

## THE SYMBOLISM OF GOD'S HOLY DAYS

God gave to Israel His Feast days recorded for us in [Leviticus 23](#). These festivals to Israel celebrated their national deliverance at the time of the Exodus by God's hand and also showed gratitude to God for the two major seasonal harvests each year.

As with many things of God the lessons of the Holy Days are dual in nature – they teach both physical lessons as well as spiritual lessons. They also teach us tremendous lessons about the great master plan God is working out here on earth through mankind.

“They reveal the framework that organizes the major events of God's plan in a logical order...When God freed the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, He revealed to them, in addition to the weekly Sabbath, His seven annual festivals. The apostle Paul tells us these observances are ‘a shadow of things to come’ ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)) - that is, they foreshadow and reveal the basics of His plan of salvation.



“God originally gave them as harvest festivals - and for an appropriate reason. The writers of the Bible often compare the spiritual harvest of human lives to the agricultural harvests that physically sustain life. Therefore we find harvest analogies and parables to represent aspects of God's plan to bring humanity to repentance. God's goal is to harvest human beings - you and me - into His Kingdom.

“Jesus compared the work God began through Him to a harvest. Christ told His disciples: ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together’ ([John 4:34-36](#))” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – ‘God’s Festivals: Keys to Humanity’s Future, p.2).

In [Leviticus 23:2](#) God tells Moses: “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: ‘**The feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, **these are My feasts.**”

Notice that they are the Feasts of the Lord – they are not just Jewish feasts! These are the Lord's feasts!

He then proceeds to give the details of each of God's feasts starting with the weekly feast of the sabbath and then proceeding on with the seven annual feasts of God.

In [Colossians 2:16-17](#) the apostle Paul to the primarily Gentile church at Colosse tells them to not let anyone hassle them about the way that they observed **the sabbath, new moons and festivals** and then he goes on to say that these “**are a shadow of things to come.**”

The sabbath and many of the annual feasts (particularly the latter feast days) picture future events in the plan of God when God will intervene in world events and bring His kingdom to the earth.

There is great symbolism to the sabbath, the new moons and the festivals of God. We've already covered the three major meanings behind the sabbath day. We will soon go deeply into the great symbolism behind each of the Holy Days. Before we do let's look briefly at the symbolism of the new moons.

We are told in [Genesis 1:14](#) that God set the sun and moon in the heavens to divide time. We are told in [Leviticus 23:5](#) that the Passover is held at the beginning of the 14th day of the first month. This first month on God's sacred calendar is not January as it is on our calendar which came from the Romans. The first month on God's calendar is the month of Nisan or Abib (meaning green ears) which starts in spring in the northern hemisphere. God's calendar starts around March / April on our Roman calendar.

The word month comes from the moon and originally a month was the time that it took for the moon to go through all its phases and revolve around the earth (from new moon to new moon).

Originally this period was 30 days when the length of the year was exactly 360 days. In the book of Genesis we read that the Flood lasted 150 days and went from the 17th of the second month to the 17th of the seventh month - 5 months of exactly 30 days each ([Genesis 7:11, 8:3-4](#)). The length of the prophetic year in Daniel and Revelation that is used is 360 days and not our current 365 ¼ days. The number of degrees in a circle (360) is also another remnant of that earlier time in man's history when there were 360 days in the year.

Currently the time it takes for the moon to go through all its phases and revolve around the earth (from new moon to new moon) is 29 ½ days and so the months on God's calendar alternate between 29 and 30 days each.

Now because 29 ½ doesn't evenly fit into 365 days, an extra month (Adar 2) is added about once every three years so the months keep up with the seasons. This is why the Feast of Tabernacles alternates each year between mid October, early October and late September. The Roman calendar we use today was invented much later and does not follow the phases of the moon.

What is the symbolism behind the new moons? Also, why start the month at the new moon and not the full moon which might, at first, seem more logical given it is easier to see?

In the church we have often taught the analogy that the Sun can be compared to God ([Malachi 4:2](#)) while the moon, which has no light of its own but can radiate a lot of the Sun's light, can be compared to the church.

If we follow that analogy further then the new moon would symbolize the time when those of us in the church were in darkness without God. Just as over the course of the month the moon takes on more and more of the brightness of the Sun, we too, in our christian walk must take on more and more of the light of God's word and character. The lesson of this analogy helps to explain why God starts the month at the darkest period (new moon) and also why God's day starts at sunset ([Genesis 1:5, 8, Leviticus 23:32](#)) with the darkest part (night) before the daylight half.

On the new moon two silver trumpets were blown in ancient Israel ([Numbers 10:10](#)). The trumpets are a symbol of alarm and war ([Numbers 10:9](#)). The new moons are never listed as sabbaths in the Bible and there is no clear directive stating the new moons are a holy convocation.

There are two passages that give support to the case that, even though new moons are not sabbath days they may be holy convocations in a similar way that Nisan 14, the night of Passover, is a holy convocation or commanded assembly ([1 Corinthians 11:20-27](#)) but is not a sabbath day (the day after, Nisan 15, the first day of Unleavened Bread is a sabbath). The first is in [Numbers 10:3](#) where we read that Israel, when they were on the move in the wilderness, would assemble at the tent of meeting when they heard the trumpets being blown.

The second passage is in [Ezekiel 46:1-3](#) where we read that people will be worshipping in the millennial Temple on the new moons:

**“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on the Sabbaths and the New Moons.’”**

Even though the primarily Gentile Colossian church wouldn't have kept the new moon as a sabbath, it appears as if they were still carrying on the Jewish tradition of assembling together on the night of the new moon ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)). This tradition will gain a resurgence in the millennium ([Isaiah 66:23](#)) when the millennial temple is built.

At the very least now, the new moon is a regular reminder to us and a good time to reflect on the time when we were in darkness without God and when we answered the call (symbolized by the trumpet) that

alarmed us of our sins and our need for God's light in our lives. It reminds us of the need to rededicate ourselves to taking on more and more of the light of God's word and character in our christian walk just as moon gets brighter as it takes on more of the Sun's light over the course of the month.

Let's now move onto God's annual Holy Days and explore the symbolism of each of them which cover the great plan of salvation that God has for mankind.

"Seven annual festivals are listed in the Scriptures:

"(1) the Passover, (2) the Feast of Unleavened Bread, (3) the Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost), (4) The Feast of Trumpets, (5) the Day of Atonement, (6) the Feast of Tabernacles and (7) the Last Great Day. Each focuses on a specific aspect of God's plan.

"Occurring during the physical harvests of life-sustaining food products, God's festivals all point to aspects of His spiritual harvest of humanity to eternal life. As is so often the case in the Scriptures, God uses physical things to help us better understand spiritual truths. Jesus Himself frequently drew physical analogies to teach spiritual principles" (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p.3).

## PASSOVER

**Leviticus 23:5** - "On the 14th day of the 1st month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."

**Exodus 12:3, 6-8** - "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb...Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth 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. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.'"

**The Passover was to be a yearly reminder of God's intervention in delivering the Israelites' firstborn from death at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 12:26-27). It also pictured, in advance, the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of all mankind who is called "our Passover" lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.**

The sparing of the Israelites' firstborn from the death angel through the shed blood of lambs on that first Passover is a symbolic type of us being spared today from the eternal penalty of sin (**Romans 6:23**) through Christ's sacrifice.

"What did the Passover service mean to the ancient Israelites? - "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians'" (**Exodus 12:26-27, NIV**)...

"Should Christians continue observing the New Testament Passover service? – 'For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy [irreverent] manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord' (**1 Corinthians 11:23-27, NIV**).

"Paul shows that the earliest Christians not only observed this festival annually - with its new symbols of bread and wine that Christ instituted to represent His suffering and death...Since it is a memorial, this God-given event should be observed only once every year as God has commanded (**Numbers 9:2-3**) - not at our discretion nor on some weekly or monthly schedule. This festival should be observed on the exact annual date that is the anniversary of Christ's death for our sins - the annual Passover festival...and in the proper manner as described above" (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – 'God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p.3, 5-6).

The Passover is held at the beginning of the 14th day of the first month. This first month is not January. It is the month of Nisan or Abib (meaning green ears) on God's calendar which starts in spring in the northern hemisphere.

The Israelites were told to pick out a lamb on the 10th day and hold it for four days (**Exodus 12:3**). During those four days it was very easy to become attached to it with it in their household. To have to kill it after those four days was to be an emotional experience to help them to feel what it was like for God to give up His only Son (**John 3:16**) in order to pass over our sins.



We are told not to take the Passover unworthily but to examine ourselves beforehand (**1 Corinthians 11:27-28**) and make sure we are doing our best to follow God's ways. A great price was paid to make forgiveness available to us and God wants us not to take it lightly. In Israel no uncircumcised person was to take the Passover (**Exodus 12:48**). We saw in the last lesson that circumcision, as a sign of God's covenant people, has been replaced with baptism and so only those who have been baptized take the Passover today.

