

# The Feasts of the Lord

Leviticus 23

by Earlene Davis

Vs. 1-2, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning **the feasts of the LORD**, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are *my feasts*.”

In this chapter the Lord gives instructions for Israel to observe *seven feasts* which He calls “**my feasts**.” Another expression for the word translated feasts is ‘*set times*.’ Four of these set times are really fasting times rather than feasting times. The Lord said to proclaim these set times to be “*holy convocations*.” Convocation in the Hebrew simply means ‘*a holy assembly*.’ Each feast involves worship, offerings and a rest from labor.

V. 3, “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the **sabbath of the LORD** in all your dwellings.” These set times begin with a sabbath, the rest of God. No work was to be done on these days, except what was necessary to prepare for them.

V. 4, “These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim **in their seasons**.” The first three set times occur in the first month, ‘*Abib*,’ of the Jewish sacred year in early spring. The fourth is in late spring, and the last three are in the seventh month. The Israelites observed these marked off times every year, so they are *historic*. They also contain some marvelous *typical* teaching. For all God’s plans relating to redemption are found in these seven feasts. They are also *prophetic* and encompass Calvary down to the end of the millennium.

These feasts are still celebrated today in altered forms by devout Jews. But their major feature being the *blood sacrifice* is impossible today, because they are without their Temple in Jerusalem. So, to many the original meaning of the feasts has been lost.

Jesus kept the feasts while He was on the earth. He even celebrated Passover on the last night before going to Calvary. These feasts were never given to the Gentiles, but to the children of Israel. Believers in Christ are not responsible to keep these feasts, but a study of them is enlightening and we appreciate their fulfillment found in the New Testament. We will look at each feast individually and its fulfillment.

## The Lord’s Passover

V. 5, “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is **the LORD’S passover**.” The festival year begins with Passover, and the date for its observance is given. God’s calendar is a lunar calendar based on the phases of the moon, rather than the earth’s revolutions around the sun. Each month starts with a new moon, reaching a full moon in the midst of the month. So Passover always falls on a full moon, the

first full moon of spring. The lunar cycle is harmonious throughout nature. The tides of the seas raise and fall with the moon, etc. Also, in God's reckoning, the day begins at sundown, or moonrise. In Genesis one, we read, "And the *evening* and the morning were the first day." In Lev. 23:5 we read "at *even*," the fourteenth day is the Lord's passover.

Passover was a memorial of Israel's departure from Egypt. We read of its institution in Exodus 12. In that night they were to kill a lamb, put the *blood* on the door-posts and lintels. Then all the family ate of the roasted lamb with unleavened bread. That night God made a difference between His people and the people of the world. He spared from judgment all who were sheltered by the sprinkled *blood*.

The *blood* upon the doors meant they acknowledged their place as sinners and deserving of judgment. They accepted God's way of dealing with sin by the sacrifice of a substitute. God had a people He could righteously call His own, because they were accepted on *redemption ground*. The meaning of Passover is the feast of salvation because *the blood of the lamb* delivered the nation of the Jews from bondage.

The lamb for Passover had to be a male without blemish. II Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, **who knew no sin**; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I Pet. 1:18-20, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of **a lamb without blemish and without spot**: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

John the Baptist clearly marked out the person of Jesus Christ as the *blood sacrifice*. John 1:29, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold **the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world." It is no mere coincidence, that our Lord was sacrificed on Passover. Luke 22:15, "And he (Jesus) said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Mt. 26:27-28, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is **my blood** of the new testament, which is **shed for many for the remission of sins**." This He said at the last supper. John 18:28, "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover."

Just as the Jews marked their houses with the blood of the lamb and was saved, so are believers in Christ saved by the **shed blood of Christ**. As we read in Lev. 23:5, "it is the Lord's passover," *it is God's Salvation*. Luke 3:6, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

We are already living our eternal life. When we believe on Jesus as our *blood sacrifice* and receive Him, we have eternal life for **He is Eternal Life**. We may not be in our eternal state yet, but we possess eternal life and that life never dies. Praise God! We are redeemed, set free from the bondage to sin by the blood of Jesus, *the spotless Lamb of God*. The remarkable fulfillment of Passover on the exact day illustrates a principle we see with each of these feasts. Our Lord fulfilled each feast on its appropriate day up to the point we have reached in His prophetic plan. All seven feasts have either been fulfilled or prophesied to be fulfilled and His Word is yea and amen. II Cor. 1:20.

