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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

The holy days known as Feasts of the Lord were first given to Israel, and people often think of these as Jewish holidays. Indeed they are, but they are first and foremost the Feasts of the Lord mandated by His Word.

There are four spring feasts and three fall feasts. The spring feasts are symbolic of prophetic events surrounding Christ's first coming which have been fulfilled. The fall feasts are symbolic of events yet to be fulfilled that relate to His second coming.

Israel has other feasts that are mentioned in the Bible and that mark special occasions connected with their spiritual and historical heritage. Volumes have been written on the subject of these feasts if you are interested in detailed aspects of the ceremonies and Jewish traditions.

The purpose of this manual, however, is to deal specifically with the Feasts of the Lord, their prophetic significance, what they mean to you as a Believer, and ways you may observe these special days spiritually.

The spring Feasts of the Lord represent prophecies already fulfilled. They are:

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

Date: Nisan 14 (March/April).

The Passover commemorates Israel's deliverance from death through the applied blood of a lamb. For the believer, this feast commemorates the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. He is the one who has delivered us out of the slavery of sin and bondage through the sacrifice of His blood.

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Dates: Nisan 15-22 (March/April).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread recalls Israel's deliverance from slavery and the urgency with which the people left Egypt without even waiting for their bread to rise. Purging leaven is biblically symbolic of eliminating sin. It illustrates the urgency for Believers to escape the enslavement of the world and begin their spiritual journey to the promised land. It is also symbolic of Jesus, the Bread of Life, who is free from leaven which is symbolic of evil.

THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

Date: Nisan 17 (March/April)

First Fruits was the time when the first yields of the harvest were presented to the Lord. These first fruits of the crop were representative of all the harvests to come. Prophetically for Believers, this feast symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus. He was the grain of wheat which died to bring forth the first fruits of all resurrections. It also indicates that we should give the first fruits of our labor, the tithe, to the Lord.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST (Feast of Weeks/Shavuot)

Date: Silvan 7 (May/June) Fifty days after Passover.

This feast commemorates the giving of the law at Sinai some 50 days after the exodus from Egypt. For Believers, this feast symbolizes the giving of the Holy Spirit at the birth of the church age and its operation under the New Covenant of grace: Acts 2.

The fall feasts represent prophecies yet to be fulfilled. They include:

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (Rosh Hashanah)

Date: Tishri 1 (September/October).

This feast marked the end of harvest and beginning of the Jewish new year. For the Believer, this feast is symbolic of new beginnings and the glorious day when Jesus will return at the trumpet sound to take His people to their spiritual Promised Land (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:52).

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur)

Date: Tishri 10 (September/October).

This was the most holy day of the year when atonement for Israel's sins was made by the High Priest. For Believers, this feast is symbolic of the atoning work of Christ on the cross. A key truth manifested by this feast is that there is only one way to approach God and be forgiven and that is through the shed blood of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Feast of Booths/Sukkot/Ingathering)

Dates: Tishri 15-22 (September/October).

The booths constructed during this feast celebrated the time when Israel lived in temporary shelters prior to building permanent structures in their Promised Land. This feast commemorates God's faithfulness in the past, especially during their wilderness journey. It is also called the Feast of Ingathering because it was held at the conclusion of the reaping season and included a week of joyous celebration for the harvest. For the

believer, it speaks of God's faithfulness in the past and prophetically of our coming into our Promised Land after we abandon our temporary earthly tabernacles. It also reveals that in the Kingdom of God, the end is better than the beginning.

These are the Feasts of the Lord, not something instituted by the people. Israel had other feasts, but these are specifically mandated as the Feasts of the Lord. These appointed times during which God's people are called to repent; to reflect and rejoice over what God did in the past; and to look forward in faith to what He will do in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

CELEBRATING THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

When we hear the word *feast* we think of an elaborate meal or banquet, but the Feasts of the Lord are holy convocations established by God for His people to come together and meet with Him in special ways. These assemblies include ceremonial meals, but are not exclusively about food. They have very deep spiritual and prophetic meanings.

The Hebrew word for a “holy convocation” or “sacred assembly” is *mikrah*. Prophetically, Christ's atonement for sin at His death, His resurrection, His ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, His return, and other future prophetic events are illustrated in these special convocations.

The Feasts of the Lord are what are called Old Testament types. A type is a person, place, thing, or event that resembles an actual person, place, thing, or event in the New Testament. The type is a prophetic preview of that which is to come. Volumes have been written on how Jesus, the church, events in the New Testament, and the prophetic future are concealed in types and shadows in the Old Testament. The Feasts of the Lord are among the greatest types in the Old Testament that reveal the redemptive plan of God.

Paul speaks of the value of the Old Testament declaring:

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

PREVAILING ATTITUDES

There seems to be four prevailing attitudes of Believers towards the Feasts of the Lord:

- Celebrate them by mandate in a legalistic manner. Some Believers are taught these celebrations are required and must be observed in minute detail.
- Ignore them. Some Believers think these are Jewish feasts with no spiritual application for Believers and many have not been taught about their significance.
- Prohibit them. Some Believers object to observing these feasts because they were originally given under the law and they view them as tradition. Jesus certainly spoke against traditions that were not in harmony with and/or were elevated above God's Word, but traditions are not inherently wrong. The Lord's Supper may be a “tradition”, but it is a positive one deep with spiritual meaning.

-Celebrate them by choice. These Believers freely choose to honor these observances by celebrating God's faithfulness in the past and by looking forward in anticipation to the fulfillment of His prophetic timeline in the future.

Jesus kept the Feasts of the Lord. He kept Passover as a child with His parents (Luke 2:41-42) and at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13). He observed an unnamed feast, thought to be the Feast of Weeks, in the first year of His ministry (John 5:1). He observed the Passover just prior to His death (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20; John 13:1-5). The Feast of Booths is also mentioned in John 7:2-38.

Every important event that ushered in the New Covenant coincided with the celebration of a major feast. The crucifixion took place during the Feast of Passover. The Resurrection took place during the Feast of Firstfruits. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place during the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 1:4; 2:1).

It is not mandated that New Testament Believers observe these Feasts because they do not affect your salvation or your eternal destiny. These privileges only come through the grace of God and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not a matter of obligation, but it is an opportunity for you to choose to enjoy these festivals and learn about their deep spiritual meaning.

To celebrate the Jewish feasts is not to turn away from the grace and work of salvation, but to come to a better understanding and appreciation of Christ's work on the cross. The early Christians kept these feasts as a reminder of their deliverance from sin through the free grace of Jesus Christ and in anticipation of the fulfillment of God's plan of the ages.

It is a privilege to celebrate these feasts, but they never should be promoted as required ritual, as essential to being righteous before God, or as a means of securing one's salvation (Galatians 2:21; 4:9-11, 5:1-4). That is legalism.

It is more important to be washed in the blood of Jesus (the true Passover Lamb) than to eat a Passover meal. It is more vital that you are filled with the power of Pentecost (the baptism of the Holy Spirit) than to learn how the firstfruits were offered on that day. It is more important to have the Messiah "tabernacle" in your heart and life than to build a *sukkah* in your back yard (the traditional, small, three-walled structure that Jews erect to remind them of their wilderness journey). You may be circumcised in the natural body, but it is only legalism if you have not been circumcised in your spirit.

When the dying thief cried out to Jesus: "*Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom,*" Jesus replied: "*Verily I say unto thee, Today you will be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:42-43). The dying man was instantly saved. He received no baptism in water. He could not take Communion. He did not belong to a church. This reveals that although these biblical practices are important, they have nothing to do with one's salvation. Neither does the keeping or lack of keeping of the Feasts. Without true repentance, God did not like His own feasts (Amos 5:21-23).

Over the years, Christianity has been corrupted with heathen influences, including celebrations like Easter and Christmas. The word "Easter" is found only once in the King James Version of the Bible (Acts 12:4 KJV) and is incorrectly translated from a word that should be rendered "Passover" (*pascha*). Easter actually refers to the worship of a false deity named Eastre, the goddess of spring. Christmas revolves around the winter solstice, and is filled with non-biblical symbolism like yule logs, mistletoe, decorated evergreen trees, and Santa Claus. Plus, research proves that it is unlikely that Jesus was born on December 25th.

Do not become critical about such observances, however. Children who participate in an egg-hunt are not worshipping the goddess of fertility. Families who give gifts around a Christmas tree are not honoring the sun-god. If they are Believers, they use these special days to teach Biblical truths about Jesus. The observance of these celebrations is a personal choice. In the same way, Believers are free to choose to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord. Do not become legalistic or judgmental in these matters.

The Bible states that each person should be fully convinced in their own mind regarding questionable issues:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (Romans 14:5)

He admonishes:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come... (Colossians 2:16-17a)

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. (Titus 3:9)

Believers are free to observe traditions that do not conflict with Scripture and that help us learn about God and His great plan of the ages.

Each of the seven Feasts of the Lord was designed to point the Jewish people to the Messiah, and each uniquely portrays a particular aspect of Christ's life and ministry. For Christians who have received the revelation from the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah, observing these days provides special opportunities to pause and focus on God's redemptive plan--what He has done in the past, what He is doing in the present, and what He will do in the future.

THE FEAST CALENDAR

Over the centuries, people have invented various calendars to mark the passing of time and special events, but there is only one calendar of God. The sun, moon, and stars were created not only to give us lights, but also to determine time correctly:

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:14-18)

The heavenly bodies establish God's calendar of day and night, seasons, days, and years.

The Jewish people operate by a civil calendar in secular business and a religious calendar for spiritual matters. Each day begins at sundown and extends until sundown the next day. Each month begins with the first visible crescent moon. The full moon is always in the middle of the month, and the half-moon in between.