Before Christ ate His last Passover before He was crucified He washed the disciples feet (**John 13**) and said: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (**John 13:15**). By washing their feet, Jesus was illustrating to His disciples that He had come to earth to serve mankind. Shortly afterward, He proved the extent of His extreme service to this world when He gave His very life for the sins of all mankind. The foot washing ceremony that takes place before the bread and wine is taken depicts the attitude of humility and service to others that Christ wants all of us to have plus it is symbolic of our being cleansed from our contact with the world over the past year (**John 13:9-10**).

When Christ kept His last Passover before He was about to be killed He changed the symbols from the Passover lamb, which was an Old Testament type of Christ's sacrifice to the new symbols of the bread and wine which picture Christ's body and His blood which was sacrificed for us.

The bread pictures four things -:

- The literal body of Christ which was broken for us (**Luke 22:19**).
- The Word of God which is the bread of life (**Matthew 4:4, John 6:48**). We need to use God's Word, the Bible, to grow in grace and knowledge and be more like God.
- The church - "We, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread" (**1 Corinthians 10:17**). We should be thankful for the body of the church - our brethren who we are called together with. We should have a renewed sense of dedication to serve our brethren and strive to resolve any differences we might have and be unified with one another in the church.
- The mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5-8**) and having the same love and concern that Christ showed when He was here on earth.

We are told that "by His stripes we are healed" (**Isaiah 53:5**). The Passover also reminds us of the blessing of healing and the forgiveness of our breaking the physical laws which cause sickness and disease. Following on from that, we should examine ourselves and how we treat our bodies and be determined to glorify God in our bodies by living a healthy life (**1 Corinthians 3:16-17**).

We know that Christ's flesh was torn and broken but why did God make sure that none of His bones would be broken (**John 19:33-36**), as is pictured by the Passover lamb being roasted whole with no bones broken (**Exod. 12:43-46**)? Now, our bones make up our inner framework and picture our inner strength.

I suspect the importance of God ensuring His bones weren't broken is a type of Christ's inner strength of character, through God's spirit, not being broken through the ordeal that He went through. He did not compromise an inch with sin through all that He went through (**1 Peter 2:21-23**). By doing so He left a very powerful example for us to follow in not compromising with God's way of life as we go through trials.

By symbolically ingesting Christ we focus our minds also on allowing Him to live His life in us. It takes self-discipline to submit to God's will and not live our own way, especially when our will clashes with God's will. Ultimately the meaning of Christ's sacrifice to us should be to "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (**Hebrews 9:14**).

The wine pictures Christ's shed blood ([Luke 22:20](#)) to cover all our horrible past sins which gives us a fresh start. We are then forgiven of our past sins, though mindful we have to change our life from here on.



The wine is also called the cup of blessing in [1 Corinthians 10:16](#). It reminds us of the many blessings we are to be thankful to God for in this life and the loyalty He has shown us in blessing us with all we have, including His forgiveness. It reminds us of our need to show that loyalty in return to Him in heartfelt obedience.

The shed blood of our Saviour, the cup which we drink, symbolizes sharing in His suffering in this life with the many trials we go through ([Matthew 20:23](#)). We are to be living sacrifices ([Romans 12:1-2](#)) poured out like a drink offering in service and sacrifice ([Philippians 2:17](#)) for God and others as Christ has done for us. As God has forgiven us through Christ, we need to forgive others for their faults ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)) and even forgive ourselves for our own sins as well.

Christ said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom comes ([Matthew 26:29](#)). This is a type of the High Priest, which Christ is for us now ([Hebrews 4:14-15](#)), not drinking wine when he is serving in the Temple of God ([Leviticus 10:8-11](#)). Wine is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit ([Ephesians 5:18](#)).

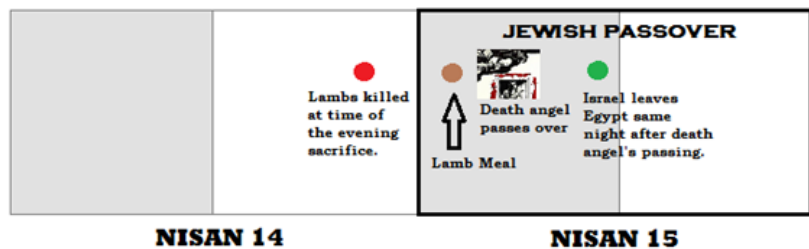
In [Exodus 12:27](#) we read the following about the Passover: "It is the sacrifice of LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt, when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Note carefully here that it primarily celebrates the passing over of their houses sparing their lives, not just the killing of the lambs. [Leviticus 23:5](#) clearly states the Passover is on the 14th day of the 1st month.

Despite the plain instructions in [Leviticus 23](#) the Jews do not keep Nisan 14 as the Passover today. They keep the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15, as Passover, not Nisan 14.

The majority of the Jews had it wrong in Jesus' day as well – they killed the lambs on the afternoon of Nisan 14 and had a lamb roast on the evening of Nisan 15 in contrast to the way that Jesus kept it ([John 18:28](#)).

Many today mistakenly believe that with the original Passover that the lambs were killed on the afternoon of Nisan 14 and that the death angel passed over on the night of Nisan 15 and then a few hours later on the same night they left Egypt.

#### JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER



#### BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ORIGINAL PASSOVER



If this view were correct then why celebrate the Passover on Nisan 14 as [Leviticus 23](#) plainly states if the actual event it commemorated – the passing over of the death angel – occurred as they believe on the night of Nisan 15? It doesn't make sense.

Jesus was put up on the cross about 9am ([Mark 15:25](#)) and died around 3pm ([Matthew 27:45-50](#)). These two times of day were the times of the morning and evening daily sacrifices which Christ was the type of, hence why He was raised on the cross at the time of the morning sacrifice and died at the time of the evening sacrifice. The fact that Jesus was killed at the same time that the Jews were killing the passover lambs in the Temple was merely a co-incidence.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated the day Israel came out of Egypt. **Exodus 12:17** says: “And you shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For in this same day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.”

These two great back-to-back feasts celebrated two different events – one the passing over and sparing of their lives by the death angel and the other their coming out of Egypt. They celebrate different events that occurred on two consecutive but different days. We should not blur the two events into one. When they kept the first Passover God told them – “And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning” (**Exodus 12:22**). It was on the night of Nisan 15, the night after they were spared from the death angel that the Israelites celebrated their freedom and were able to leave Egypt.

For those who weren't able to keep the Passover through sickness or distance or other reasons there was the second Passover which was kept on the fourteenth day of the second month. We read of it in **Numbers 9:9-12**:

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD’s Passover. On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.”

### FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

**Leviticus 23:6-8** - “**And on the 15th day of the same [1st] month** is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it*.”

**Exodus 12:15-17** – “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.”

**The Feast of Unleavened Bread anciently symbolized the exodus of the Israelites and their deliverance by God out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:17). For those of us in the church it pictures putting sin out of lives as well as developing the character of God (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).**

Leaven or yeast is what is put into bread to make it rise. Leaven is compared to sin (**1 Corinthians 5:8**) because just as leaven puffs up bread so does sin puff us up spiritually. God does not want us puffed up with our own importance but humble and willing to serve others. Once we have repented of our sins and been forgiven by God, we must strive to forsake sin completely. We must come out of this world's ways of sin (**Revelation 18:4**) - just as Israel left Egypt which is also a type of sin (**Hebrews 11:25-26, Revelation 11:8**). We must be striving to put all sin away from us. That is our part in God's Master Plan for us.



In **1 Corinthians 5** Paul had to deal with a problem in the church at Corinth. They allowed a man who was continuing to committing a terrible sexual sin and not trying to deal with it to continue attending church. Most of the church knew about the problem and Paul knew it would send the wrong message to the rest of the church that it is OK to sin like that. By not putting out the sinner from the congregation He realized that others in the church might also commit such sins and think they could get away with it. He connected an important lesson from the Passover and Unleavened Bread festival season that they were in to the problem that they had in their church. He wrote:

“Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven [put the sinner and their own sins out], that you may be a new lump, since you truly are

unleavened [they had physically de-leavened their homes but they needed to also be spiritually unleavened and not puffed up]. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. **Therefore let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).

“Paul commanded the Corinthian Christians - mostly gentiles (non-Israelites) - to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. His instructions show that Christians from non-Jewish communities and cultures kept the Days of Unleavened Bread. Setting an example for all Christians today, these Jews and non-Jews observed these days in accordance with God's laws” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p.6).

“The church at Corinth was obviously and unmistakably keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to which Paul repeatedly alluded. However, Paul used the Corinthians' faithful obedience in keeping the feast physically (removing leaven from their homes) as a basis to encourage them to celebrate this feast with proper understanding of its spiritual intent.

“Today removing leaven from our homes for seven days reminds us that we, too, through prayer and God's help and understanding, must recognize, expel and avoid sin. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is thus a time of personal reflection. We should meditate on our attitudes and conduct and ask God to help us recognize and overcome our shortcomings” (God's Holy Day Plan, p.22).

There are two annual Sabbaths or Holy Days during this feast on the first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread. We meet for the Passover service during the night part of Passover (Nisan 14) but Passover is not a Sabbath day. We are not commanded to abstain from leaven until the beginning of Nisan 15 but traditionally most people have de-leavened their homes before Nisan 14 and are not eating leaven by then.