So we understand Passover represents salvation. The exodus from Egypt was just a *shadow* of the greater redemption. The Lord instructed us to take communion (a part of the original Passover Feast) in remembrance of the Lord. He established this on the Lord's own Passover table. I Cor. 11:23-26.

## The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Vs. 6-8, “And on the fifteenth day of the same month is **the feast of unleavened bread** unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.”

This feast of unleavened bread occurs simultaneously with the Lord’s passover. It begins the day after the passover eve, and lasts for seven days. Because they are closely related in time and purpose, their names are often used interchangeably. During passover and the feast of unleavened bread, God instructed the Israelites to eat only the pure unleavened bread. We read in Exodus 13:6,7 that they were to put out all leaven even from their houses. Leaven in Scripture symbolizes sin and evil. Because Christ, *our passover* was sacrificed for us, we have been separated from evil. An entire and immediate separation has been provided.

Unleavened bread, symbolized a holy walk with the Lord. “Seven days,” seven being the number of *perfection* has reference to the completeness of the work of Christ in putting away sin. All believers in Christ are cleansed from sin and empowered to walk in newness of life. I Cor. 5:7,8, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a *new lump*, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Keeping the feast signifies that we are not to tolerate sin in any way, but rejoice in our perfect deliverance in Christ.

Unleavened bread in the New Testament is the *body* of our Lord. He was born in Bethlehem, which means “*House of Bread*” in Hebrew. He also announced Himself as “*the Bread of Life*.” John 6:31-33,48, “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world... **I am that bread of life.**”

The very bread used by the Jews during the week of unleavened bread is Matzoh, pure without any leaven and is a good picture of our Lord. I John 3:5, “...he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is *no sin*.” The Matzoh is also striped in the baking. Isa. 53:5, “...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” You hold this bread in front of a candle and you can see the light through the holes pierced in it. Our Lord was pierced by the nails in His hands and feet and the Roman spear in His side. Zech. 12:10, “...I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

We cannot separate passover and unleavened bread, for God has joined them. Now instead of passover and the feast of unleavened bread, we observe *the Lord’s Supper*. We remember Calvary and feast upon the Lamb. I Cor. 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

In the Jews Passover ceremony they brake the bread, Matzoh, into three pieces. The middle piece is buried (by hiding it). Then later in the ceremony they resurrect it, by the piece of Matzoh being found. This pictures Christ's death and resurrection. In the modern Jewish Passover celebration they are presenting the Gospel, the good news and don't know it.

God performed this exact ceremony with the burial of Jesus, and He performed it on the exact day of the feast. His body was interred at sundown of Passover Day, the beginning of the 15th day of the first month. Crucifixion normally took three days. The Romans used this slow and terrible way of death to terrify the population of Israel as they passed by those crucified. Remember the centurion was not ready to believe that Jesus was dead in just six hours. But it is simple to understand when you consider the schedule of the first two feasts. Our Lord said no one could take His life from Him, "I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..." John 10:18.

Again we see this feast was fulfilled in an unmistakable way. Our "Kernel of wheat" (John. 12:24) was placed in the ground at the appropriate time, to rise again in accordance with the schedule of the feasts.

## **The Feast of Firstfruits**

Vs. 9-11, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the **firstfruits** of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."

The feast of Firstfruits is directly related to Passover and Unleavened Bread. It is celebrated on the morrow after the Sabbath of the week of Unleavened Bread. Since the feast of Unleavened Bread was seven days long, one of those days would be a Sunday and it would be *Firstfruits* each year.

When the Israelites redeemed by blood (Passover) had come into their land, God wanted them to acknowledge with thanksgiving, the fruit of the good land He had given them. Barley was the first grain of the season. They were to bring a sheaf (stalks and ears of the barley bound together) to the priest at the Temple to be waved before the Lord on their behalf. This spiritually is Christ's resurrection and His resurrection is happy news worthy of celebration.

Vs. 12-14, "And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an *he lamb without blemish* of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat (meal) offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings." A he-lamb without blemish with its meal offering was burnt upon the altar as a *sweet savor*. For it was on the *basis* of what Christ accomplished by His death that He was *raised* from the dead.

The sheaf was to be waved the day after the sabbath. Christ arose on this day "for our justification," Rom. 4:25. To the Gentiles this day is known as Easter, named for the false Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, the pagan goddess of fertility. Many worship such objects of fertility such as the rabbit, the egg, etc. A far cry from *the Feast of Firstfruits*. We miss a very important truth of God by not using the name "Firstfruits" as the name of this feast. "First" implies a second, a third, etc. The first harvest is but a

promise of the larger harvest to come. The condition which brought about the first harvest will also bring the rest.