Feast days are determined based on the religious calendar rather than the secular calendar and are on the same days each year. Because the Western calendar is not the same as God's calendar, the specific dates vary from year-to-year.

THE SPRING FEASTS

The spring Feasts of the Lord represent prophecies already fulfilled.

Passover.

Representing: The crucifixion and death of Jesus as the Passover lamb.

Date: Nisan 14 (March/April).

Unleavened Bread.

Representing: Christ's sinless life as the Bread of Life.

Dates: Nisan 15-22 (March/April).

First-Fruits.

Representing: The resurrection of Jesus as first-fruits of resurrection.

Date: Nisan 17 (March/April).

Pentecost.

Representing: The coming of Holy Spirit.

Date: Silvan 7 (May/June) Fifty days after Passover.

Exodus chapter 23 discusses the spring feasts and lists the blessings associated with them:

-Divine protection Exodus 23:20a.

-Preparation for the season ahead: Exodus 23:20b.

-Your enemies will be God's enemies: Exodus 23:22.

-Supernatural guidance: Exodus 23:23.

-Supernatural health: Exodus 23:25.

-Multiplication: Exodus 23:26,30.

-Longevity: Exodus 23:26.

-Restoration: What the enemy has stolen will be returned to you: Exodus 23:33.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

DATE: Nisan 14 (March/April)

REFERENCES:

The First Passover:

Exodus 12:1-13,21-23,29-41

Future Passovers:

Exodus 12:14-20, 24-28, 42-49

Commands to keep the Passover:

Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16; Deuteronomy 16:1-6; 2 Chronicles 30:15

THE FEAST

BACKGROUND

Genesis chapters 37-50 relate the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob who was sold as a slave by his brothers to the Egyptians. Despite many adversities, God prospered Joseph in Egypt and he eventually gained favor in the sight of Pharaoh and became a ruler in the land.

Due to a series of circumstances caused by a famine, Joseph was reunited with his brothers and his father and he moved them to Egypt. For generations, Joseph's descendants (the Hebrews) thrived in the materially wealthy and culturally advanced nation of Egypt.

Some years after Joseph's death however, the Egyptians begin to view the presence of the Hebrews as threatening because of their prosperity and growth. Different Pharaohs rose to power who did not know Joseph, and eventually these leaders enslaved the Israelites for a period of 400 years.

The book of Exodus begins with the story of Moses, a firstborn son of Israelites, whose fate should have been doomed by an edict from Pharaoh to kill all male babies. Thanks to a godly mother and the providence of God, Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter and adopted into the royal Egyptian family (Exodus 2).

As Moses matured, he became aware of his true identity as a Hebrew. One day he witnessed an Egyptian horribly mistreating a Hebrew and in a moment of anger he killed the Egyptian, after which he fled for his life.

During an extended time in the desert, the Lord prepared Moses to lead His people out of slavery. Eventually, God commanded Moses to return to Egypt and approach Pharaoh regarding freeing the Israelites. It took a series of ten plagues from God before Pharaoh finally released the people from bondage. It was the last plague, the death of the firstborn, during which the first Passover was mandated by God (Exodus 5:3; 7:14-12:36).

During the tenth plague, the death angel passed over the land and the first-born son of every household was slain. The Israelites were instructed to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood over the doorposts of their homes to be protected from this judgment. When the death angel saw the applied blood, he passed over that residence. *Pesach*, in Hebrew, means to 'pass over,' as when the wings of a mother bird are spread over baby chicks (Luke 13:34). The Passover is a reminder of how the death angel passed over every home that had the lamb's blood covering it, thus sparing the firstborn son inside.

During the centuries in Egypt, God's people had assimilated the life-style and customs of their environment and neglected many of God's commands. They needed both physical and spiritual redemption. The Passover commemorates their redemption from Egypt, symbolic of sin, through the applied blood of a lamb. This was prophetic of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who would eventually shed His blood for the redemption of all mankind.

There are two detailed passages regarding the observance of the Passover: Instructions for the first Passover and instructions for future Passovers.

THE FIRST PASSOVER

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land

of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:1-13)

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. (Exodus 12:21-23)

There was no precedent for the first Passover. The Bible states of Moses that “...*Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them*” (Hebrews 11:28).

Here is a summary of the instructions:

The Lamb. Hebrew families were instructed to select a lamb without defect on the 10th of the month and keep it until the 14th of the month. Each day the lamb was kept symbolized 100 years of Egyptian bondage. During this time, the family became attached to the lamb and slaying and eating it made them recognize the gravity of their sin and the required penalty of death (Exodus 20:6). It was a painful lesson regarding the price of sin. The lamb must be perfect and without blemish, it was to be roasted by fire which is symbolic of God’s judgment, and not one of its bones was to be broken. This was prophetic of Jesus Christ, whose bones were not broken during His death.

The Blood. Blood from the lamb was to be spread on each side of the doorway and the header of the doorway. It was not to be placed on the threshold (Hebrews 10:29). To be protected, a person must remain in the blood-marked house until the judgment concluded.

The Meal. The Passover meal was to be eaten quickly, with participants prepared for their deliverance from Egypt and their departure for their Promised Land. The meal consisted of:

The Lamb. Each member of the family must personally eat of the lamb.

The Bitter Herbs. The bitter herbs were symbolic of the hardships which they endured in Egypt and a reminder that their firstborn son lived because of the bitterness of death of the Passover lamb.

The Unleavened Bread. Leaven is often used as a type of sin in the Bible, so eliminating in symbolized cleansing themselves from the evil with which they had been infiltrated during the

years in Egypt. The people fled Egypt so fast that the women could not wait for their bread to rise, which is symbolic of the urgency with which they responded to the plan of redemption. This part of the Passover Feast continued for seven days. It is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread and is covered in the next chapter.

FUTURE PASSOVERS

Here are the Biblical references regarding future Passovers:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. (Exodus 12:14-20)

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. (Exodus 12:24-28)

It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no

uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. (Exodus 12:42-49)

Here is a summary of the instructions for future Passovers:

The date. The Feast was to be observed on the same date every year. According to the Hebrew calendar, Passover dates do not change. Passover starts on the evening of Nisan 14th and ends at sundown on Nisan 22nd. The Hebrew calendar is lunar. The Gregorian calendar, by which the western world operates, is solar. This is what creates the differences in Passover dates from year-to-year on your calendar. Even though most people today call the entire seven day feast Passover, the name actually refers only to the first day when the Passover meal is eaten. The other days are actually the Feast of Unleavened Bread which is discussed in the next chapter.

Location. The Feast must be observed only at the place appointed by God (Deuteronomy 16:5-6).

Inclusions and exclusions. All the congregation of Israel must keep the Passover (Exodus 12:47). All males of the congregation must appear before the Lord (Exodus 23:17; 34:23). No stranger, uncircumcised, or those outside the covenant were to eat the Passover (Exodus 12:43-45).

The lamb. One lamb per household and all must be eaten in one night (Exodus 12:3-4,46; 34:25).

Leaven must be eliminated. All leaven must be removed from their house and blood sacrifices must be made without leaven (Exodus 13:6-7; 34:25).

Children were to be taught the meaning of the Feast. Through observance of the Passover, the younger generation was to be taught about the faithfulness of God in behalf of His people:

And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. (Exodus 13:8)

And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. (Exodus 12:25-27)

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

For Believers, this feast commemorates the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. He is the one who delivered us out of the slavery of sin and bondage through the sacrifice of His blood. "Christ our Passover" is a title given to Jesus:

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. (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

The lamb, the blood and its application, and the Passover meal all contain beautiful symbolisms of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who is our Passover.

The Lamb. The lamb selected by Hebrew families was to be without blemish, it was to be slain and roasted by fire which is symbolic of God's judgment, and not one of its bones were to be broken. This was symbolic of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world once and for all (John 1:29,36).

During the Passover held during Christ's final days on earth, when each family was choosing their lamb on the 10th day of Nisan for Passover, God revealed His Lamb during the triumphant entry of Jesus (Zechariah 9:9).

The Blood. The sacrificial lamb which each family offered prefigured the Lamb of God whose blood would take away the sins of the world. The blood of the lamb placed on the lintel and two side posts of the house symbolized the required sacrifice for sin and prophetically represented the cross of Jesus. The applied blood set apart those who believed from those who did not. It does the same today.

The blood on the doorposts during the first Passover signified that God's people were:

- Redeemed from slavery in Egypt.
- Delivered from the kingdom of Egypt.
- Freed from Pharaoh's power.
- Saved by the Blood of the Passover Lamb
- Freed to become God's people.

Protected by the applied blood, each family feasted on the slain lamb as the death angel passed over. Each family member must partake of the lamb themselves, just as we must each personally accept the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin. Jesus was God's perfect Lamb, without blemish. Even Pilate found no fault in Him (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 1:19).

God called the sacrificial lamb "the Lord's Passover" and "the Passover sacrifice of the Lord" (Exodus 12:3-11,27). This was so named because God promised, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you*" (Exodus 12:13). Some 1,500

years later, the Apostle Paul used this same term to describe Jesus Christ, cognizant of the fact that the Passover lambs slain at the time of the Exodus were symbolic of the final sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. At the very time Jesus died on the cross, the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple.

When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of all mankind, it signified that Believers are:

- Redeemed from the slavery of sin
- Delivered from the Kingdom of Satan.
- Freed from Satan's power.
- Saved by the blood of the Lamb of God
- Freed to be grafted in as the people of God.