We have to remember that it is not called the Feast of not eating Leavened Bread but the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Not only do we need to put sin out of our lives but we also have to put on God's character. We need to develop all of the fruits of God's spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). In 1 Corinthians 5:8 Paul talks about the unleavened bread of sincerity of truth and sincerity. Here are two specific qualities we can look at in our own lives at this time. Do we really speak and live the truth and with sincerity and not hypocrisy (saying one thing but doing another)?

In Deuteronomy 16:3 we read about two other reasons why God told Israel to eat unleavened bread and abstain from leaven. Firstly we are told that they didn't have leaven because they left in haste and secondly, it was called the bread of affliction in the same verse reminding them of the bitter affliction of slavery that God had delivered them from.

What are the lessons for us today? Just as Israel left in haste from Egypt, which is a type of sin, we have to put sin out of lives with urgency. We can't fool around with sin. If we stay in a sinful environment too long it will overtake us and enslave us. Paul tells us that a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). If we let Satan and sin to get a foot in the door they will push open the whole door. That's why we cannot afford to compromise even a little. We are also told to beware of the spiritual leaven of false teachers (Matthew 16:6-12).

There are three lessons that we can learn from the meaning of the bread of affliction. Firstly, it pictures the trials that we have to suffer in this life (Acts 14:22) to have eternal life. That reminds us that if we want anything worthwhile, such as eternal life, we have to work hard and even suffer for it.

Secondly, it pictures what Christ had to suffer for us (1 Peter 2:21) and the last profound lesson of the bread of affliction is the lesson that **SIN HURTS!** That is something we have to believe not just in our minds but deep in our hearts as well. How much we believe deep in our heart that sin hurts is shown in the choices that we make each day. Sometimes we love our sins a lot more than we should.

There are lessons that we learn from the rituals of de-leavening our homes, abstaining from leaven and eating unleavened bread. Do we think about them as we go through them? Obviously de-leavening our homes shows we have to thoroughly put sin out from every nook and cranny we can get to. It teaches us that God's way of life is not a smorgasbord. We can't pick and choose. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by

**EVERY** word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (**Matthew 4:4**). We can ask ourselves, "What areas am I still holding back from God?"

Sometimes it's hard to tell whether certain things contain leaven or not. This can teach us the lesson of avoiding the grey areas. Sometimes we accidentally eat something leavened. This shows us how easy it is to sin (**Hebrews 12:1**) and how much we need God's help to avoid sin.

Sometimes we find leaven during the feast we missed when de-leavening just like we find hidden sins in our life which have to be put away immediately. We have to eat unleavened bread every day - seven days shall you eat it (**Exodus 12:15**). This teaches us our need to come to God seeking His help and power every day and be renewed day by day (**2 Corinthians 4:16**). Seven is the number of completeness, teaching us that we need to put sin out of our lives completely.

“[In **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**] Paul compares a Christian's deliverance from sin through the sacrifice and assistance of Christ to Israel's deliverance from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea [which probably occurred on the final day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread]...

“After we are justified by Christ's sacrifice at the time of baptism, we must be led out of sin and into a righteous pattern of life just as Israel was led out of its bondage during the same Days of Unleavened Bread. This festival represents the work of the living, resurrected Christ directly leading and assisting us in overcoming sin” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p.6)

Since none of the seven festivals of God are devoted to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the resurrection neglected in the Holy Day plan of God? The answer to that question is that it isn't neglected and that it is intimately connected with a special ceremony that God gave to Israel that occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Israelites commemorated the wave sheaf offering on the first day of the week that fell during the Feast. In **Leviticus 23:10-11** we read: “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.’”



The wave sheaf was the very first sheaf of wheat that was harvested in Israel during the early barley harvest which concluded at the feast of Pentecost seven weeks later. The first harvest was the smaller of the two annual harvests. Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Firstfruits. The wave sheaf was the first of the firstfruit harvest. The Jews cut the first sheaf right on sunset to give the maximum amount of time to prepare the sheaf for the morning sacrifice around 9am when it would be waved to God. The sheaf would be ground and beaten into very fine flour before being waved up to God and then waved back..

Those of us in the church are the firstfruits of salvation before the later greater harvest of souls in the millennium. Christ is called the firstborn from the dead in **Colossians 1:18**. In **1 Corinthians 15:20-23** we see that Christ is the first of the firstfruits and the wave sheaf that was waved at the very beginning of the early harvest represented Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath before the wave sheaf offering is the memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who rose near the end of the Sabbath. He rose to heaven and was accepted as the true wave sheaf offering - the first of the firstfruits - on the day after.

Christ as the first of the firstfruits is called the firstborn from the dead (**Colossians 1:18**) tying the resurrection to the symbolism of the first of the firstfruits. **Deuteronomy 16:9** speaks of the wave sheaf offering as the time when “the sickle is first put to the standing grain” in the NRSV. The sheaf of grain had to be standing when the wave sheaf was cut loose from the ground at sunset after the weekly Sabbath. The picture is of Christ, resurrected from the dead, standing, awaiting His ascension to the Father.



Jesus said to Mary Magdalene after she recognized Him: "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" ([John 20:17](#)). Later on the first day of the week, after He beamed up to heaven and back and was accepted by God, He allowed the disciples to touch him ([John 20:19-29](#)). On the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread it's worthwhile to take time to remember the resurrection of Christ which occurred on that day and all that it means for mankind.

What was the symbolism of waving the offering to God? This was not the only offering waved to God. Waving also done with the peace offerings where God, the priests and the offerers all got to share in the eating of the animal sacrifice. It was also done with consecration of Aaronic priesthood and the law of jealousy where there was suspicion of adultery.

Traditionally, the ceremony of "waving" seems to have meant that parts of the sacrifice were swung or elevated towards the altar, signifying that they were given to God, and then swung back again, indicating that they were given back by God to the priests, for them to eat (see also [Leviticus 9:18-21](#); [10:14-15](#); [Numbers 6:19-20](#); [18:18](#)).

Just as the new grain could not be eaten until the wave sheaf was offered, neither could those called by God and reconciled to Him fully partake of salvation through receiving the Holy Spirit until He had ascended to be accepted by God for all them and all humanity. Through His ascension He was waved to God. He was waved back to us for our benefit when He later descended that same day. His ascension may well have taken place at the same time of day the wavesheaf offering took place at the Temple which was the time of the morning sacrifice (9am).

What must have this scene in heaven been like? We get a glimpse of this in [Psalm 24](#) where we read: "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart... Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors!" ([verses 3-4, 8-9](#)).

It was the first time that Jesus had seen the Father face to face since He became a mere pinprick in Mary's womb. It must have been an incredibly emotional and teary-eyed moment, to say the least, when they finally embraced each other again.

There is some confusion created by using the term wave-sheaf because in English a sheaf is usually used for a stalk of grain. The Hebrew word "omer" translated sheaf is actually a dry measure of grain that was equivalent to a handful of flour. The first stalk of grain was ground into flour before it was waved before God.

The barley grain was parched, thrashed and sieved into fine flour. Animal sacrifices mercifully were not beaten like Christ was but grain offerings were beaten very fine to symbolize Christ's broken body. It is significant that barley is the crop used to symbolise not only Jesus Christ but the church as well. Barley is adaptable to a greater range of climate than any other cereal. It is able to grow and ripen in a shorter time than any other cereal and it has greater resistance to dry heat than other small grains.

When Christ was dedicated to and accepted by God, He became the token of the remainder of the spiritual harvest. With His consecration to God the rest of the first spiritual harvest was consecrated to God. He became a pledge from God that what happened with Christ – His resurrection and ascension – would happen for us as well. We, too, will ascend to meet him in the clouds.

Paul refers to this firstfruits offering in [Romans 11:16](#) when he says: "For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches." With the consecration of the firstfruit the whole harvest was also consecrated.

The wave offering was also important in that it marked the beginning of the count to Pentecost. Pentecost is seven weeks after the wavesheaf offering. We tend to think of Pentecost as symbolizing the birthday the church but in another sense it represents the end of the harvest that begins on wavesheaf Sunday and ended at Pentecost time in the Holy Land. Samuele Bacchiocchi has suggested that the seven weeks from the beginning to the end of the barley harvest ending in Pentecost represent the seven eras of the church.

After Christ returned from heaven He gave the great commission to His disciples. In essence He said: "The firstfruits wave offering has taken place. Get out there all over the world now and reap that first, smaller harvest of souls." He wants us to put our hearts and souls into supporting God's first harvesting of souls right now!

## PENTECOST

**Leviticus 23:15-21** – "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 7th Sabbath**...And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations."

**Pentecost was a celebration of thanksgiving for the first small harvest for Israel. In the plan of God we, in the church, are the first small harvest of souls of all humanity (James 1:18).**

"Earlier we saw Passover symbolizing Christ's giving of Himself for us so our sins could be forgiven. We also learned how the Days of Unleavened Bread teach us that we must remove and avoid sin, whether in actions or attitudes. The next Holy Day, Pentecost, builds on this important foundation.



