - the shofar, by the Jews.)

### **Time to move on**

So we have established the use of the two silver trumpets was to gather the people to be before the Lord, ready to break camp, ready to move on.

When the Lord appeared to Moses on the mountain He gave instruction for the people to be gathered to Him at the foot of Mount Sinai. The text tells us that the people were summoned by a long and loud trumpet blast. (Exodus 19) Which got louder and louder.

With the noise, the fire, the smoke, the thundering, the lightning, the quaking of the mountain, the people became afraid. This caused the people to say to Moses, *'You speak with us, and we will hear you; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.'* Exodus 20:19

Because we have established that Jesus fulfills the feasts and that the feasts also mark significant stages in the Christian life we can now see the significance of the feast of trumpets. It will be signaling time to move on. There will be fulfilment for the believers. The rapture of the church is coming very soon – actually 21 days later at Tabernacles. But for Israel there is a 7 year delay whilst they Day of Wrath is worked through.

*'Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.'* 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

*'For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord, Therefore comfort one another with these words.'* 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

So Jesus blows the last trumpet of the church age and summons us to be ready to move on, ready to meet Him in the clouds in the new incorruptible bodies we receive at that moment. Just how this will manifest in the very near future we do not know, but we will undoubtedly recognize at the time.

Jesus fulfills the feast.

The feast marks the fifth major stage of the Christian life – preparing to meet Jesus in our immortal bodies.

(5 represents grace – surely this fifth feast is the fulfillment of grace for those who believe.)

Regretfully, although the feasts were given to them, Israel failed to see their fulfilment in Jesus the Messiah.

So for Israel in particular there is more to come.

Note.

Israel used the visual method to determine the first day of the month – when the new moon could be seen the trumpet was blown. This means that first day of the new month for Israel is always 1 day late astronomically.

Jesus celebrated His last Passover the day before Israel celebrated it. Because of their use of the visual method Israel was one day late in celebrating Passover. Jesus who perfectly fulfilled everything celebrated Passover on the astronomically correct day.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Day of Atonement**

'Yom Kippur,' the day of Atonement, begins at sundown at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

In Judaism the Day of Atonement is the culmination of 10 days of repentance and mourning. Jews are to seek reconciliation, albeit temporary, with God and with their neighbours. Permanent reconciliation with God requires being born again through belief in Jesus sacrifice.

For the born again believer Jesus has already fulfilled everything necessary for us to be in right standing with God, the Father. Our day of atonement has been made at Calvary – we are fully reconciled with God.

*'We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation (atonement.)'* Romans 5:11

**For Israel the fulfillment is yet to come:**

*'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look upon Me whom they pierced. Yes they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.'* Zechariah 12:10

The time we know as the 'Great Tribulation' will be devastating for the world and particularly for Israel. It is the time of God's wrath against sin. The tribulation comes quickly after the rapture of the church.

Zechariah describes it like this:

*'And it shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one third shall be left in it; I will bring the one third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "this is My people;" and each one will say, "The Lord is my God."' 13:8-9*

The requirement for the return of Jesus to put an end to the tribulation is met when the Jews call on the name of the Lord:

*'I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."'*  
Matthew 23:39

A final reminder for the believer - *'God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.'* 1 Thessalonians 5:9  
*'Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us (Greek rhuomai lit: snatches us to Himself) from the wrath to come.'* 1 Thessalonians 1:10

Believers, our day of atonement is already complete. Yet for the bride of Christ there will be a time to especially focus on preparing herself for the marriage to the Lamb following the trumpet call.

The fulfilment of the prophetic message of the Day of Atonement could be considered as a two sided event depending on one's spiritual position - believer or unbeliever, born again and made righteous or still in one's sins.

On the unbeliever side we have all the Jews and Gentiles who, up to this point, have not believed in Jesus and become part of the bride. Fulfilment for them will be tribulation, during which repentance and mourning for Him whom they pierced will be the prelude to the call that brings the return of Christ to bring an end to the tribulation.