The Meal. The haste with which the Passover meal was eaten symbolizes the urgency for us to partake of redemption and begin our journey to our Promised Land.

The Lamb. Each person must partake of the lamb, just as every person must individually partake of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. No one else can make the decision to accept Him for you. You must personally acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior.

The Bitter Herbs are symbolic of the bitter bondage of sin from which you are redeemed.

The Unleavened Bread. Leaven is often used as a symbolic of evil in the Bible. Unleavened bread made without yeast, of which the Hebrews were to eat as part of the Passover meal, is symbolic of the sinlessness of Jesus, the Bread of Life, who declared:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. (John 6:51-58)

The Hebrews fled Egypt so fast that the women could not wait for their bread to rise, which is symbolic of the urgency of their response to the plan of redemption. Today is the day of salvation. Don't delay. Your destiny depends on your response.

Eating the bread symbolizes appropriating Jesus as the sustainer of life. As physical food is required for physical life, so spiritual food is required for spiritual life. The command to observe

the Lord's Supper is symbolic of this, as we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine which is symbolic of Christ's body and blood.

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

The Passover Feast is part of our spiritual heritage. As Believers, we are not required to adopt Jewish traditions or celebrate the Passover in the way described in the Old Testament. Even Orthodox Jews do not do so, as there is no temple and no animal sacrifices. We also do not need to follow modern Jewish Passover rituals as they include many customs that were not part of the first Passover.

We celebrate this Feast as a shadow of the greater redemption to come. We observe it in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ who provided eternal redemption once and for all through His blood sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. No blood sacrifices will ever again be needed, as Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for sin when He died on the cross.

Here are some ways to celebrate the Passover:

Passover Preparation. During the week prior to Passover, study about Christ's last week on earth and the events leading up to and including His death which included His observance of Passover. Appendix One of this manual provides a guide.

The Lord's Supper. Celebrate Passover by taking the Lord's Supper, also referred to as Communion. Jesus celebrated the Passover with His Disciples on the final night before His death and instructed them to do this in His memory. Partake of a small piece of bread and a cup of juice to remember and celebrate Jesus, your Passover. Use the following passage to guide your observance:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

A Messianic Seder. Some misinformed Christians have accused Believers of Judaizing and legalism because they celebrate a Passover Seder. Romans 14:5-6,10 and Colossians 2:16-17 gives us freedom to observe Holy Days we see fit. Celebrating a Messianic Passover is another option. It is a special time to gather with friends and family to review what God has done for you by redeeming you from the slavery of sin. Instructions for a Messianic Passover Seder are provided in Appendix Two of this study.

Instructing Children. The Passover story is one that the Bible directs you to teach your children. Take time to do this as part of your celebration of Passover:

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. (Exodus 12:24-27)

The Old Testament Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread merge together. The Passover is the main event, followed by a week of eating unleavened bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is covered in the next chapter.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

Exodus 12:11

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.

Exodus 12:21

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

Exodus 12:27

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Exodus 12:43

43 And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof.

Exodus 12:48

48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

Exodus 34:25

25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

Leviticus 23:5

5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.

Numbers 9:2

2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.

Numbers 9:4

4 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.

Numbers 9:5

5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Numbers 9:6

6 And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

Numbers 9:10

10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord.

Numbers 9:12

12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

Numbers 9:13

13 But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

Numbers 9:14

14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Numbers 28:16

16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the Lord.

Numbers 33:3

3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Deuteronomy 16:1

16 Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

Deuteronomy 16:2

2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there.

Deuteronomy 16:5

5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Deuteronomy 16:6

6 But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

Joshua 5:10

10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

Joshua 5:11

11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

2 Kings 23:21

21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

2 Kings 23:22

22 Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah.

2 Kings 23:23

23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 30:1

30 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel.

2 Chronicles 30:2

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

2 Chronicles 30:5

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

2 Chronicles 30:15

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 30:18

18 For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written...

2 Chronicles 35:1

35 Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.

2 Chronicles 35:6

6 So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

2 Chronicles 35:7

7 And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance.

2 Chronicles 35:8

8 And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen.

2 Chronicles 35:9

9 Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen.

2 Chronicles 35:11

11 And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them.

2 Chronicles 35:13

13 And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people.

2 Chronicles 35:16

16 So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

2 Chronicles 35:17

17 And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

2 Chronicles 35:18

18 And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 35:19

19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

Ezra 6:19

19 And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month.

Ezra 6:20

20 For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

Ezekiel 45:21

21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Matthew 26:2

2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Matthew 26:17

17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

Matthew 26:18

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

Matthew 26:19

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

Mark 14:1

14 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

Mark 14:12

12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Mark 14:14

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Mark 14:16

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Luke 2:41

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Luke 22:1

22 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

Luke 22:7

7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

Luke 22:8

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

Luke 22:11

11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Luke 22:13

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Luke 22:15

15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.

John 2:13

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 2:23

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

John 6:4

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

John 11:55

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

John 12:1

12 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

John 13:1

13 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

John 18:28

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.

John 18:39

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

John 19:14

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

1 Corinthians 5:7

7 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.

Hebrews 11:28

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

DATES: Nisan 15-22 (March/April)

REFERENCES:

Commands to eliminate leaven:
Exodus 12:15-20

Commands regarding unleavened bread:
Exodus 13:6-7
Numbers 28:17
Deuteronomy 16:3-4

Sacrifices for sin without leaven:
Numbers 28:17-25

THE FEAST

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover are related, but distinct holidays. Passover is a one-night observance that recalls the time when the blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from the plague of the death of the firstborn. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a seven-day feast that requires removing all leaven from the homes and eating unleavened Bread. The first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are Sabbaths, regardless of the day of the week,

The Feast of Unleavened Bread recalls the time when Israel fled Egypt so rapidly that they did not have time to add leaven (yeast) to their bread:

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou came forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days... (Deuteronomy 16:3-4a)

God instructed the Israelites to go through their homes and eliminate anything that contained leaven (Exodus 12:15; 13:6-7). They were to eat only unleavened bread at the Passover meal and for seven days following. All sacrifices made to the Lord were to be free from leaven. On the first day and the seventh day of this Feast a holy convocation was to be conducted where all work was to cease. The Lord commanded that this Feast be observed in following generations by an ordinance (Exodus 12:17).

An important purpose of this Feast was to remind Israel of how God redeemed them from Egyptian bondage which is symbolic of sin. This Feast is a time for spiritual examination to rid oneself of sin, as leaven is used in the Bible as an example of the permeating power of evil.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

In the natural world, once yeast is incorporated into the dough it becomes an inseparable part of the bread. Spiritually, leaven is often used as a symbol of sin in the Bible. Like leaven, once sin is incorporated into your life it permeates your entire being: Body, soul, and spirit.

The unleavened bread eaten at the Passover meal and for the seven days following is symbolic of the sinless life of Jesus Christ. Jesus said: *“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger...”* (John 6:35). To eliminate the leaven of sin, you must partake of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, through the new birth experience described in John chapter 3. After receiving Jesus as your personal Savior, the Bible repeatedly calls for self-examination in order to purge oneself of the leaven of sin.

The fact that Israel left Egypt for their Promised Land so rapidly that they did not have time to add leaven to their bread is symbolic of the urgency with which we should eliminate the spiritual leaven of sin as we journey to our own Promised Land.

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

Here are some biblically based suggestions for Believers who wish to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Focus on the Kingdom. In one of Jesus’ parables describing the Kingdom of Heaven, leaven is used in a different way (Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:21). It is not used as a symbol of evil, but as a symbol of the Kingdom of God which will gradually permeate the world. Just as a woman uses the smallest bit of leaven in the dough, so the Gospel starts with small beginnings. Just as the leaven quietly works its way through the whole batch of dough, the Gospel will have a profound impact on the world. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a great time to pray for the good leaven of the Gospel to permeate the world through the ministries of evangelists, pastors, teachers, and missionaries who are on the frontlines of spiritual harvest.

Cultivate thanksgiving. Another positive use of the word “leaven” is in Amos 4:5 which indicates Believers should *“...offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven...”* Every prayer and act of service should be permeated with thanksgiving. You can celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread by fostering a thankful spirit and raising a sacrifice of praise to the Lord.

Set aside the first and seventh days of this feast as a holy convocation. Refrain from your normal duties and spend an extended time with God.

Examine your life. Some people choose to actually abstain from products containing leaven during the days of this feast. While they are free to do that if desired (Colossians 2:16), the true significance of this time is to examine one's self to eliminate the leaven of sin. The Bible declares: "...let a man examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28). The Apostle Paul explained:

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. (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)

A great way to observe this Feast of the Lord is to examine your life. Are you harboring secret sins? Are you bitter, angry, and unforgiving? Are you bound by addictions? Are you honoring God in your finances, your family, your relationships, your work, your conduct, and your ministry? The Bible declares: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..." (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Take heed to these warnings regarding the permeating spread of sin:

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. (Galatians 5:9)

Dead flies cause the ointment of the perfumer to putrefy [and] send forth a vile odor; so does a little folly [in him who is valued for wisdom] outweigh wisdom and honor. (Ecclesiastes 10:1)

In other words: A little bit of the leaven of sin goes a long way!

Ask God to cleanse you of the leaven of sin, even from secret faults of which you are not aware (Psalm 19:12). The Bible declares:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

When you confess your known sins, God goes above and beyond to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, even transgressions of which you are not aware.

As part of your observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and eliminating spiritual leaven from your life, study this prayer of repentance penned by King David:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. (Psalm 51)

Here is an outline for studying this Psalm:

Psalm 51: Cleansing The Leaven Of Sin

(David's prayer of repentance after his sin of adultery: 2 Samuel 11-12.)