"This festival is known by several names, which derive from its meaning and timing. Also known as the Feast of Harvest (**Exodus 23:16**), it represents the firstfruits (**Numbers 28:26**) gathered as the result of the labour of those who completed the spring grain harvests in ancient Israel (**Exodus 23:16**). It is also called the Feast of Weeks (**Exodus 34:22**), with this name coming from the seven weeks plus one day (50 days in all) that are counted to determine when to celebrate this festival (**Leviticus 23:16**).

[Pentecost is seven weeks (49 days) **FROM** the day after the Sabbath when the wave sheaf was offered (**Deuteronomy 16:9-10, Leviticus 23:15**) **AND** fifty days **TO** the day after seventh Sabbath – a Sunday (**Leviticus 23:16**). Recall that Christ was resurrected on the Sabbath **AND** He ascended to heaven to be accepted by God the Father on a Sunday.]

"Similarly, in the New Testament, which was written in Greek, this festival is known as Pentecost (Pentekostos in the original), which means 'fiftieth' (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 'Pentecost')...

"God chose the first Pentecost after Jesus Christ's resurrection to pour out the Holy Spirit on 120 believers (**Acts 1:15**). 'Now 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 [languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance' (**Acts 2:1-4**)...

"From this pivotal point, God's Spirit has been available to all who truly repent and are properly baptized. The Day of Pentecost is an annual reminder that God poured out His Spirit to establish His Church, the group of believers who are led by His Spirit...

"Humanly speaking, no matter how hard we try not to, we still sin (**1 Kings 8:46; Romans 3:23**). Acknowledging this inherent weakness of humanity, God lamented in **Deuteronomy 5:29**, 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments that it might be well with them and with their children forever!'

"Here God explains that humankind has a heart problem. Academic knowledge of the law does not enable us to think like God. Becoming godly in our thoughts, attitudes and actions is beyond the comprehension and ability of men and women without an additional ingredient: God's Spirit...

"God's Spirit within us identifies us and sanctifies us - sets us apart as Christians. 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,' wrote Paul, 'he is not His', and 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God' (**Romans 8:9, 14**).

“Paul also referred to the brethren as those ‘who have the firstfruits of the Spirit’ (**verse 23**). He alluded to several first-century Christians as the firstfruits of God's calling (**Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15**)...Few people understand that God follows a systematic plan, symbolized by His Holy Days, to save all humanity by offering all people eternal life in His Kingdom. In this world we are simply at the beginning of the harvest for the Kingdom of God...When God founded His Church by imparting His Spirit to certain believers on the Day of Pentecost in [**30 A.D.**], He was expanding His spiritual harvest. It was the beginning of what Joel prophesied, that God will ultimately pour out His Spirit on ‘all flesh’ (**Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:14-17**).

“This divine power allows us to be ‘led by the Spirit of God’ (**Romans 8:14**). It was this same power that transformed the lives of the early Christians and is the power working in the Church today. Paul told Timothy that God's Spirit is a ‘spirit of...power and of love and of a sound mind’ (**2 Timothy 1:7**). Pentecost serves as an annual reminder that our Creator still works miracles, granting His Spirit to the firstfruits of His spiritual harvest, empowering them to carry out His work in this world” (**God's Holy Day Plan**, p. 24-29).

We read in the New Testament that on at least two occasions, Paul carefully arranged his schedule according to where he wanted to be on the Day of Pentecost. In **Acts 20:16** we read: "For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the **Day of Pentecost**" and in **1 Corinthians 16:8** Paul wrote: "But I [Paul] will tarry in Ephesus until **Pentecost**."

The church in Ephesus was primarily a Gentile church. Just as Paul told the Gentile Christians in Corinth to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, here is another indication that early Christians, Jew and gentile alike, kept God's annual festivals.

At Pentecost we focus on how much we need God's spirit and what it does for us as God's down payment or deposit to us of eternal life (**Ephesians 1:14**). Pentecost is a day to reflect on developing the many qualities of God's Holy Spirit. Various analogies used for the Holy Spirit in the Bible help us to better understand some of those qualities. Christ saw the Spirit of God descending like a **dove** when He was baptized (**Matthew 3:16**) symbolizing the gentleness of God (**Matthew 10:16**). On the Day of Pentecost when the church began the Holy Spirit manifested itself in the form of **fire** (**Acts 2:1-2**) which is a symbol of zeal and energy (**Revelation 3:19**). At the same time it came as a mighty rushing **wind**. Wind is another symbol of power.

Jesus also described the Holy Spirit as living **water** (**John 7:38-39**). Water is something that cleanses and soothes us. Do people feel refreshed when they come in contact with us? **Light** is another symbol of the Holy Spirit (**Rev. 4:5**). We are to shine as good examples – lights in a darkened world (**Matthew 5:14-16, Philipians 2:15**). The Holy Spirit is symbolized as the **breath** of life (**John 20:22**) or spiritual life. The Holy Spirit is also symbolized as **oil** (**Matthew 25:8**). Oil is a healing or soothing agent. Do we hurt or do we help and soothe others with our words and actions?

Pentecost was held at the end of the seven week barley harvest and at the beginning of the wheat harvest. Pentecost was the first and smaller of the two great harvest festivals.

**Exodus 34:22** refers to the Feast of Weeks as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. During Unleavened Bread the wavesheaf offering was the firstfruits of the barley harvest. Another firstfruits ceremony was held on Pentecost. On Pentecost from the firstfruits of the wheat harvest two loaves with leaven were baked by fire. In Leviticus 23:17 it says that “They are the firstfruits to the LORD.”

God's church, the first small harvest of souls, is called His firstfruits in **James 1:18** and **Romans 8:23**. In the old Ambassador College Correspondence Course the interpretation given for the symbolism of the two wave loaves is that one represents the Old Testament saints and prophets and the other represents the New Testament church.

They were wave offerings symbolising being offered to God and, when waived back, offered as a service to others. We can ask ourselves the question “Are we seen as a blessing or service to others or are we just content to do our own thing?”

It is also interesting to note the rather unusual placement of one of the statutes in the feast chapter of **Leviticus 23** - that is the statute about not reaping the corners of the field and leaving them to the poor right

after the instructions about Pentecost ([Leviticus 23:22](#)). In essence, it seems to be saying that this is the real litmus test of a true spiritual firstfruit of God – whether you care for others around you like the poor just as the early New Testament church did after their first Pentecost together.

According to Jewish tradition God gave Israel the Ten Commandments on the Day of Pentecost and made the old covenant with Israel who became His holy people. Israel is called His firstfruits in [Jeremiah 2:3](#) – “Israel was holiness to the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase.” Pentecost is also a time to think of how God is going to first use the physical nation of Israel as a model nation in the millennium to teach the rest of the world God's ways ([Zechariah 8:23](#)).

The Jews traditionally read the book of Ruth on this day, a book that is a type of the future marriage of the church and Christ. Just as the apostles had to wait in Jerusalem to receive power from God's spirit ([Luke 24:49](#)) it teaches us that we have to wait on God to help us and deliver us from the trials of sin and the world.

The new covenant is being made with spiritual Israel – the church – where God's laws are not written on stone but on the hearts of those God is calling today ([2 Corinthians 3:3](#)). Pentecost was the birthday of the church ([Acts 2](#)) when the Holy Spirit was given and the new covenant began with spiritual Israel. It is a time to think of how we can contribute to unity in the church and be of one accord ([Acts 2:1](#)) just like the church was at Pentecost. It's also a time to think of how we can each support the church and it's Work of reaching the world with the good news of the Kingdom of God and salvation.

Even though the Church of God had its birth on the Day of Pentecost, the Feast of Pentecost was held at the end of the first harvest after beginning seven weeks earlier when the wavesheaf was offered. The seven weeks probably also represent the seven eras of God's church over the last 2000 years.

“The festivals that follow Pentecost point to God's plan for bringing the rest of humanity to repentance. The aspects of God's plan represented by the [first three] festivals - Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost - have already occurred. But the prophetic implications of the last four festivals...are yet to be fulfilled” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 7-8).

## FEAST OF TRUMPETS

[Leviticus 23:24-25](#) – “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: **In the 7th month, on the 1st 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*”

**The Feast of Trumpets pictures the time known as the Day of the Lord when the seven trumpet plagues of the Book of Revelation will occur ([Revelation 8, 9, 16](#)) and to the return of Jesus Christ at the seventh trumpet to rule all nations ([Revelation 11:15-18](#)). It also points us to the joyous time when Christians, living and dead ([1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)), will receive eternal life at the first resurrection and be born into the Family of God.**



The Feast of Trumpets represents that pivotal time in God's plan when He will bring this present evil age to an end and establish His rule and government over humanity.

**It is the Feast of Trumpets (plural) picturing the whole of the Day of the Lord and how God is going to discipline this world and bring this world to repentance.**

“The Feast of Trumpets is observed on the first day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar - falling in the autumn in the northern hemisphere, in September or October. This festival, today known as Rosh Hashanah by Jews [meaning head of the year], also begins the Jewish civil year. In ancient times Israel celebrated it with an emphasis on the blowing of trumpets, the primary method of announcing a gathering of the people or warning them of impending danger or war” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 9).