In Christ (the one sheaf) is the acceptance of the great harvest – **a new creation**. I Cor. 15:20-23, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits of them that slept*. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Jesus Christ is the first fruit whom God raised from the dead. He is the promise or guarantee of our resurrection **through faith** in Him.

If we die before Jesus comes again, we will be raised, “every man in His own order.” This word “order” in the Greek means, orderly in arrangement, a series of succession, ranks as in a military troop. God has an order and His Son was number one, the Firstfruits. We are now qualifying for the order in which we will be resurrected or translated. We not only remember the resurrection of our Lord on “Firstfruits,” but our resurrection, the resurrection of His body, the church. Col. 1:18, “...he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the *firstborn from the dead*; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

Paul yearned to be resurrected out from the rest of the believing dead. In other words the first rank to go up. Phil. 3:11, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” This word resurrection is different from all other places we read this word. It has a prefix in front of it “ek” and has the meaning of out-resurrection from the other believing dead. May we also desire to be of that company, who love His appearing and have not left their first love for Christ. II Tim. 4:7-8 & Rev. 2:4.

I Thes. 4:16-17, tells how each rank will go up. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

It is impossible to separate the resurrection of the saints from that of Christ. The consummation of all things is bound up with both. Rev. 20:6. All believers are part of the first resurrection no matter what rank they are in. The second resurrection is of the wicked dead to be judged after the millennium. Rev. 20:5,11-15.

Isn't it marvelous when we understand these feasts? Jesus celebrated the Sunday of the week of His crucifixion by rising from the dead. It was not some other day He chose, but the very day of *Firstfruits*. Just as He had fulfilled Passover and Unleavened Bread on their feast day. Also Jesus presented His proper *Firstfruits offering* to the Father. What Happened? Graves were opened and some believers came forth and were seen in Jerusalem after His resurrection (Mt. 27:53). The Lord, like the Jewish farmer, gratefully showed the Father the early crops of what will be a magnificent harvest later.

## **The Feast of Pentecost**

Vs. 15-16, “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number *fifty days*; and ye shall offer a *new* meat offering unto the LORD.”

This feast is known as Pentecost in the New Testament, the Greek name for it means *'fifty.'* God gave very specific directions for counting the proper number of days until this feast. It is exactly fifty days after the wave offering of First Fruits.

It is also called the feast of Weeks. The Jews call it *'Shavuot'* which means 'weeks' in Hebrew, because of the counting of Seven sabbaths.

This feast is also known as the feast of Harvest, because it actually marked the summer harvest, the second harvest of the year. Many more crops were available than at the first fruits, but still not as many as would come in the fall harvest. Like the Feast of First Fruits, this feast occurs on a Sunday, "the morrow after the sabbath." The predominate spirit of this feast was *glad praise*, Deut. 16:9-12.

At this harvest festival the people thank God for the wheat harvest with a free-will offering. V. 17, "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD." The priest offered two wave loaves of bread that were of equal weight as a "**new** meal offering" unto the Lord - V. 16. The word "new" is very significant. The first believers after Pentecost were the first-fruits of the new creation. We see in them a type of God's people, both Jews and Gentiles. For we find in them the nature of Christ, the fine flour; but we also find leaven which is a type of sin (Mt. 16:6) indicating the presence of sin in God's people. Rom. 7:18.

But these loaves have been **baked** (which speaks of the *judgment* Christ bore for sinful humanity) making the leaven inactive. God was predicting that the church would be comprised of Jews and Gentiles (two loaves). Sometimes we mistakenly think of the church as entirely Gentile, but it has always been part Jewish. The Lord retains a remnant of the Jews. In fact the Holy Spirit came first upon Israel, those Jews in the upper room of Acts 2. Jesus had declared that the Holy Spirit shall abide forever. Was God at a loss when the nation of Israel would not have Him? NO! God brought to light His purpose that had been "Hid in God." Eph. 3:1-11.

Both Jews and Gentiles have been made one in Christ at the birth of the church on Pentecost. I Cor. 12:12-14, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." This baptism took place at Pentecost. It is the "one baptism" of Eph. 4:5. All believers present and future were baptized into one body, the *body of Christ, the church*. Gal. 3:27-28, "...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Therefore, it was necessary to wave the loaves with the five offerings which figure Christ (Vs. 18-21). We are not accepted because of our own worth or perfection, but because of His perfection, which we accept. The atonement of Christ has made full provision for the sin which dwells in our flesh.