- I. Reconciliation of a sinner: It is on the basis of mercy and grace. (1)
 - A. Have mercy upon me. *(He didn't shift the blame to someone else.)*
 - B. According to Your loving kindness.
 - C. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies.
- II. Requests of a sinner. (2-6)
 - A. Blot out my transgressions. *(Obliterate the record of my sin.)*
 - B. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity.
 - C. Cleanse me from my sin.
 - D. I acknowledge my transgressions. *(He pleads guilty.)*
 - E. My sin is ever before me.
 - F. Against You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight. *(Although others are affected by your sin, all sin is rebellion against God.)*
 1. You are justified when You speak.
 2. You are clear when You judge. *(David acknowledged that there was no argument against the divine justice of God concerning his sin.)*
 - G. I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. *(The source of sin is not environmental. We are sinners by birth and by choice.)*
 - H. You know my inward and hidden parts. *(God desires inner sincerity in repentance.)*
 - I. You will make me know wisdom.

- (God is teaching him truth concerning his sinful nature.)*
- III. Restoration of a repentant sinner. (7-12)
- A. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.
(Hyssop was used in the Old Testament for cleansing sin.)
 - B. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
 - C. Restore my joy and gladness, so the bones you have broken may rejoice.
(David felt crushed and broken by his sin.)
 - D. Hide Your face from my sins.
 - E. Blot out all mine iniquities. *(Not just the specific sin of which he was repenting, but "all" his sins.)*
 - F. Create in me a clean heart, O God.
(The word of "create" as used here means new. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.)
 - G. Renew a right spirit within me.
 - H. Cast me not away from Your presence *(as God did to Cain).*
 - I. Take not Your Holy Spirit from me *(as God did to King Saul).*
 - J. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation.
 - K. Uphold me with Your free spirit. *(The Holy Spirit enables us to walk victoriously and makes us willing to do God's will.)*
- IV. Results of a restored sinner. (13-15)
(Forgiveness of sin and restoration to right relationship leads to worship.)
- A. Work: He is restored to teach transgressors God's ways so that sinners will be converted.
 - B. Worship: He is restored to worship.
 - 1. My tongue will sing aloud of Your righteousness when You deliver me from blood-guiltiness *(the consequences of my sin).*
 - 2. My lips will be opened to show forth Your praise. *(He asks God to open His lips, fearing to speak until the Lord unstops his sin-silenced mouth.)*
- V. The realizations of a restored sinner. (16-19)
- A. It is not offerings and sacrifices alone.
 - B. It is:
 - 1. A broken spirit.
 - 2. A broken and contrite heart.
 - 3. Doing good to Zion *(symbolic of the people of God).*
 - 4. Building the walls of Jerusalem *(symbolic of securing the dwelling place of God).*
 - 5. Sacrifices of righteousness.
 - C. Then the Lord will be pleased with the offerings brought to the altar.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO LEAVEN AND UNLEAVENED BREAD

And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. (Genesis 19:3)

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. (Exodus 12:8)

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15)

And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. (Exodus 12:17)

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. (Exodus 12:18)

Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. (Exodus 12:19)

Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. (Exodus 12:20)

Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. (Exodus 13:6)

Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. (Exodus 13:7)

Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty. (Exodus 23:15)

And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. (Exodus 29:2)

And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord. (Exodus 29:23)

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. (Exodus 34:18)

Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left unto the morning. (Exodus 34:25)

No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire. (Leviticus 2:11)

And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. (Leviticus 6:16)

It shall not be baken with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. (Leviticus 6:17)

Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread. (Leviticus 8:2)

And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the Lord, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder. (Leviticus 8:26)

And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy. (Leviticus 10:12)

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. (Leviticus 23:6)

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord. (Leviticus 23:17)

And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. (Numbers 6:15)

And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. (Numbers 6:17)

The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. (Numbers 9:11)

And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. (Numbers 28:17)

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. (Deuteronomy 16:3)

Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work therein. (Deuteronomy 16:8)

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. (Deuteronomy 16:16)

And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hastened, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof. (1 Samuel 28:24)

Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. (2 Kings 23:9)

Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. (2 Chronicles 8:13)

And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. (2 Chronicles 30:13)

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. (2 Chronicles 30:21)

And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. (2 Chronicles 35:17)

And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. (Ezra 6:22)

In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. (Ezekiel 45:21)

And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God. (Amos 4:5)

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. (Matthew 13:33)

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Matthew 16:6)

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (Matthew 16:11)

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Matthew 16:12)

Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? (Matthew 26:17)

And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. (Mark 8:15)

After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. (Mark 14:1)

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? (Mark 14:12)

In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (Luke 12:1)

It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. (Luke 13:21)

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. (Luke 22:7)

And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) (Acts 12:3)

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. (Acts 20:6)

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (1 Corinthians 5:6)

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. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

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. (1 Corinthians 5:8)

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (Galatians 5:9)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

DATE: Nisan 17 (March/April)

REFERENCES:

-Instructions for observing the Feast of Firstfruits:
Exodus 23:16, 19a; Leviticus 23:9-14; Numbers 28:26-31

-Command to honor the Lord with the Firstfruits of labor:
Proverbs 3:9

-Spiritual application:
1 Corinthians 15:20-23

THE FEAST

Here are the passages related to the Feast of Firstfruits:

And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field...The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. (Exodus 23:16,19)

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. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf a lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat 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. (Leviticus 23:9-14)

Here are the instructions:

Mark, gather, and present the First Fruits. The commandment regarding Firstfruits required an Israeli farmer to mark the first grain that sprouted in their field and the first fruit that developed on their trees. When these first grains and fruits ripened, they were harvested, taken to the Jerusalem Temple during the Feast of Firstfruits, and waved before the Lord in worship. By obeying this command regarding giving God the Firstfruits, the remainder of their crops were blessed supernaturally.

Present offerings to the Lord. For Israel, the Feast of Firstfruits celebrated His provision in the past and present and looked with anticipation towards the future bountiful harvests to come. They presented sacrifices and offerings in commemoration of God's faithfulness.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

The greatest spiritual application of the Feast of Firstfruits is found in 1 Corinthians 15:20 where the Apostle Paul refers to Jesus as the Firstfruits of the dead:

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. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

Jesus celebrated the Sunday after His crucifixion by rising from the dead on the day of the Feast of Firstfruits. As the first fruits of harvest were symbolic of many more harvests to come, the resurrection of Jesus was the Firstfruits of the great spiritual harvest of Believers who will be raised to eternal life because of the new covenant in His blood (Luke 22:20). Jesus was the grain of wheat which died to bring forth the Firstfruits of all future resurrections. (For further study on the Resurrection, see Appendix Three of this manual.)

The marking, gathering, and presenting of the first fruits symbolizes the marking of Believers by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13); the gathering of Believers in the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17); and their presentation at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

The presentation of the first fruits also indicates that Believers should give the first fruits of their talent, time, and labor to the Lord. Numbers 18:12 says that the Firstfruits offerings must be the first and best of their produce. As Believers, we must offer the best of our time and talent to God. We should also offer the first fruits of our labor (our tithe of 10%) to the Lord, anticipating that He will supernaturally bless the remainder.

The Firstfruits metaphor was also applied to the first converts in regions where the Gospel spread who were representative of great spiritual harvest to come (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15). The term Firstfruits is also applied to Believers who are martyred (Revelation 14:1-5) and to all Believers who are in the truth:

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:18)

You are born again as a kind of firstfruits of all God created. As such, like the produce presented at the Feast of Firstfruits, you are representative of the world-wide harvest of true Believers.

Romans chapters 9-11 describes the place of the Jewish people in God's plan, also referring to them as firstfruits. Paul warns Believers against feeling proud that they accepted the Gospel when the majority of Israel rejected it and He explains how unbelieving Israel will be grafted back in.

Romans 8:23 speaks of the "Firstfruits of the Spirit":

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:22-23)

The Firstfruits of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of an even more intimate relationship with Christ in our resurrected bodies. The Holy Spirit guarantees your future inheritance:

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:12-14)

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

As with all of the feasts, there are many traditions that have come to be associated with the Jewish observance of Firstfruits over the years. But most important to you as a Believer is that you can observe this day spiritually by renewing your commitment of time, talent, and resources to the Lord.

The Feast Of Firstfruits reminds us that God has done great things in the past, He will do great things in the present, and we can anticipate even greater things in the future. There is much we can learn from this metaphor of a simple sheaf of wheat and bough of fruit dedicated to the Lord.

If you have not been tithing, it is a good time to start. Renew your commitment to give God the first fruits of your labor which, according to the Bible, is 10% of all you earn. As you do this in obedience, God will supernaturally bless the remainder.

Take time on this day to thank God that you are sealed by the Holy Spirit, you will be gathered with Christ at His coming, and you will be presented faultless at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Thank God that because Jesus was the Firstfruits of the resurrection, you will be resurrected to eternal life.

Claim the promises of God that as you share the Gospel and experience the Firstfruits of souls coming to the Lord, it is a guarantee of more to come. The spiritual harvest fields are ripe. What you are experiencing now in your ministry is only the Firstfruits of what God has promised.

Thank God that you have the Firstfruits of the Holy Spirit which guarantees your future inheritance of eternal life and an even more intimate relationship when you see Christ face-to-face.

Pray for Israel, the Firstfruits that God desires to graft back into His wonderful plan. The Bible indicates that we should pray for Israel (Psalm 122:6 and Joel 2:17) and that there is a blessing pronounced upon those who bless Israel (Genesis 12:3). Here is a guide for intercession for Israel during the Feast of Firstfruits.