“God instructed ancient Israel in the appropriate use of trumpets to communicate important messages. The sounding of one trumpet meant a meeting of the leaders of Israel. Two trumpets sounded to call a

gathering of all of the people (**Numbers 10:3-4**). God also used a trumpet to herald His meeting with Israel when He descended upon Mount Sinai (**Exodus 19:16**).

“Trumpets could also sound a warning. **Numbers 10:9** states, ‘When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets.’ In this case the trumpets resounded a warning of impending danger and imminent warfare.

“Trumpets could also furnish a festive sound: ‘Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets...and they shall be a memorial for you before your God’ (**Numbers 10:10**). With their ability to transmit sound over great distances, trumpets were excellent instruments for attracting people’s attention” (God’s Holy Day Plan, p. 34).

Trumpets were used for sounding a warning people of danger and this day reminds us of our job, as a church, to warn this world of the impending great tribulation (**Ezekiel 33:1-9, Amos 3:6, Isaiah 58:1**). Trumpets were also blown as a sound of peace or end of strife (**2 Samuel 2:28**). When Christ comes back there will finally be peace on earth and not only that an end to the struggle in our lives against sin when we will be resurrected to immortality.

“Notice Paul’s description of the return of Jesus Christ: ‘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’ (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**).

“Paul also spoke of the day when the firstfruits pictured by Pentecost will be resurrected to immortal life. In **1 Corinthians 15:52** he says this will happen ‘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’” (God’s Holy Day Plan, p. 34-35).

Trumpets were also blown signifying the crowning of a king (**1 Kings 1:34**). This day pictures the crowning of Christ as king over all the earth (**Revelation 11:15**). Israel will also be re-gathered at the sound of the trumpet (**Isaiah 27:12-13**). According to Jewish tradition the re-creation of the earth culminating with Adam 6000 years ago also occurred on this day.

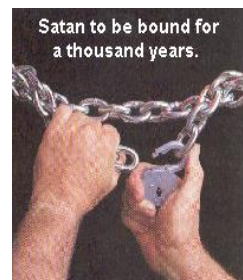
The message of the Feast of Trumpets is that we should repent and rend our hearts to God (**Joel 2:1-13**). The day reminds us of man’s utter hopelessness to live in peace and harmony without God and our utter need of Christ’s intervention in world affairs. On this day we should reflect on all that this world will go through in the future and sigh and cry over all these terrible things that humanity is bringing upon itself (**Ezekiel 9:4**).

“We see that, even though tragic events lie ahead, the good news is that God will intervene to save humanity and guide mankind into His way of life. Jesus Christ will return to establish God’s millennial rule, bringing His perfect government to earth. This is the wonderful, inspiring meaning of the Feast of Trumpets. Christ taught us to pray ‘thy kingdom come’ (Matthew 6:10, KJV). How urgently we need the answer to that prayer!” (**God’s Holy Day Plan**, p. 37).

## DAY OF ATONEMENT

**Leviticus 23:27-28** – “**Also the 10th day of this 7th month** shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.”

The Day of Atonement pictures the banishment of Satan and his influence over mankind when Christ returns (**Revelation 20:1-4**). It also pictures mankind being reconciled or made at one with God (at-one-ment) through the banishment of Satan and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (**Leviticus. 16**).



“The Day of Atonement and Passover both teach us about the forgiveness of sin and our reconciliation with God through Christ’s sacrifice. However, although the Passover is personally and (for the time being)

individually applied to Christians whom God has called in this age, Atonement carries immediate universal implications.

“Moreover, the Day of Atonement pictures an essential additional step in God's salvation plan not to be found in the symbolism of the Passover. This step must take place before humanity can experience true peace on earth. All people suffer the tragic consequences of sin. But sin doesn't happen without a cause, and God makes this cause clear in the symbolism associated with the Day of Atonement.

“The Day of Atonement involves not only the forgiveness of sin; it pictures the removal of the primary cause of sin - Satan and his demons. Until God removes the original instigator of sin, mankind will simply continue to fall back into disobedience and suffering. Although our human nature has a part to play in our sins, Satan the devil bears great responsibility for influencing mankind to disobey God...

“Paul...teaches us that Satan has influenced every human to walk in the ways of disobedience. He notes that those called into God's church "once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience (**Ephesians 2:2**)...

“**Leviticus 16** describes God instructing ancient Israel to observe the Day of Atonement. Although, since the sacrifice of Christ, no need remains for animal sacrifices, this chapter adds significantly to our understanding of God's plan” (**God's Holy Day Plan**, p. 38-40).

“On the Day of Atonement each year the nation of ancient Israel was figuratively cleansed from its sins. This figurative cleansing was only a type of a spiritual cleansing that will occur first for the people of Israel, and then for the rest of the world, after Christ returns.

“Two goats were figurative bearers of guilt. Both had all the sins of the people symbolically placed on them. One goat was left alive but banished to a wilderness. The other, representing Jesus, was killed as a sacrifice for sins (**Leviticus 16:6-10, 15-16**). In this drama the banished live goat represented Satan's part in the people's sins. The slain goat, picturing Christ, represented Him taking on Himself the penalty for the people's sins” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 10-11).

The High Priest had to cast lots to decide which goat would represent Christ and which goat would represent Satan. This teaches us that we need God's help to tell what is of God and what is of the devil in our lives. The sins were symbolically laid upon the Azazel goat's head representing Satan. The goat was then driven by a fit man out into the wilderness representing the angel binding Satan in the bottomless pit (**Revelation 20:1-2**) after Christ returns.

“**Leviticus 16:15-19** describes a solemn ceremony that was carried out only once each year, on the Day of Atonement. The high priest was to take the blood of the slain goat into the Holy Place - the most sacred part of the tabernacle - and to the mercy seat. The mercy seat was symbolic of the very throne of Almighty God. The high priest acted out the function Christ performs for repentant Christians. Having ascended to the very throne of God by the blood of His sacrifice, Christ intercedes for us - as He has since His resurrection - as our High Priest. The book of Hebrews makes this symbolism clear. ‘But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this [physical] creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption’ (**Hebrews 9:11-12**).

“Because of Christ's sacrifice, we enjoy direct access to the true mercy seat - the throne of our merciful, loving Creator. This was dramatically and miraculously demonstrated at the moment of Christ's death, when ‘the veil of the temple’, covering the entrance to the Holy Place, ‘was torn in two from top to bottom’ (**Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38**). This massive curtain over the entrance to the Holy Place was torn asunder in a dramatic testimony to the access we now have to God's throne.

“Many verses in Hebrews mention Christ's role as our High Priest and intercessor. Because of His sacrifice for us, we can ‘come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need’ (**Hebrews 4:16**). The Day of Atonement thus pictures the loving reconciliation we have with God, made possible through Christ's sacrifice. It also shows the remarkable truth that Satan, the

author of sin, will eventually be removed so that humanity can at last attain reconciliation with God on a universal basis” ([God’s Holy Day Plan](#), p. 43).

“The Day of Atonement is perhaps the most unusual Holy Day, as far as what God expects us to do. It is the one day of the year on which God commands us to fast—to abstain from food and water ([Exodus 34:28; Esther 4:16](#))--for 24 hours...(Leviticus 23:32)” (Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course – Lesson 23, p.12).

“Fasting for spiritual reasons at any time of the year should be for the purpose of humbling ourselves—to draw closer to God and His righteous way ([Isaiah 58:6-11](#)). Fasting helps us remember how temporary our physical existence is. Without food and water, we would soon perish. Fasting helps us realize just how much we need God as the giver and sustainer of life” ([God’s Holy Day Plan](#), p. 42).

This day reminds us of the incredible gap between man and God and that we need Christ to bridge that gap, who was both man and God. Fasting pictures drawing close to God as we seek to put away those sins that distance us from God. Atonement drives home that sin is a real offence to God, that God is merciful to pardon our sins and that we have to do something to receive the gift of pardoning - rending our heart with fasting.

Sin separates us from God so that is why we need an atonement ([Isaiah 59:2](#)). The Day of Atonement is a day that reminds us of God's mercy which is always available upon genuine repentance though we cannot use mercy as an excuse to break God's law ([Hebrews 10:26-31](#)).

The Jews consider the Day of Atonement, which they call Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year and of all the Holy Days. This is because Atonement is a solemn day of national atonement for their sins. They celebrate Passover as a day of national deliverance from the death angel when Israel was in Egypt rather than for personal atonement of their sins like true Christians do today.

Kippur is the Hebrew word that is translated as atonement. Kapporeth is the Hebrew word translated as mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. Seat is actually a poor translation. It is better translated as mercy cover, the cover or lid on top of the Ark of the Covenant. Similarly atonement is probably not the best translation for kippur. The name of this feast is probably better translated as the Day of Covering being the day on which sins were covered over or cleansed.

On Yom Kippur, the Jews primarily focus on the national atonement offered through the sin offering of the first goat. The Day of Atonement is listed amongst the latter festivals which, from our church perspective, look forward to end time events. Because of this, the Church of God tends to more focus on the meaning of the part of the ceremony played by the second goat.