V. 22, "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God." Some of the poor who ate from the corners of the fields that were left unharvested were Jesus and His disciples.

Let us consider this feast as it occurred in the New Testament. After Christ resurrection He appeared to His disciples and taught them for 40 days. Acts 1:4-5,8-9,13a,14, "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me...ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days

hence...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem...and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight...And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication..."

The Holy Spirit came exactly on the day of the feast of Pentecost. Acts 2:1-6, "And *when the day of Pentecost was 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 all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were *all filled with the Holy Ghost*, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

Acts 2:12-18, "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But *this is that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

Peter tells how it was foreordained of God that Christ should die. That they by wicked hands have crucified Him, but He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God - Vs. 22-23. That David prophesied of His resurrection - Vs. 29-33. That day the Holy Spirit gathered a harvest of 3,000 souls - V. 41. Many were added to the church daily - V. 47. And many have been added during this Church Age.

Peter was empowered to stand up and preach Christ to the multitude in Jerusalem, after receiving the Holy Spirit. The same Peter who cowardly denied Jesus three times only seven weeks before this. Do we need this power of God, His Spirit? Oh yes, we do. Don't refuse this precious gift of God to His people.

Christ was crucified on "Passover."

He was buried on the feast of "Unleavened Bread."

He arose on "First Fruits."

The Holy Spirit was sent on "Pentecost."

These four feasts are in the spring and summer of the Jewish year and they have been fulfilled. We have not yet seen the fulfillment of the fifth feast, "Trumpets." It may be soon. The last three feasts were at the end of their year. Today we are cultivating the summer crops. We are workers together with Christ in the field of the world, until the day of the great harvest marked by the next feast, "Trumpets."

## The Feast of Trumpets

V. 23-25, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

Trumpets is the first of the year-end feasts. A long time elapses between the feast of Pentecost which is in the third month and the feast of trumpets in the seventh month. This is very significant and portrays the two thousand plus years that have passed since Pentecost. It reaches on to the end of this age and the fulfillment of the seventh-month feasts.

The Jewish name for this feast is *Rosh Hashanah*, which means “Head of the Year.” The Jews have two calendars. The seventh-month of their religious calendar marks the beginning of their civil year, so it is their New Year’s Day.

God commanded the *blowing of trumpets* to call the congregation of Israel together for a solemn assembly, a day for rest and worship. Their day begins in the evening. The high priest would sound a trumpet to signal the field workers to come into the Temple. The faithful would stop harvesting and leave immediately for the worship service. Remember the feast is a sabbath, a rest, they were to do no servile work. God insists that His blessings to the church, to Israel and the world are all of grace. It is a holy convocation, no works of man allowed.

God seems to enjoy the trumpet. In biblical times the trumpet was a ram’s horn. It is called the *Shofar*. Remember how Isaac was spared by the ram being caught in the thicket by its horns – Gen. 22:13. In Isaac’s place, the ram was offered. The ram’s horn is the symbol of this sacrifice. This typifies gloriously the sacrifice by our heavenly Father of His Son. Also the willingness of the Son to offer Himself up for the salvation of all men. He was the only one who could accomplish this. Eph. 5:2 “... walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath *given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice* to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

In Exodus 19:16, the blast of the trumpet acknowledged the presence of God before His people. It was sounded to herald the year of Jubilee – Lev. 25:8-10; signaling the release of slaves and debt, proclaiming liberty throughout all the land. God also used the blowing of trumpets when Joshua conquered Jericho – Josh. 6:5. Joshua’s name is *Yeshua* in Hebrew, the Old Testament name for Jesus. Ehud blew the trumpet to call the Israelites to battle – Judg. 3:27. The sound of the trumpet was heard as the people went to the fortified cities in Jeremiah 4:5. It was blown to warn of danger as enemies tried to stop the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. “In whatever place ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye there unto us: Our God shall fight for us” – Neh. 4:20. Also when a new king took the throne, the trumpet would sound a loud blast – I Kings 1:5-39.

According to Jewish teaching, *Rosh Hashanah* is the beginning of ten days of judgment when all the children of men pass before the Creator. The righteous are written into the book of life, and the wicked are condemned and given ten days to repent and escape judgment. We, who are written in the *Lamb’s Book of Life* do not fear judgment, for Jesus bore our judgment on the cross.