-Pray for Israel's government:

-That their leaders will be just.

-That they will be free from corruption.

-That they will receive supernatural wisdom from God.

-That they will come to know the true Messiah.

-That they will be supernaturally protected by God in the execution of their duties.

-Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6.).

-Pray for the Jewish people of Israel that they will come to know their true Messiah.

-Pray for a supernatural revelation of the Messiah to all Israel (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

-Pray for the religious leaders of Israel, that their eyes will be opened to the Messiah.

-Pray for the power of Islam and other false religions in the country to be broken.

-Pray for economic prosperity for the nation of Israel.

-Pray for God to continue to draw His people to Israel from around the world.

-Pray for successful integration of Jews returning to Israel.

-Pray for the Jewish communities around the world to be receptive to the Gospel.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field. (Exodus 23:16)

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. (Exodus 23:19)

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. (Exodus 34:22)

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. (Exodus 34:26)

As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord... (Leviticus 2:12)

And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. (Leviticus 2:14)

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. (Leviticus 23:10)

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. (Leviticus 23:17)

And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. (Leviticus 23:20)

All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee. (Numbers 18:12)

Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work. (Numbers 28:26)

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 26:10)

And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. (2 Kings 4:42)

And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the fields; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. (2 Chronicles 31:5)

And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord. (Nehemiah 10:35)

And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. (Nehemiah 10:37)

And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. (Nehemiah 12:44)

And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good. (Nehemiah 13:31)

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase. (Proverbs 3:9)

Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 2:3)

For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. (Ezekiel 20:40)

And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. (Ezekiel 44:30)

And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for it is holy unto the Lord. (Ezekiel 48:14)

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23)

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. (Romans 16:5)

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. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints). (1 Corinthians 16:15)

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:18)

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14:4)

CHAPTER SIX

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

The Feast Of Weeks

Shavuot

DATE: Silvan 7 (May/June). A one-day feast held fifty days after Passover.

REFERENCES:

-Instructions concerning the Feast of Pentecost:
Leviticus 23:16-21; Deuteronomy 16:10-12.

-Commands to observe the Feast:
Exodus 34:22.

-New Testament instructions concerning Pentecost:
Acts 1.

-The Day of Pentecost:
Acts 2.

THE FEAST

The Feast of Pentecost is also referred to as the Feast of Weeks and Shavuot.

-The Greek word Pentecost means fifty days, referring to the time from Passover and Pentecost.

-The Feast of Weeks refers to the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost (a total of 50 days).

-Shavuot means “weeks” in Hebrew.

These terms all refer to what is called the Feast of Pentecost. Here are the instructions concerning the Feast:

And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are

among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. (Deuteronomy 16:10-12)

The feast was to held at a place appointed by the Lord. It included a freewill offering, great rejoicing before the Lord for their redemption, and a recommitment to observe the Word of God.

Because of similarities, this Feast links together the **giving of the Law of God at Sinai** some 50 days after the exodus from Egypt, and the **giving of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem** 50 days after Passover. Thus, the feast celebrates both the Law of God represented by the Old Testament experiences at Mt. Sanai and the Spirit of God represented by the New Testament experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Mt. Sinai. The giving of the law is recorded in Exodus chapters 29-30. These chapters are often read in Jewish synagogues in celebration of the Passover. At Mt Sinai, there were signs of thunder, lightning, and fire:

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. (Exodus 19:16-19)

Jerusalem. The giving of the Holy Spirit is recorded in Acts 2 with physical signs of fire and wind:

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 (Acts 2:2-6).

Exodus 32:28 records that 3,000 men died on the day the law was given. Acts 2:41 declares that 3,000 people were saved at the giving of the Holy Spirit. The law brought death, while the Spirit brought life.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

In the natural world, we count days to special events like a wedding, a birthday, or a holiday vacation with great anticipation. A spiritual countdown like the days between Passover and Pentecost places our focus on God with great anticipation, knowing that each passing day brings us closer to the fulfillment of His promises.

Spiritual anticipation looks forward to the new things God has for us rather than maintaining the status quo. Pentecost directs us to look for new things from God. No one had ever experienced the signs given at the coming of the Holy Spirit. Even bystanders took note:

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. (Acts 2:12-18)

Between Passover and Pentecost Jesus did not remain with His disciples, but was seen by them several times during which He taught concerning the Kingdom of God and the coming of the Holy Spirit:

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 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. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:3)

The Apostle John reveals how the Gospel accounts are not a complete historical record of all Jesus did. He declared: “*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book*” (John 20:30). We do not know all of the times Jesus appeared to His disciples between Passover and Pentecost, but in many of the appearances recorded in the Bible there is a common theme:

The women. *So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Hail!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” (Matthew 28:8-10)*

Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus. *That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. (Luke 24:13-43)*

The Disciples. *As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you." (Luke 24:36)*

Before the Ascension. *Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. (Luke 24:50-53)*

The emphasis of Christ's discourses during these post-resurrection appearances focused on the Kingdom of God and the task of reaching the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost reminds us of these purposes.

In Matthew 9:37 Jesus tells His disciples that "*the harvest is great, but the workers are few.*" Then He put the plan into action. He tells them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. That was the day the Church was born (the Day of Pentecost) and the spiritual harvest began with 3,000 souls.

Previously, Jesus sent His disciples to minister to Israel. Now they were sent to people of different languages and cultures. The various languages at Pentecost confirmed God's plan to save more nations besides the Jews. This was a new plan for the disciples. Pentecost testifies that we must be open to new movements of the Holy Spirit.

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

For Christians, this feast calls to remembrance the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus descended from heaven on Believers. We can celebrate this feast by:

- Increased spiritual focus between the days of Passover and Pentecost.
- An emphasis on prayer as Believers did in Jerusalem as they awaited the promise of the Holy Spirit.
- Emphasizing the Holy Spirit in Bible study, teachings, and sermons between Passover and Pentecost.
- Leading others to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Focusing on the spiritual harvest and sharing the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

-Preparing a special financial gift for Pentecost Sunday: “...no one is to come empty-handed”.

The day of Pentecost did not mark the finish line, but it was a starting point for the early church. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, 3,000 were added immediately to their number, the beginning of a mighty spiritual harvest that continues to this day. Celebrate Pentecost by doing something to reach the spiritual fields of the world which are white to harvest and are still in need of laborers.

Many Jews read Psalm 67 on the final day before Pentecost. You might want to use this chapter to conclude your celebration of Pentecost:

*1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, Selah
2 that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.
3 May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.
4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. Selah
5 May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.
6 Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us.
7 God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.
(Psalm 67, NIV)*

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
(Acts 2:1)*

For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. (Acts 20:16)

But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. (1 Corinthians 16:8)

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF WEEKS

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. (Exodus 34:22)

And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. (Deuteronomy 16:10-12)

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. (Deuteronomy 16:16):

*Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.
(2 Chronicles 8:13)*

THE FALL FEASTS

The three fall feasts occur in the 7th month of Tishri and they represent prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

The Feast Of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah).
Representing: The rapture and resurrection Of Believers.
Date: Tishri 1 (September/October).

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).
Representing: The second Coming Of Jesus and final judgment.
Date: Tishri 10 (September/October).

The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).
Representing: The Messianic Kingdom Age.
Dates: Tishri 15-22 (September/October).

The Feast of Trumpets represents the promised ingathering of God's people in the Rapture. The Days of Awe symbolize the tribulation for those remaining on earth. The Day of Atonement speaks prophetically of final judgment, and the Feast of Booths symbolizes the future establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Rosh Hashanah

DATE: Tishri 1 (September/October) First day of seventh month in the Jewish calendar.

REFERENCES:

Instructions for the Feast of Trumpets:

Leviticus 23:23-25

Numbers 29:1-6

Spiritual application:

1 Corinthians 15:51-55

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

THE FEAST

The longest gap between the feasts of the Lord is between Pentecost and Trumpets which is prophetically symbolic of the extended time between the giving of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) and Christ's return (the Feast of Trumpets).

Rosh Hashanah, also known as the Jewish New Year, is one of Israel's most holy days. The festival begins on the first day of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, which falls during September or October on your calendar.

Rosh Hashanah commemorates the Jewish new year and marks the beginning of the Days of Awe, a ten-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates in the Day of Atonement, also called Yom Kippur.

This Feast marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of a new year. It was a day of rest and a holy convocation which is proclaimed with the blast of trumpets:

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. (Leviticus 23:23-25)

Further instructions are given in the book of Numbers:

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. (Numbers 29:1-6)

The blowing of the trumpet was a signal for all work to cease and for people to depart immediately for the Temple for prayer, confession, instruction in the Word, worship, and sacrifices and offerings.

The trumpets sounded 100 times during the Feast of Trumpets. Four types of blasts were blown during this celebration:

-Tekiah, one long blast of alarm, symbolizing the king's coronation.

-Shevarim, three medium blasts lasting a second each like wailing, symbolizing the crying out of a heart to God.

-Teruah, nine short blasts designed to arouse one from spiritual slumber.

-Tekiah Hagedolah, the longest and loudest blast lasting about ten seconds. symbolizing a call repentance.

In 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, Paul refers to the trumpet sounding during end-time events, and the sound of trumpets echoes in events prophesied in the book of Revelation.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

As previously mentioned, the longest gap between the Feasts of the Lord is between Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets. This is prophetically symbolic of the extended time between the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and Christ's return at the sound of a trumpet:

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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)

For the Believer, the Feast of Trumpets symbolizes anticipation of the glorious day when Jesus returns at the trumpet sound to take His people from the earth to dwell with Him forever:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

Rosh Hashanah, also known as the Jewish New Year, is a time for new beginnings. For Believers, it is a time to put the past behind you and look forward to the future:

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

Rosh Hashanah is a good time to emphasize prayer, worship, and the Word. The Ten Days of Awe are a good time to examine your spiritual life (1 Corinthians 11:28). It can be a time for repentance and restitution of wrongs you may have committed.