The second goat wasn't killed but exiled into the wilderness. We have interpreted the meaning of this to refer to what happens to Satan the Devil when Christ returns and brings the Kingdom of God to this earth where an angel will bind Satan and lock him in a bottomless pit for a thousand years so that he cannot deceive the nations like he does in this age ([Revelation 20:1-3](#)).

The Church of God has tended to not focus much on the meaning of the first goat as there does not appear to be a prophetic end-time element to the slaying of the first goat. The symbolism behind the sacrifice of the first goat is tended to just be seen as a re-iteration of the Passover sacrifice but this raises a curious question - why focus on Christ's sacrifice amongst the latter festivals that picture end-time events? Is this just a re-iteration of the Passover sacrifice or is there something end-time being pictured here?

When sin offerings were made its blood would be sprinkled upon the veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant was. [Leviticus 4:17](#) says: "And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the veil."

Symbolically the sins of the people were transferred to the holy sanctuary. Then, once a year, the ritual performed on the Day of Atonement would cleanse the holy sanctuary which had been bearing the sins of the people.

Notice what it says in [Leviticus 16:15-21](#): "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil. And he shall do with that blood as he did with the blood of the young bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy-cover and before the mercy-cover. And **he shall atone for the sanctuary**,

because of the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins...And when he has made an end of **reconciling the sanctuary** and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the sins of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send away by the hand of a chosen man into the wilderness."

We see here a two step process of the cleansing of the sins of God's people. During the year the sins are symbolically transferred to the sanctuary and then once a year the sanctuary is itself cleansed by the Day of Atonement ritual.

What might this represent in the lives of those who follow Christ? While we are mortal we are regularly slipping up and need our sins to be forgiven by God made possible by Christ's sacrifice. However, if we overcome to the end, we will then be resurrected and we will be completely purged of sin.

We are now only begotten of God. At the resurrection when we will be born of God the apostle John says: "Everyone who has been born of God does not commit sin, because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" **(1 John 3:9)**.

For those in the church, our resurrection, when we will be finally purged of sin, will be the culmination of Christ's redemptive work in us which started with His sacrifice on the cross.

**The Day of Atonement, in addition to the removal of Satan on this earth, also looks forward to the time when we will be forever purged of our sins!**

The Jubilee Year began on the Day of Atonement **(Leviticus 25:8-17)**. The Jubilee is a year of freedom - freedom from debts and a return to one's inheritance - a fresh start. Atonement pictures our freedom from sin.

"The early Church kept the Day of Atonement. More than 30 years after Christ's death, Luke still referred to the time and seasons by mentioning this day, stating that 'sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over' **(Acts 27:9)**. Almost all Bible commentaries and dictionaries acknowledge that 'the Fast' refers to the Day of Atonement..."

"The Day of Atonement, as a Christian festival, reminds us that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is not only for individual Christians in this age but for the forgiveness and reconciliation of all people. This atonement paves the way for Christ to gather all people - as many as are willing - into God's Kingdom during Jesus' 1,000-year reign after Satan's banishment" (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 11).

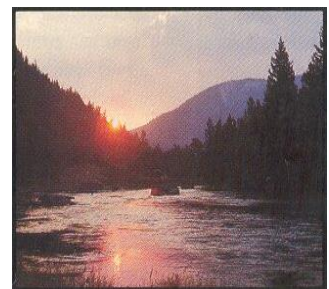
## FEAST OF TABERNACLES

**Leviticus 23:34-35** – "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: '**The 15th day of this 7th month** shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*."

**Deuteronomy 16:15** - "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice"

**The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the greater harvest of souls that will occur during the millennium (Isaiah 25:6-8) when Jesus Christ will bring the Kingdom of God to this earth and rule all nations and set His hand to save all of mankind with the saints of God – those Christians who overcome in this age (Daniel 7:27).**

"The Feast of Tabernacles symbolizes the restoration process, which will start with the return of Jesus Christ, pictured by the Feast of Trumpets, and the banishment of Satan, depicted by the Day of Atonement. Once these events have taken place, as represented by the previous Holy Days, the foundation is in place for the restoration of the creation to peace and harmony with God.





“The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles ([Leviticus 23:27, 34](#)) pictures the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ over the earth after His second coming ([Revelation 20:4](#)). This period is often called the Millennium, which simply means ‘1,000 years’. This Feast also reflects the ‘rest’ symbolized by the weekly Sabbath ([Hebrews 4:1-11](#)) that celebrates the great harvest of humanity when all living people will learn God’s ways...

“The name of the Feast of Tabernacles derives from God’s command to ancient Israel to build temporary ‘tabernacles’, sometimes called ‘booths’, to live in during the festival. The Israelites left their houses and built temporary dwelling places (Hebrew *succah*, meaning ‘hut of woven boughs’) to live in while rejoicing before God. These reminded them of their release from slavery and their dwelling in booths when God brought them out of Egypt ([Leviticus 23:34, 41-43](#)). In stark contrast to the hardship of slavery, this festival emphasizes rest, peace and prosperity as it meets the needs of all people, including strangers, widows and the poor.

“The Bible emphasizes that, as with booths or temporary dwellings, our physical life is transitory. The apostle Paul’s writings reflect this theme: ‘For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven’ ([2 Corinthians 5:1-2, KJV](#)). [Hebrews 11](#) recounts the examples of many of God’s faithful servants down through the centuries. It then concludes that ‘these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth’ ([verse 13](#)).

“The Feast of Tabernacles is an annual reminder of our temporary state and that we also ‘seek a homeland’ ([verse 14](#)). This lesson is reinforced when we travel to a site of the Feast of Tabernacles and stay in temporary dwellings such as hotels and campgrounds. This festival reminds us that, in spite of our material possessions, we are still mortals in need of a literal transformation so we may possess eternal life ([1 Corinthians 15:50-54](#))” ([God’s Holy Day Plan](#), p. 44-45, 48).

The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the stark contrast between us and God and our ultimate destiny. Just as Abraham dwelt in tabernacles and looked forward to the heavenly Jerusalem ([Hebrews 11:9](#)), we look forward to that city and the Kingdom of God. According to Jewish tradition Abraham kept the Feast of Tabernacles. “And Abraham built Succoth for himself and his servants in the seventh month and he was the first to celebrate the festival of Succoth in the Holy Land” ([Jubilees 16:26](#)).

Just as Abraham looked to the New Jerusalem that God promised he would have a home in ([Hebrews 11:9-10](#)), dwelling in tabernacles reminds us that no matter how much we have in this life, this world is not where it’s at – real life is ahead of us when God brings His kingdom to this earth. It is a time that God is eagerly looking forward to when He will personally dwell with us and get to hang out with all of us in a direct face to face way.

After this world will have been humbled during the Great Tribulation the people of the world will finally be willing to allow God to help them turn their lives over to Him. The Spirit of God will influence people to willingly and enthusiastically obey God from their hearts. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” ([Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)).

Not only are Christians still obligated to keep the Feast of Tabernacles along with the rest of God’s Holy Days, all nations will keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the millennium. Even Arab nations such as Egypt will have to keep these so-called “Jewish” holy days. In [Zechariah 14:16-19](#) we read:

“And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to **keep the Feast of Tabernacles**. And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have* no *rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of **all the nations** that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

“The first time the Bible mentions the Feast of Tabernacles it is called the Feast of Ingathering ([Exodus 23:16](#)). It was the great autumn harvest festival that people from every corner of Israel came together to

observe. All during the harvest season they set aside animals and produce for this special week of rejoicing. Everyone enjoyed an abundance of food, drink and fellowship.

“Jesus Christ will give those same blessings even more abundantly to the whole world when He returns and establishes His reign on earth. What ancient Israel could enjoy for one week at the end of the fall harvest merely represented what He will bring to all mankind when He assumes the role of King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God’s Festivals: Keys to Humanity’s Future, p.12).

The Feast of Tabernacles is called the **Feast of Ingathering** twice in the Bible. The first is in **Exodus 23:16** and the other is in **Exodus 34:22** where we read: “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.”

**The Feast of Ingathering represented the great ingathering at the end of the agricultural year – the second and greater of the two harvests. The obvious spiritual meaning of the second harvest is the great harvest of souls that begins with the millennium.**

The reason it is called the Feast of Ingathering is because the fruit at this time was gathered in. In the millennium God will first spiritually gather in Israel. He will extend the new covenant to the House of Judah and the House of Israel at Christ’s return spoken of in **Hebrews 8:7-12**. Then He will set His hand to gather in all nations.

God’s joy at gathering in all nations is expressed over in **Isaiah 19:24-25** where we read: “In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’” After the millennium, of course, is another extension of this great gathering which we celebrate on the Last Great Day.

God’s gathering of all nations is symbolised in the 70 bulls slain during the time of the Levitical Priesthood during the Feast of Tabernacles. The bull was a symbol for a nation and 70 nations was the traditional number of all the nations of the world taken from the number of descendants mentioned in Genesis 10.

The Feast of Ingathering celebrated the fruit harvest. In ancient Israel this feast was all about the fruit and being thankful for the fruit. From a christian point of view the term fruit has much symbolism. We talk about the fruits of the spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**) and Christ in **John 15:2 and 5** asks us to bear more and much fruit.