This feast like the other feasts is prophetic. It tells us of the home call of the saints of this dispensation, the Church Age, as well as that of Israel. The Church will be taken up to heaven and Israel called to their homeland. We are looking and waiting for Jesus, when He shall come with the trumpet sound and the voice of the archangel to bring us into His sabbath of rest. There remaineth a rest for the people of God – Heb. 4:9. When that trumpet sounds, a great miracle will take place. The graves will give up the believing dead and the living believers will rise up from the earth. Oh, what a day that will be, to see Jesus and enjoy heaven. I Thess. 4:16-17.

I Cor. 15:51-52, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the *last trump*: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall **be changed.**” All believers will be clothed with a body like unto Christ’s – I Jn. 3:2.

The last trumpet sound means there are other trumpet sounds, a first, a second, etc. Read I Cor. 15:21-23, “...every man in his own order (or rank).” One of the big controversies in Christendom is that some say the rapture of the church is pre-tribulation and some say post-tribulation. What does the Scripture say?

Rev. 3:10 tells us of a group or rank that will go up *before the tribulation*, for they will be **kept out** of that hour that is coming on the earth. We see this group in Rev. 4 & 5 as the elders and living creatures in heaven. Rev. 5:8-10, they are *redeemed ones* out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, made unto God, kings and priests. They are the first group to arrive in heaven, the first rank taken up.

In Rev. 7:9 we see an *innumerable company of saints* in heaven. Verse 14 tells us, they come out of tribulation days. This is another rank or company of the church that cannot be numbered.

In Rev. 14, we see another rank of the church in heaven, the 144,000 of Israel. So there will be *more than one trumpet sound*. There will be an holy convocation convening in heaven with each trumpet sound.

A remnant of Jews will be in the church, but Jeremiah tells us concerning the nation of Israel – Jer. 8:20. The nation will come into their blessings after the church has all been gathered home and tribulation ended. Then the trumpet will sound for their return to their land – Isa. 27:12-13. God will move on to fulfill the next and most sacred of Jewish feasts, Day of Atonement.

## **Day of Atonement**

Vs. 26-27, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

The Jewish name for this set time is ‘*Yom Kippur*.’ It is the most important High Holy Day for the Jews. It is most solemn, a fasting time rather than a feasting time. Each individual Jew was to “afflict their souls.” This day of confession was accompanied with an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

It was on this day the high priest entered the fearsome Holy of Holies where God dwelt. Lev. 16 tells about it in detail. First the high priest would make a *blood sacrifice* for His own sins and for his house.

Then he would offer a *blood sacrifice* on behalf of all the sins of all the people of Israel. Today there is no Temple, so there are no animal sacrifices. The Jewish people have to rely solely on repentance for forgiveness of sins. They have no assurance that God has heard and forgiven. For the Scriptures teach that **atonement is in the blood**, Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22.

Vs. 28-31, “And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.” If they worked on atonement day or did not repent of their sins, they were cut off from among the people.

Vs. 32, “It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” A full twenty-four hours was specified by God for confession, but remember it was for the sins of an entire year. It was a sabbath of rest for them when they repented and had faith in the blood sacrifice for their atonement.

Atonement means, “to cover, cancel” in Hebrew. In the Greek it has the meaning of “reconciliation.” This day of atonement for the Jew was the covering over of their sin and reconciliation to God for a year at least.

This set time is not fulfilled by the church. The church is not innocent of course, but Jesus shed blood paid for the sins of every one of us - Heb. 9:28. When Christ offered His own blood as our atonement or covering, the veil of the Temple was rent (torn) in two, signifying that He had opened the way into the Holy of Holies. Mk. 15:38. By His sacrifice all who believe now have access to God and a covering for sin.

The Day of Atonement will be fulfilled in a wonderful way when the Lord returns, coming to the aid of Israel and judging those nations that have come against her at the battle of Armageddon. Zechariah tells us of the reaction of Israel when they see their King returning.

Zech. 12:10-14, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

They will certainly afflict their souls, mourning for the rejection of their Messiah, Christ and turn to Him. Zech. 13:1, 6, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness...And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

Those Jews who do not bow to the antichrist when he enters the Temple (II Thess 2:3,4), and will repent and mourn when they see Him who they pierced (their Messiah), they will be the remnant that will be a nation born in a day Rom. 11:26; Isa. 66:8. Only surviving Israel will be saved, for two-thirds of that nation shall perish at the hands of the antichrist.