The Feast Of Trumpets is also an opportunity for Believers to focus on the anticipated return of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised His followers:

...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:2-3)

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 gives the most detailed about this return confirming that...

-Christ Himself will return (verse 16).

-There will be a resurrection from the grave of those who were Believers when they died (verse 16).

-There will be a rapture, which means "the act of taking a person from one place to another." Living Believers will be taken from earth to meet Christ (verse 17).

-There will be a reunion between Believers who have previously died, Believers living at the time of Christ's return, and their Lord Jesus Christ (verse 17).

The Ten Days of Awe that follow the Feast Of Trumpets is also a good time to study the book of Revelation which reveals events on earth leading up to the final judgment (of which the Day of Atonement is prophetic) and our final dwelling place with the Lord (of which the Feast of Tabernacles is prophetic.)

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

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. (Leviticus 23:23-25)

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. (Numbers 29:1-6)

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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Yom Kippur

Date: Tishri 10 (September/October)
The 10th day of the 7th month.

References:

Command regarding the Day of Atonement:
Exodus 30:10

Instructions for the Day Of Atonement:
Leviticus 16
Leviticus 23:26-32

Instructions regarding sacrifices on the Day of Atonement:
Numbers 29:12-40

New Testament atonement:
Hebrews 9:6-15; 10:1-14; 7:25-27

THE FEAST

The ten days after Rosh Hashanah (the Feast of Trumpets) are called the Days of Awe. It is a time during which Jews express remorse for their sins through prayer and fasting as they prepare for the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is one of the most sacred days on the Jewish Calendar. Atonement means "at-one-ment", the bringing together of two parties who have been at enmity into a positive relationship. It is restoring relationship between sinful man and a righteous God. The Feast is also called Yom Kippur which literally means "day of covering", as sins were covered by the blood of animal sacrifices of Old Testament times by looking forward to the cross, and are covered now by the eternal blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ made at the cross.

The Day of Atonement is held on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar each year. It is, a day of rest and spiritual reflection during which Israelis ask God to forgive their sins of the past year and restore them individually and collectively.

One of the most important duties of the High Priest in Old Testament times was to conduct the services on the Day of Atonement. On this day, the he would remove his official priestly

garments, bathe, and put on a pure white linen robe. Then he would make a sin offering for himself and the other priests by sacrificing a young bull and a ram as a burnt offering before entering the Holy of Holies.

Yom Kippur was the only time during the year when the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies in the innermost chamber of the Temple to make atonement for the sins of the people. He would enter with a pan of glowing coals from the altar of incense which filled the air with a smoky cloud and a sweet aroma. Using his fingers, he would sprinkle the blood of the bull on the mercy seat and the floor before the Ark of the Covenant.

The high priest would then cast lots between two live goats. One goat was killed as a sin offering for the nation and its blood added by the high priest to the blood already sprinkled inside the Holy of Holies. The High Priest would then place his hands on the head of the live goat and confess the sins of the nation before the altar of burnt offering. Finally, the live goat would be carried outside of the camp/city and set free into the wilderness. Symbolically, this "scapegoat" would carry away the sins of the people.

After these ceremonies, the High Priest would enter the tent of meeting, bathe again, and redress in his official priestly garments. Taking the fat of the sin offering, he would present a burnt offering for himself and one for the people. The remaining flesh of the young bull would be burned outside the camp.

The Day of Atonement traditionally consisted of five services: Early evening with confessional chants; early the next morning with reading of Leviticus 16; a second service reading Day of Atonement scriptures; an afternoon service which included reading the book of Jonah; and the final service in which the books were closed and locked.

The High Priest made multiple atonements on this day:

- For himself and his household: Leviticus: 16:6,11,17
- For the Holy place: Leviticus 16:16,33
- For the golden altar: Leviticus 16:18,33
- For the tent of meeting, the tabernacle: Leviticus 16:16,33
- For all the people: Leviticus 16:17,24,33-34

Specific instructions for sacrifices during this feast are given in Numbers 29:12-40. The sacrifices were marked by four principles:

- Substitution: The offering was a personal substitute for sin.
- Identification: The person offering the sacrifice placed his hand on the head of the animal and confessed his sins which symbolically transferred sin to the animal.
- Death: The person offering the sacrifice killed the animal under the guidance of the priest.

-Exchange of life: Leviticus 4 notes that when the animal died with the sin upon it, its life was transferred to the offeror.

Study further in the Day of Atonement in using this outline of Leviticus 16:

- I. Entering the Holy Place. (1-4)
- II. Preparation for the offerings. (5-10)
- III. The sin offering for the priests. (11-14)
- IV. The sin offering for the people. (15-19)
- V. The scapegoat. (20-22)
- VI. Concluding the Day of Atonement. (23-28)
- VII. The sacredness and permanence of this day. (29-34)

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

For Believers, the Day of Atonement is significant for the following reasons:

-Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place to make the sacrifice for sin. Only our High Priest, Jesus Christ, could enter God's presence on our behalf to make atonement for our sins.

-The tearing of the temple curtain from top to bottom when Jesus died symbolizes that the way into God's presence is now open to all who come through the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

-Like the scapegoat, Jesus bore our sins outside the camp and carried them away forever.

-Like the goat that was sacrificed, Jesus died for our sins.

According to Leviticus 16, in order to experience atonement, there must be:

- A correct approach to God: 1-4.
- A proper preparation: 5-10.
- A righteous High Priest: 11-14.
- An atoning sacrifice: 15-22.
- Acknowledgement that atonement is necessary for reconciliation with God: 23-33.

These factors are still required to receive atonement and Jesus met all of these requirements. He was the substitute for our sin, identified with our sins in that He became flesh, and died in an exchange of His life for the penalty of our sin.

We must come God's way through Jesus Christ. He is the only righteous mediator between God and man. He made the final atoning sacrifice, once and for all. As sinful people, we must acknowledge our sin and our need for reconciliation with God.

By understanding the role of the Old Testament High Priest, you can better comprehend the significance of Jesus offering Himself for your sins once for all. By entering God's presence on your behalf to make atonement for you sin, Christ has secured for you an eternal redemption:

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:6-15)

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:1-14)

Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, offered up the sacrifice for sin once and for all:

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. (Hebrews 7:25-27)

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest stood before God and the people of Israel stood until their guilt was cleared, they were forgiven, and atonement was completed through the blood sacrifice. For Believers, Jesus now sits at the right hand of God as the High Priest of the New Covenant. He is sitting, indicating that the work of atonement has been completed.

The fact that you are forgiven by the blood of Jesus does not eliminate the need for regular repentance as confirmed by the daily prayer taught by the Lord (Matthew 6:9-15). The Word declares:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)

The Day of Atonement is a special time for personal introspection, repentance, and restitution.

Hebrews 3:1 says to “consider” Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession:

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1)

“Consider” means to think about something or someone carefully, especially in order to make a choice or decision. Take time today to fix your heart on Jesus and consider Him as the High Priest of your faith. Meditate on this verse:

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. (Hebrews 7:26-27)

During the Day of Atonement, Jews recite the thirteen attributes of the mercy and forgiveness of God which were revealed after the incident of the golden calf. These attributes of God in Exodus 34:6-7 reassures us that repentance is always possible. Take time to study these attributes of His mercy:

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:6-7)

Here are the attributes listed in this passage:

- The Lord! (HaShem)—This name means that God does not change. He was in the past, is in the present, and always shall be merciful.
- The Lord! (Adonai)—God is merciful after the sinner has gone astray.
- God (Elohim)—a name that denotes Him as ruler over nature and humankind, and indicates that God's mercy surpasses even the power indicated by this name.
- Compassionate (*raham*)—God is filled with loving sympathy for human frailty.
- Gracious (*v'hanun*)—God shows mercy even to those who do not deserve it. He consoles the afflicted and raises up the oppressed.
- Slow to anger (*ereh apayim*)—God gives the sinner ample time to repent.
- Abundant in Kindness (*v'rav hesed*)—God provides more blessings than one deserves. His goodness draws men to repentance.
- Truth (*v'emet*)—God never reneges on His Word. He is faithful and fulfills all of His promises.
- Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations (*notzeir hesed la-alafim*)—God remembers the deeds of the righteous for the benefit of future generations.
- Forgiver of iniquity (*nosei avon*)—God allows those who intentionally sin to repent and receive forgiveness.
- Forgiver of willful sin (*pasha*)—When people deliberately commit a sin with the intent of rebelling against God and angering Him, He still gives them opportunity to repent.
- Forgiver of error (*v'hata'ah*)—God forgives a sin committed out of carelessness, thoughtlessness, or ignorance.
- Who cleanses (*v'nakeh*)—God is merciful, gracious, and forgiving, wiping away the sins of those who truly repent. If one does not repent, however, they cannot be cleansed.

After receiving this revelation, Moses bowed in worship before God. Spend time in worship on this holy Day of Atonement. Thank God for His abundant mercy and forgiveness and that the work of atonement is completed in your life.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord. (Exodus 30:10)

And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his

finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses. (Leviticus chapter 16)

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. 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. 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. (Leviticus 23:26-32)

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. (Leviticus 25:9)

And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings. (Numbers 29:7-11)

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:6-15)

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his

enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:1-14)

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. (Hebrews 7:25-27)

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

CHAPTER NINE

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Feast Of Booths/Sukkot/Ingathering

DATES: Tishri 15-22 (September/October)
Continues for seven days.