This feast was also time that the fruit of the vine was harvested and wine was made. Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches and we must draw our spiritual sustenance from Him (**John 15:5**).

One thing that was vital to make this fruit harvest possible was the latter rain. James speaks of this over in **James 5:7** where we read: “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.”

If the fruit of the millennium is the converted lives of people in the World Tomorrow what is the water or latter rain that helps produce this fruit? The prophet Joel answers this question over in **Joel 2:28** where we read: “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.” The water of the Holy Spirit will help produce this great spiritual harvest in the World Tomorrow.

To better understand the harvest symbolism behind the Holy Days and how that may apply on the spiritual level it is instructive for us to take a look at the harvest seasons in Israel and the time of year that the various fruits of the land were and still are harvested in the land of Israel.

The calendar that God gave to Israel started at the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere around March/April. The first crop to be harvested in the year was barley. Barley is adaptable to a greater range of climate than any other cereal. It is able to grow and ripen in a shorter time than any other cereal and it has greater resistance to dry heat than other small grains.

Barley was harvested as we have seen between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Pentecost seven weeks later. Christ symbolised the first of the firstfruits. In reference to the rest of the firstfruits some have drawn a connection between the seven weeks of the barley harvest up to Pentecost and the seven church eras many see in the letters to the seven churches in [Revelation 2 and 3](#).

Following the barley harvest came the remainder of the grain harvest – primarily wheat as well as oats which was harvested around May to July in the summer. Pentecost was at the end of the barley harvest but at the beginning of the wheat harvest.

Almost immediately following the summer harvest was the grape harvest that is harvested usually between July and September. Dried fruits and pomegranates are harvested in the couple of months leading up to the Feast of Tabernacles.

There was even more harvesting that went on after the Feast of Tabernacles. Olives were harvested both sides of the Feast of Tabernacles and much of the ploughing and planting of the following year's grain harvest took place soon after the feast.

### Harvesting and ingathering, based on modern agricultural practices in Israel

	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Barley		x	x		1. First Fruits				
Wheat			x	x	2. Weeks				
Sesame					x				
Flax					x				
Millet					x	x		3. Ingathering	
Grapes				x	x	x	x		
Figs						x	x		
Pomegranates						x	x		
Olives							x	x	x

In ancient Israel the primary harvest season extended from April to November. The major crops were **wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey**. Over **50% of their calories** came from **wheat and barley**.



In the minds of most of us who live in cities it is easy for us to see a disconnect or large gap between Pentecost and the latter holy day season. For those involved in the harvest they would not perceive that sort of disconnect as there was continuous harvesting between Pentecost and Tabernacles. Even today there is no such break in the Work of God as claimed by some people who say that the Work was finished when Herbert Armstrong died.

There is a final harvesting that takes place today in Israel after the latter rain and that was the citrus harvest. Oranges and other citrus fruits are harvested today in Israel from around December to March.

As citrus fruits weren't as common in ancient times the three main groups of harvests in ancient Israel were the Barley harvest, the Wheat harvest and the Grape harvest. The Barley harvest represents the firstfruits of God.

Notice what **Deuteronomy 16:13** says: "Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor [wheat – the summer harvest] and your winepress [grapes – autumn harvest]."

We saw before that Pentecost celebrates the firstfruits (or beginning) of the wheat harvest yet here the Feast of Tabernacles seems to be a celebration of both the wheat and the grape harvest.

In **Leviticus 23:40** it notes different plants in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles –The Jews traditionally believe these to be the palm, myrtle and willow trees and "the fruit of goodly trees is interpreted to be a citron which is similar to a lemon. They see these as the trees designated for building their booths and part of their celebrations including waving a bundle of willow, myrtle and palm branches known as a lulav and the citron known as the etrog. The Jews have some unusual speculation as to their symbolism. The Bible does not specify their symbolism. My best guess is that the palm symbolises peace, the willow and myrtle the water of the Holy Spirit and "the fruit of goodly trees" symbolises the fruits of the spirit that we are supposed to bear.

The Jews added a ritual to the Feast called the great water ceremony which was about seeking God's blessing on the early and latter rains to come after the feast. According to Jewish scholars they would take water from the Pool of Siloam up to the Temple each day of the feast, go around the altar once and then pour water on the altar. On the seventh day of the feast, like the Israelites did around Jericho, they circled the altar 7 times before pouring the water on the altar.

When this went on they read from the millennial passage of **Isaiah 12:3** which says that "with joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation" and remember the name of Jesus or Yeshuah in the Hebrew means salvation. This appears to have been the ceremony that was going on at the time that Christ made His famous statement in **John 7** about rivers of living water or God's spirit coming out from those who would believe in Him.

In **Isaiah 25:6-8** God compares the millennium with a great fruit harvest festival which in Israel is known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering: "And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces. The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken."

**Jeremiah 31:34** also speaks of this time when this great harvest of souls in the millennium will occur: "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

**Isaiah 11:9** says the following about this time: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

The connection between the Feast of Tabernacles and the millennium was not lost on the early church. Methodius wrote, "For I also, taking my journey and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection which is the true Feast of Tabernacles, and there having set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection, which is the day of judgment, celebrate the Millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath" (253-4).

One website has this to say about the meaning of the Feast:

"The literal meaning of the name 'Hag Sukkot' (Feast of Shelters) for the nation of Israel was that of a memorial to their being brought out of Egypt under the protective hand of God. The making of shelters and dwelling in them was symbolic of the need for God's care and protection and the futility of human efforts to care for and protect themselves...Dwelling in shelters is prophetic of the future, after the return of

Christ when Israel will again be established as a nation under the care and protection of God. Dwelling in shelters points to the eternal reward, which will be given for righteous and diligent service to God: eternal life and a dwelling place within the Family and Kingdom of God under the care and protection of God the Father.”

It's interesting to note in [Isaiah 4:4-5](#) it speaks of God sheltering Israel in the millennium with a covering that will be a cloud of smoke by day and a flaming fire by night.

In the Jewish mind there is a strong connection between weddings and the Feast of Tabernacles. Jewish marriage ceremonies are performed under what's called a huppah – a wedding tabernacle – where a couple seek the shelter and protection of God in their marriage. Jewish weddings also often go for 7 days just like the Feast of Tabernacles. There will be great joy after the marriage of Christ and the church when, together, we will help bring joy to the whole world and many more sons and daughters of God will be brought to glory ([Hebrews 2:10](#)).



One prophetic interpretation I've heard based on this typology claims that Christ will come back on Trumpets and there will be 10 days of punishment and judgment culminating in the banishment of Satan on Atonement followed by the Marriage of the Lamb at Tabernacles. Whether that is true or not, only time will tell.

“These are days of continuous, genuine Christian fellowship and just plain good fun! Tens of thousands of God's people and their families gather at dozens of festival sites around the world. Christians at the Feast demonstrate now, by the way they live together in harmony, what today's sin-filled, unhappy world will become like after Christ returns.

“But just as the Feast of Tabernacles is a physical feast filled with rejoicing, it is also a spiritual feast of education and preparation. Members of God's Church receive instruction from God's ministers through inspiring sermons to help them further prepare to rule and teach with Christ during the Millennium” (Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course – Lesson 23, p.14).



Steve Myers in a Beyond Today article makes these comments regarding the Feast of Tabernacles:

"Let's notice the details of the event commonly called the Transfiguration...'Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain...and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white...And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and **let us make three tabernacles**" ([Mark 9:1-5](#)).

"What an amazing event! In a vision, these disciples were suddenly whisked into the future to see Jesus Christ in His glory in His Kingdom! Don't miss Peter's reaction. What did Peter associate with this vision? He said that they should make tabernacles...**Peter made the connection between the Kingdom of God and temporary dwellings!**

“The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the temporary nature of our physical life, and it helps us to focus on what's permanent — our goal for eternal life in God's Kingdom” (Celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Today's World, Beyond Today Sept-Oct 2016, p.22-23).

There are two important lessons that God connects to the Feast of Tabernacles. The first is to learn how to fear God. In [Deuteronomy 14:22-23](#) we read: “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, **that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.**”

The nations of the world in the millennium will learn to fear God ([Zechariah 14:16-19](#), [Isaiah 2:2-4](#)). Initially this fear will be primarily motivated by fear of punishment God brings on those who don't keep His laws but in time this will develop into a true godly fear which is motivated out of love.

**True godly fear is a proper sense of awe and deep respect where one fears to disappoint God because of the great love that they have for Him.** Through the sermons that are given throughout the Feast we learn more about how to have this proper fear and respect for God. Our example at the feast, which doesn't go unnoticed by people in the communities where the feast is held, also gives us a chance to show the proper fear of God in action by the way that we live our lives.

The other important lesson connected to the Feast of Tabernacles is to learn to rejoice. Life can be tough at times but during the Feast God commands us to make a conscious effort to be joyful and rejoice. In [Deuteronomy 14:26](#) we read: "And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and **you shall rejoice**, you and your household."

Regardless of how tough life is at times we have so much to be thankful for – we have this great calling to be among the firstfruits. We have the knowledge of God's wonderful way of life and God's great plan to save all mankind. We also know that there is a far better world coming when Christ returns. God wants us to put our worries aside during the Feast and be thankful and rejoice in these wonderful blessings and share that joy with as many people as we can.