The tribulation period will end on the Day of Atonement. For they shall accept the atonement Christ has made. God will have ended His separation from Israel (His wife). The book of Hosea tells of the adultery of Israel in type and of her redemption and purification.

Only then will the third of these end-time series of set times become a reality - "Tabernacles."

## The Feast of Tabernacles

Vs. 33-34, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be **the feast of tabernacles** for seven days unto the LORD."

This is the last of the seven feasts of the Lord. It is also called the "Feast of Booths" or "Feast of Ingathering" and is known in Hebrew as *Succoth*. Being the final fall harvest festival, it is a time of ingathering at Jerusalem and also a memorial of the shelter God provided the Israelites in the wilderness.

Vs. 35-44, "On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day: Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD."

This was truly a feasting time, of joy and song, for there was no work performed for eight days. The first day was a sabbath and the last day was a sabbath. A time when Israel began to gather in the produce of the land for which they thanked the Lord. It was somewhat like our thanksgiving day, except it lasted a week. Our camp meetings might answer to it, except Tabernacles was on a larger scale. The devout Jews built little shelters outside their houses and worshiped in them and lived in them during this eight-day festival. Even today some Jewish people build little huts and decorate them with tree boughs and autumn fruit to remind them of harvest.

In Jesus day, everyone in Israel who was able, came up to Jerusalem for this very joyous festival every year. Jesus not only celebrated it, but took the traditional elements of water and light. He used them to help the people understand who He is and what He offers. Jn. 7 & 8.

The Temple worship for this holiday included the ritual pouring of water from the pool of Siloam, symbolic of the prayers for the winter rains which were so vital for the preservation of life. At this time Jesus cried out, "...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" Jn. 7:37-39. As the rain falls to nourish the crops, so the Holy Spirit (*Ruach ha Kodesh*) refreshes us and causes us to grow spiritually. All those refreshing streams were stored up in Christ Himself.

At the end of the first day of the feast, the Temple was gloriously illuminated. Four gigantic candelabras were lit and the Temple being on a hill above the city, the glorious glow was a light for the entire city to see. The light was to remind the people how God's Shekinah glory had once filled His Temple. In the person of Jesus, God's glory was again present in that Temple. Again He used that celebration to declare to all who were gathered there, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jn. 8:12.

Today in Jerusalem there is a municipal shelter provided near the Jaffa Gate for the whole city to celebrate this feast of Tabernacles each year. Even though the majority of the people in Israel are secular, yet Tabernacles is a time when the nation pauses for a time of joy, celebration and thanksgiving. The public schools are closed and many business and government offices are closed. Let us pray for the Jewish people that more will come to know the One of whom all the festival speaks.

After Israel's final Day of Atonement, this Feast of Tabernacles will again be celebrated. Zech. 14:16-19, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even 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 whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

What a joyous assembly that will be. The repentant, converted and restored Israel under the rulership of THE KING will celebrate like never before. They will commemorate the years of their exile, but they will also remember the Lord their Messiah and King who will have made their restoration possible. They will wave palm-branches and shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who cometh in the Name of the Lord." They will remember His mercy and thank Him at the feast.

Ezek. 37:26-28, "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Natural and spiritual blessing shall fall upon Israel, their feast of Tabernacles will fully come to them.

Notice, in verse 34 that the feast was for seven days. It was followed with an eighth day (V. 36) which was the greatest day of the feast yet not a part of the seven, but a day apart. It symbolizes a new day, the eighth, when old things are done away with and all things are new. Revelation 21:3-6 tells of the eternal state after the seventh dispensation, the Kingdom Age.

God set these feasts to picture the entire career of the Messiah. The first three (the crucifixion, burial and resurrection) occurred very close together. Then a pause before the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then a long pause before the rapture of the church. The Day of Atonement will end tribulation days for Israel, then following will be Tabernacles.

Passover and Tabernacles are the only feasts that Israel will continue to celebrate during the millennium. Passover represents the Lord's first coming as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world to suffer and die for the sins of mankind. They will never forget the cross where their own Kinsman-Redeemer shed His blood for them. They will truly then understand the real significance of Passover.

Tabernacles represents the second advent of Christ when the nation will come into and enjoy all the blessings that are theirs because of the death of Christ. For one thousand years they will enjoy the spoils of Calvary. The ingathering will have taken place. The harvest will have come to them, both naturally and spiritually.

The end