REFERENCES:

Instructions for The Feast Of Tabernacles:
Leviticus 23:33-44

Instructions regarding sacrifices to be offered:
Numbers 29:12-40

Mandate regarding rejoicing during this feast:
Deuteronomy 16:13-15

Additional instruction regarding the Feast given prior to entering the Promised Land:
Deuteronomy 31:10-11

THE FEAST

The Feast of Trumpets is prophetic of Christ's return at the sound of a trumpet. The Feast of Atonement, which follows it, is prophetic of the day of God's judgment. Now we come to the Feast of Tabernacles. This Feast is prophetic of tabernacling (dwelling) with our Lord for all eternity after His return and final judgment has occurred. It is the final celebration in the prophetic timeline of the Feasts of the Lord.

Jonathan Cahn notes regarding this Feast:

"In the world...the greatest things come at the beginning. Everything starts out young, and then gets older...In the world, the celebration comes at the beginning. Then it fades away, ultimately ending in death. But the Feast of Tabernacles reveals that in the Kingdom of God, it is the opposite. The greatest celebration comes at the end. So if you live in God's power, you don't move from life to death, but from death to life."
Jonathan Cahn

BIBLICAL DIRECTIVES

Holy Convocations. The Feast of Tabernacles is held during an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem when the Jewish people gather to remember God’s provision in the Wilderness and to look ahead to the promised Messianic age when all nations will flow to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Zechariah 14).

Here are the Biblical instructions regarding the Feast of Tabernacles:

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. 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, everything 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. (Leviticus 23:33-44)

Numbers 29:12-40 provides detailed instructions regarding sacrifices by fire that are to be made during this Feast, sacrifices that are called “a sweet savor to the Lord”.

Prior to entering the Promised Land, the people were instructed to read the Torah every seven years as part of this Feast so that the younger generation would learn to know and fear the Lord:

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. (Deuteronomy 31:10-11)

This feast begins with a holy convocation on the first day and ends with a holy convocation on the eighth day. No work is done on these two days, but for the remainder of the Feast days the people engage in their daily activities.

The Harvest. This Feast is also called the Feast of Ingathering because it occurs at the end of the harvest cycle in Israel (Exodus 23:16). The Feast was a joyous celebration of the final harvest of produce of the land when one was to reflect on God's faithful provision. It commemorated the Sabbath rest, as the work of planting and harvesting was concluded. It was a time set apart for thanksgiving and worship of God: *"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..."* (Leviticus 23:39a).

The Booths. The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates God's provision and protection His people during the time they lived in temporary shelters in the wilderness and after first entering their Promised Land. The instructions were...

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.
(Leviticus 23:42-43)

During this Feast the Israelis build and live in temporary structures called Sukkot, so the Feast is also referred to by that name. A Sukkot is a hastily built hut in which meals are eaten throughout the festival. Some devout Jews live in their Sukkot during the Feast days. This tradition commemorates the conditions that the Israelites endured when they traveled through the desert enroute to their promised land.

Leviticus chapter 23 gives detailed instructions concerning the booths. There is to be sufficient space to sit at a table for meals and it must be sturdy enough to withstand the wind. The roof is to be a lattice of plant or tree material through which the stars are visible—materials like palm branches, willows, boughs of trees, and the fruits of the land.

These flimsy booths serve as a reminder to Israel that they once lived in makeshift huts in a harsh environment where they were totally dependent on the Lord. During that time, God was faithful to provide water, manna, and everything they needed to sustain them.

The Lulav. During the Feast of Tabernacles, a Lulav is incorporated into worship. This is something like a bouquet that is made from natural elements:

On the first day you are to take choice fruit, palm fronds, thick branches and river-willows, and celebrate in the presence of Adonai your God for seven days.
(Leviticus 23:40, CJB)

Each token is representative of a great spiritual truth:

-The etrog, an ancient type of citrus fruit, is representative of the fruit of the Promised Land.

-The palm, which grows in the desert, represents God's provision for His people during their wilderness journey. It is also symbolic of joy, as it was used when Jesus entered Jerusalem and is used in worship in Heaven (John 12:13; Revelation 7:9).

-The trees with thick branches, thought to be myrtle trees, represent God's covenant (Isaiah 53:13). In the natural world, myrtles have essential oils that bring healing, just as God's covenant brings healing to the soul, spirit, body, and mind. It also represents God's protection of Israel in the mountain forests through which they traveled enroute to their promised land.

-The willow, which grows near waters, represents God's provision in dry places despite the difficult experiences of the bitter waters of life (Exodus 15).

The lulav is waved right, left, front, back, up and down during worship, symbolizing God's sovereignty over all creation.

The Length Of The Feast. The festival is observed for seven days, with an eighth day observance that concludes the Feast:

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. (Leviticus23:39)

The first and eighth days are referred to as Holy Convocations and are days of rest. The intervening days are festival days where people work and carry on with their normal lives except that they dwell in booths, remembering and rejoicing at God's faithfulness.

The Water Pouring Ceremony. During the time of the second temple, new traditions were added to the celebration of Sukkot. One of these was the water drawing ceremony which memorialized God's provision of water in the wilderness and petitions His ongoing provision of water for future crops.

Each morning for the seven days of the Feast, a crowd of Levites, musicians, and worshipers walked from the Temple to the Pool of Siloam. The High Priest, who led the procession, filled a golden pitcher with water, and then the procession returned to the temple through the Water Gate. There the crowd paused as the trumpeters blew three blasts on silver trumpets. Then the priests would shout: *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"* (Isaiah 12:3).

John chapter 7 records that Jesus attended this feast and...

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 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. (John 7:37-39)

Water is used in Scripture as an emblem of both the Holy Spirit and of the Word of God. As water is vital to sustaining life in the natural world, the water of the Holy Spirit is essential to sustaining new life in the spiritual world.

The Illumination. The entire city of Jerusalem was lit up during the Feast of Tabernacles. The illumination ceremony was central to celebrating this feast. The lighting of the Menorah symbolized God's presence and protection during the wilderness wandering when He provided a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

A Feast Of Rejoicing. This feast was to be a time of great rejoicing:

Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose: because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. (Deuteronomy 16:13-15)

There was great joy that their sins were forgiven during the previous celebration of the Day of Atonement, that God had abundantly provided for them in the past, and that He would provide all of their needs in the future.

One of the greatest records of this Feast was when the people celebrated after their return to Jerusalem from years of captivity when...

...all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (Nehemiah 8:17-18)

A Feast For All People. The Feast of Tabernacles is unique in that the nations were invited to come to Jerusalem at this season to worship the Lord alongside the Jewish people. This tradition first arose from the command given to Moses that Israel should sacrifice seventy bulls at Sukkot,

which were offered for the seventy nations descended from Noah (Numbers 29:12-35).

When Solomon later dedicated the Temple during Sukkot, he called on the Lord to hear the prayers of all the foreigners who would come there to pray (2 Chronicles 6:32-33). Thus, the Temple in Jerusalem was destined from the start to be a “house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13).

Zechariah 14:16 confirms the prophetic significance of this, in that the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed during the Messianic age and all nations will participate.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BELIEVERS

Jesus is called Emmanuel, meaning “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23, NLT). This Feast reminds us how Jesus put on a temporary tabernacle, a human body, to dwell on this earth and offer Himself as a sacrifice.

This feast also prophetically points to the promise that Jesus will return and we will tabernacle (dwell) with Him for all eternity. God’s Tabernacle will exist in Jerusalem during the Kingdom Age and all the world will come each year to worship Him (Zechariah 14:16-19; Ezekiel 37:26-27; Micah 4:1-7).

The Lulav reminds us that we are making our own spiritual journey through the world. The palm tree reminds us that we will never be alone, even in the wilderness, for God is with us. The myrtle reminds us that when we climb mountains of difficulties, God is there to keep us safe from falling. The willow reminds us that in the dry and barren places of life, God provides spiritual refreshing through the water of the Holy Spirit and His Word.

The illumination ceremony reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World: *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12). It reminds us also that we are bearers of His light:

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

As Sukkot marks the ingathering of the harvest at the end of the summer season, we must recognize that we are living in the end-time harvest of souls coming from every corner of the world into the Kingdom of God.

On the last day of this feast, Jesus stood up in the midst of the water pouring ceremony and declared that rivers of living water would flow from those who believed in Him. The text makes

it clear that He was speaking of the Holy Spirit which would be given after He returned to Heaven. This was fulfilled in Acts 2.

Water is used in Scripture as an emblem of the Holy Spirit and of the Word of God which was inspired by the Spirit. As water is vital to sustaining life in the natural world, the water of the Holy Spirit is essential to sustaining new life in the spiritual world. Jesus promised that *"Whoever drinks of these waters will never thirst again" (John 4:13).*

The symbol of water holds great meaning for the Believer. Jesus is:

A well of water. *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).* Like a deep well of water, the Holy Spirit has unfathomable depths from which you can draw spiritual refreshment.

Springs. The psalmist declared, *"All my springs are in thee" (Psalms 87:7),* meaning that his joy and his very life came from the Holy Spirit instead of things of the world.

Rain and showers that water the earth. *"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" (Psalm 72:6).* Like the earth, we need spiritual showers to refresh us and enable growth.

Floods on the dry ground. *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:3).* The "floods" of the Holy Spirit not only refresh your spiritually dry ground, but the blessing is passed on to your descendants.