Ever since Christ tabernacled with Israel ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#)) and tabernacled with mankind ([John 1:14](#)) when He became flesh He has always desired to return. The Father can hardly wait until He can tabernacle and live with man for all time ([Revelation 21, 22](#)) when the heavenly Jerusalem will come to earth.

The Father has remained separate from mankind for all this time. We read in [2 Peter 3:10](#) that sometime in the future that the earth will be cleansed by fire. The great meaning behind this is to teach mankind that God cannot live with sin and that it is utterly repugnant to Him. Living in tabernacles is also a type of being under God's protection in time of trouble and eventually living in God's house ([John 14:1-3](#)).

It is very possible that Jesus Himself was born on the first day of Tabernacles and was circumcised on the last or eighth day of the feast. All the accommodation in and around Jerusalem which would have included nearby Bethlehem was likely taken when Jesus was born in a manger ([Luke 2:7](#)).

"Eventually thousands of millions will be spiritually converted! The great 'autumn harvest' of humans will be gathered into the Kingdom of God—born again as divine members of the ruling Family of God during the Millennium. By the end of the thousand years, the great Family of God will be ready for the final step in God's Master Plan. Even greater joy and accomplishments lie ahead after the Millennium!" (Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course – Lesson 23, p.14).

## THE EIGHTH OR "LAST GREAT" DAY

[Leviticus 23:39](#) – "Also on the 15th day of the 7th month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for 7 days; on the 1st day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and **on the 8th day a sabbath-rest**.

**The Eighth or "Last Great" Day pictures the Great White Throne Judgment period which we read of in [Ezekiel 37](#) and [Revelation 20](#) when all the dead who haven't been saved up to Christ's coming will be resurrected and be given their first real chance at salvation.**

"As Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth ([Revelation 20:4](#)) is followed by other prophesied events, the Feast of Tabernacles is also followed by a concluding festival that represents the conclusion of those final events - the final aspects of God's purpose and plan for humanity on our physical earth. The book of Revelation reveals that all people who have ever died without hearing of Christ or learning God's way of life are to be resurrected and given their opportunity to receive eternal life. This brings us to the concluding aspects of God's plan" (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 14).

"Paul tells us that God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)). Peter adds that God is 'not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance' ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). This is God's overriding goal in dealing with mankind: He desires as many as possible to repent, come to the knowledge of the truth and receive His gift of salvation!

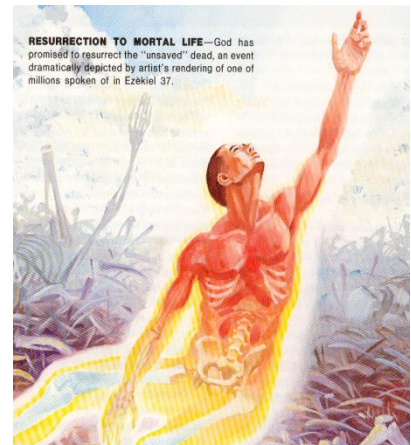
“Jesus explained how this will come about on the last day, called ‘that great day of the feast.’ He appeared publicly and stood in the midst of the people. ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ ([John 7:37-38](#))...

“In Christ's time, according to tradition, during the Feast of Tabernacles the priests would bring golden vessels of water from the stream of Siloam that had flowed from the temple hill and pour it over the altar. Joyous celebration along with the sounding of trumpets marked this ceremony as the people sang the words of Isaiah: ‘...With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation’ ([Isaiah 12:3](#)).

“Jesus stood where all could hear Him and drew a lesson from the water, revealing that all who were thirsty could come to Him and be refreshed forever. In Christ's analogy, the water represented God's Holy Spirit, which those who believed in Jesus would receive ([John 7:39](#)). He showed that the basic wants of spiritual thirst and hunger could be satisfied only by Him as ‘the bread of life’ and the source of living water.

“In [Revelation 20:5](#) John writes that ‘the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.’ Here John makes a clear distinction between the first resurrection, which occurs at Christ's second coming ([verses 4, 6](#)), and the second resurrection, which takes place at the end of Christ's millennial reign. Remember that the first resurrection is to eternal life. By contrast, God raises those in the second resurrection to a physical, flesh-and-blood existence...

“The dead who stand before their Creator are all those who died never knowing the true God. Like Ezekiel's vision of dry bones coming back to life, these people emerge from their graves and begin to know their God. The books (biblia in Greek, from which we get the word Bible) are the Scriptures, the only source of the knowledge of eternal life. Finally all will have an opportunity to fully understand God's plan of salvation.



“This physical resurrection is not a second chance for salvation. For these people it is a first opportunity to really know the Creator. The resurrected are ‘judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books’ ([verse 12](#)). This judgment will involve a period during which they will enjoy the opportunity to hear, understand and grow in God's way of life, having their names inscribed in the book of life ([verse 15](#)). During this time thousands of millions of people will gain access to eternal life...

“God will see His plan through and bring many sons to glory ([Hebrews 2:10](#)). God's promise to ‘pour out My Spirit on all flesh’ ([Joel 2:28](#)) will find its fullest manifestation. The thirst-quenching waters of the Holy Spirit will be available to all in the time depicted by ‘that great day of the feast.’ What a marvellous plan these biblical festivals portray. How great would be our lack of understanding without them!” ([God's Holy Day Plan](#), p. 52-57).

When I was in Italy for the feast one of the speakers spoke of how with some of the details we have of prophecy around this time there are what he called ambiguities. The Bible gives us some details but does not give us the whole picture and so there are multiple possibilities where we cannot and really should not be dogmatic on.

One of those is just how long will the Great White Throne Judgment period last for? We have generally thrown around a time of 100 years based on [Isaiah 65:20](#) which speaks of 100 years being a typical lifetime. The context of this verse is millennial and there is nothing that specifically ties it to the Great White Throne Judgment period.

[Matthew 12:41](#) says that those of Nineveh shall rise at the same time as those of Jesus' day and those two generations were of much the same technological level. It is an assumption to say that all generations of people up to Christ's return shall be resurrected in the Great White Throne Judgment at the same time. While scripture does not give us any specific details it is possible that there might be multiple

resurrections over a longer period than 100 years so dealing with all these people will be more manageable.

In [Matthew 10:15](#) and [Matthew 11:24](#) this time is referred to as the “day of judgment”. [2 Peter 3:8](#) speaks of a principle that with God “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” so one possibility is that this day of judgment may be a thousand years long.

The number 8 in the Bible is symbolic of new beginnings. If you include the Great White Throne Judgment period, an 8000 year plan for mankind sounds like a more rounder number than 7100 years. The Last Great Day is, when combined with the Feast of Tabernacles, referred to as the eighth day and represents this Great White Throne Judgment period.

There are often multiple layers of understanding in many of the things that God has given us. Along with those primary meanings for those Holy Days there are some interesting parallels between the first three festivals and end-time events.

For the ancient Israelites Passover pictured when God passed over their houses and they were saved from the plagues of Egypt, having being "sealed" by the blood on the lintel and doorposts of their homes.

End-time Israel will also be in captivity during the Great Tribulation ([Jeremiah 30:1-8](#)). Those Israelites who repent in that captivity will be sealed at the seventh trumpet ([Revelation 7](#)) so they will be spared from the plagues that will come upon their captors, the beast power based in Europe ([Revelation 16:10](#)).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated as the time when Israel came out of captivity when they were led out of Egypt. End-time Israel will also be freed from captivity by the beast power and there will be an Exodus greater than the original exodus of Moses' day ([Jeremiah 23:7-8](#)).

Pentecost was celebrated as the time when Israel received the law at Mt Sinai. After Christ's return to earth God's spirit will finally be poured out on all flesh which Peter spoke about on the Day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:14-21](#)). The law will then go out from Zion to the whole world through Israel which will fulfill its destiny as a model nation to the rest of the world ([Isaiah 2:1-4](#)).

There is an interesting parallel between the first three and the last three feasts. Passover and Atonement both focus on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and coming as close to God as possible. We usually fast and examine ourselves before Passover so we can take it worthily just as we fast on the Day of Atonement.

The two seven-day festivals of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles both picture our life of tabernacling in this world and focus our attention on the gap between us and God and what we have to do to bridge that gap with God's help – to put sin out of our lives and learn to fear God always. Finally Pentecost and the Last Great Day picture the two great harvests of souls - the church now and then the rest of the world when God's spirit is poured out to all mankind ([Acts 2:17](#)).

God's Holy Days also picture freedom –:

Freedom from death – Passover  
Freedom from sin – Unleavened Bread  
Freedom to live within the law – Pentecost  
Freedom from death – Trumpets  
Freedom from Satan's influence – Atonement  
Freedom from the unrighteous rulers of the world - Tabernacles

“By keeping His festivals we remain focused on what is important in our view of the future and our role in it. Each time we keep them we deepen our understanding of prophecies throughout the Bible that fill in the details of God's wonderful plan” (UCG Bible Study Course - Lesson 12 – God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future, p. 15).