For the bride, now preparing for the rapture, there will also be a time of special focus. The bride gets herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb which will take place in heaven before the fulfillment of the last of the 7 feasts. Revelation 19:7

Which leads us to the last of the seven feasts:

## Chapter 7

### Tabernacles (Also called booths or Ingathering)

The Lord's command was that on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of this 7<sup>th</sup> month (Tishri) there was to be a holy convocation for 7 days to the Lord. On the first day and the 8<sup>th</sup> day there were to be holy convocations – that is they were sacred assemblies so they could do no customary work. These were called in scripture Sabbath-rests.

All the work was done, all the harvests were safely gathered in – now for a special time with the Lord. Make booths out of branches to dwell in for 7 days – that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Tabernacles is a celebration, a time of rejoicing.

*'You shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your gates.'*  
Deuteronomy 16:13-15

It is from Zechariah that we see the prophetic significance of the feast of Tabernacles:

*'And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which come against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles.'* (14:16)

The feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated when Jesus is ruling and reigning in Jerusalem, His bride with Him 7 years after the rapture of the church.

This is after the Jews have looked on Him whom they pierced and called for Him to come. As He promised, when they do this, He comes.

The fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles is the dwelling of God with man.

For the bride there is already fulfillment – from the moment we first believed Jesus has taken up residence in our human spirit, with the promise never to leave or forsake us. At the rapture the fulfillment takes another level as we receive immortal bodies and are transferred to be with Him.

Now the complete fulfillment is when Jesus, with His bride, returns to earth and takes up residence amongst those who came through the Tribulation to re-populate the earth for the 1,000 years of Jesus reign before eternity.

Now Tabernacles is fulfilled – Jesus is dwelling with His people here on earth.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusions

When the Lord God gave instructions for keeping the feasts they were described as being holy gatherings to be kept in the ordained way and as a statute throughout the generations.

The feasts were very special occasions in the Jewish households, times when the children would learn about and be reminded of the deliverance and provision of the Lord.

The feasts carried prophetic messages which those with eyes to see and ears to hear could receive, whilst others were blinded.

Now we see a bit more clearly:

For Israel the feasts point to the Messiah to come - to the Lamb of God, even though when He came they rejected Him. The feasts remind Israel that God promised to bring them out of Egypt into a land of blessing - flowing with milk and honey. The agricultural nature and timing of the feasts, remind Israel that it is God who provides the harvest. The promise is that it will be plentiful - if the harvest is not plentiful they should be alerted to the fact that something is going wrong.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 Israel get this promise:

*'If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.'*

This was spoken to Solomon by the Lord when He was instructing him regarding the future of the house of David.

It does find fulfillment in the Tribulation when the Jews do seek Jesus whom they pierced. He hears from heaven. He comes. He establishes and sits on the throne of David. The land is healed and prospers.

For the Christian believer the feasts point to stages of the Christian life:

1 First the deliverance from the bondage of sin and the bringing of resurrection life.

2 Then the unleavened (sinless) nature of the resurrected life.

3 Then the eternal promise with Jesus as our firstfruit, the One who goes before to prepare the way for us to live in newness of life.

4 The power to live the New Covenant life as we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our personal Pentecosts.

5 The call of Trumpets to be ready to rise into our inheritance at the coming rapture.

6 That period when the bride prepares for the rapture and coming wedding, whilst on earth the Jews reflect, consider their position and call for Jesus.

7 The final fulfillment when Jesus tabernacles with man whom he created and we reign with Him in Jerusalem.

## Timing

With our understanding enlightened we can come to some conclusions regarding the rapture of the church.

First. Everything the Lord does is very precise so to fulfil the type the rapture will take place on the last day of Tabernacles.

Secondly to fulfill firstfruits it will take place on a Monday - this is because Jesus rose from the dead on Monday morning. As the firstfruit rose on Monday so the bride will rise on Monday. (This will come as a surprise to many because the church has lost sight of the timing of Jesus death and resurrection. In contradiction to Jesus one sign, that of Jonah, the church has adopted crucifixion on Friday and resurrection on Sunday - it cannot be as you cannot accommodate three days and three nights.)

When added to our understanding of time, which again is exactly precise, we can know when the rapture will take place. This is in fulfilment of Paul's words - *'But you brethren are not in darkness so that this Day overtake you as a thief.'* 1 Thessalonians 5:4

So we are able to say it is our expectation that the rapture will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025, soon after midnight, Jerusalem time, which is both a Monday and the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

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