Rivers. Jesus said: *"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..." (John 7:37-38).* The Prophet Ezekiel describes these spiritual rivers as having waters to swim in and being so deep that it cannot be measured (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

You may choose to celebrate the first and last days of this feast with a day of rest during which you worship and rejoice in God's faithfulness.

As the city of Jerusalem was lit up during this Feast, Jesus is the light of the world and you are to reflect His light into the spiritual darkness of this environment. This is a good time to get rid of any works of darkness in your life. You may want to light candles in your devotion time during the days of this feast to symbolize these great truths.

As you study the water-pouring ceremony of this Feast, ask God for the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit to be released into the dry and barren areas of your life. Make this declaration: "As

the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God... ” (Psalm 42:1-2).

Pray about the fruit of your spiritual harvest. Not only are you to demonstrate the fruits of the Holy Spirit in your life, you are also to bear spiritual fruit by sharing the Gospel in the harvest fields of the nations of the world:

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)

The height of the Sukkot (booth) is given in scripture, but no dimensions are given for its width and breadth. Build a spiritual Sukkot to God, extending your faith and influence in this lost world as far as you can:

Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; spare not; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes, For you will spread abroad to the right hand and to the left; and your offspring will possess the nations and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. (Isaiah 54:2-3, TAB)

This is a Feast of great rejoicing, so spend time in praise and worship, recalling all God has done in the past and rejoicing in what He will do in the future. God wants you to serve Him joyfully and gladly so...

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations. (Psalm 100:2-5)

During this eight-day Feast, you may want to read the first five books of the Bible as Moses mandated Israel to do.

Meditate on this verse:

But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me! (1 Corinthians 12:9, TAB)

Sukkot is a time for Believers to rejoice in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in our earthen vessels and look forward to the time when we will tabernacle with God in His presence for all eternity.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND INGATHERING

Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. (Exodus 23:15-16)

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. (Exodus 34:22-23)

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. 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, everything 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. (Leviticus 23:33-44)

And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams, And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young

bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings. And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein: But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings. And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the Lord commanded Moses. (Numbers 29:12-40)

Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose: because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. (Deuteronomy 16:13-15)

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their

hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. (Deuteronomy 31:10-11)

Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the altar of the Lord, which he had built before the porch, Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. (2 Chronicles 8:12-13)

...all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (Nehemiah 8:17-18)

They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required... (Ezra 3:4)

And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (Nehemiah 8:14-18)

Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. (John 7:2-10)

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. (Zechariah 14:16-19)

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 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. (John 7:37-39)

EPILOGUE

Those of us who choose to meditate on and observe the Feasts of the Lord each year are exercising the privilege of meeting our Heavenly Father at appointed times to thank Him for the His faithfulness in the past and anticipate His prophetic promises for the future.

Studying and participating in the Feasts of the Lord provides a wonderful opportunity to understand God's plan of redemption and of its fulfillment by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These Old Testament observances are a type or shadow of what was prophetically fulfilled in the New Testament:

*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.
(Colossians 2:16-17, NKJV)*

The Feasts were a shadow. Christ is the substance. The Passover speaks of His Death. The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of His sinless life and challenges us to rid ourselves of the leaven of sin. Pentecost confirms His promise of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Trumpets anticipates His glorious return. The Day of Atonement provides assurance that, as Believers in Him, we will stand faultless before God's throne. The Feast of Tabernacles assures us of His promise that we will dwell with Him forever.

Remember, however, that these special observances do not affect your eternal salvation. The Galatian Church mandated these festivals for the wrong reasons, and the Apostle Paul warned them:

*But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless basic forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? You are observing religious days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain.
(Galatians 4:9-11, NET)*

The Galatians were errantly requiring participation in these festivals and other observances as essential for salvation. But the true message of these observances is that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is the only way to salvation.

These feasts are only a shadow or type of what was fulfilled in the New Testament through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in

those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:1-10)

The Feasts of the Lord are an opportunity, not an obligation. Observe them as the Lord leads and in the freedom God has given you.

APPENDIX ONE

MEDITATIONS PRECEDING PASSOVER

Use the following outline for personal meditation to prepare for the Passover, starting on Saturday and Sunday a week preceding the Feast.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

Jesus drew near Jerusalem for Passover: John 11:55

Jesus arrived at Bethany six days before Passover (Sunday): John 12:1

Jesus was anointed at Simon the leper's house: Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8

A great crowd came to Bethany to see Jesus on Sunday: John 12:9-11

MONDAY

Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem: Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19

TUESDAY

On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus cursed the fig tree: Matthew 21:18-20; Mark 11:12-14

Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem: Matthew 21:12-14; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46

Religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus. He left Jerusalem, presumably returning to Bethany: Mark 11:18-19; Luke 19:47-48

WEDNESDAY

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus explained the withered fig tree: Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-26

At the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus' authority and wisdom was questioned by some religious leaders: Matthew 21:23-23:46; Mark 11:27-12:44; Luke 20:1-21:4

That afternoon Jesus delivered the Olivet Discourse: Matthew 24:1-25:46; Mark 13:1-27; Luke 21:5-36

Jesus predicted that in two days He would be crucified: Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2

Judas planned the betrayal of Jesus: Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6

THURSDAY

Jesus and His disciples prepared the Passover lamb: Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13

Jesus and His disciples shared the Passover meal: Matthew 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-20

Jesus shared a powerful message with His disciples and prayed for them: Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:25-31; Luke 22:21-38; John 15:1-18:1

Jesus and His disciples arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed regarding what was to come: Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

Later that night Jesus was betrayed and arrested: Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12

Jesus was tried by Annas, Caiaphas, and other religious leaders: Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-65; John 18: 13-27

FRIDAY

Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod and Antipas: Matthew 27:1-30; Mark 15:1-19; Luke 22:66-23:25; John 18:28-19:16

He was led to the cross and crucified at 9:00 a.m.; died at 3:00 p.m.; and was buried later that day: Matthew 27:31-60; Mark 15:20-46; Luke 23:26-53; John 19:16-42. Jesus, the Lamb of God, died at the exact time when the Israelites were sacrificing their Passover lambs.

SATURDAY

Jesus' body was in the tomb during the Sabbath, and the Pharisees hired Roman guards to keep watch over the tomb: Matthew 27:61-66; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:50-56

SUNDAY

Christ was resurrected from the dead: Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-9-13; Luke 24:1-35

His was the first (the first-fruits) of many resurrections to come: Leviticus 23:9-14; 1 Corinthians 15:23

APPENDIX TWO

OBSERVING A MESSIANIC PASSOVER

The word “Seder” means “order” in Hebrew. When used in relation to Passover it refers to the specific order of a Passover Feast. There are numerous steps in a traditional Jewish Passover seder that have developed over the years that are rich with tradition and meaning, but the following guide is not a Jewish Passover Seder. It is a Messianic service designed to provide symbolic and prophetic meanings drawn from the Passover Seder which relate the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THIS CELEBRATION (per person)

1 handy-wipe
2 pieces of unleavened bread (flatbread)
1 small cup (from which they can drink four times)
A seder plate to be shared at each table.
 Shank bone of lamb
 Parsley sprigs
 Horseradish
 1 roasted egg
A bowl of salt water

Optional: As you plan your place setting, you may want to reserve a seat and place setting for Elijah and put the Elijah cup at this place. Jews believe the Messiah will come at Passover. This is why a place is left at the table for Elijah, symbolic of the forerunner of the Messiah:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord... (Malachi 4:5)

For Believers, the cup reminds us that indeed, the Messiah has come and will return again.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

Shofar (or download Shofar sounds from the Internet).
Table.
Chairs for participants.
Plates and cups for participants.
Candles.

INTRODUCTION

This Passover Seder is adapted to reflect our faith in Jesus Christ as our Messiah. It is a not traditional Messianic Passover. You may have never observed Passover in this manner, but if you have taken Communion (also known as the Lord's Supper) you have already celebrated the true meaning of Passover.

BLOW THE SHOFAR

Declare: Blessed are You, Adonai, Oh Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments, and called us to hear the voice of the shofar.

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Declare: Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments, commanded us to be a light unto the nations, and given us Jesus, our Messiah, the Light of the World.

INTRODUCTION: SCRIPTURE READING

We are gathered here tonight to remember the exodus of God's people from Egypt, which is symbolic of sin, and to celebrate our own redemption through Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

THE PASSOVER STORY

Read the story of the first Passover.

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:3-14)

Read about the Passover conducted by our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:7-20)

Read the instructions given by the Apostle Paul.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

HAND WASHING

Open the handy-wipe.

Declare: Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

Explain: As we wash our hands we remember the night of Passover when Jesus washed his disciples' feet saying, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

We remember the Tabernacle, where the priests washed their hands in the brass laver before they entered the Holy Place. We are entering into a holy place tonight, a spiritual convocation, on this appointed day. As we wash our hands, it is a time to examine our lives and repent of sin. Just as the Passover lamb was examined to make sure it was without defect before it was offered, we

should examine ourselves before partaking of this Passover Feast. Take a moment to be quiet before the Lord, and then we will pray a concluding prayer of repentance.

Pause for a short time of silence, then pray a prayer of repentance.

EXPLANATION OF THE CUPS

Explain: Tonight we will partake of four cups of the fruit of the vine. These cups represent the four vows that God made when He brought His People out of bondage.

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:6-7)

Here are the promises:

Sanctification - I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Deliverance - I will rescue you from their bondage.

Redemption - I will redeem you by the blood.

Acceptance - I will take you as My people, and will be your God.

Together these not only remind us of deliverance from Egypt which is a type of sin, but also of the process of coming into covenant with our Messiah Jesus Christ. The fruit of the vine in these cups are representative of the Blood of Jesus which secured our sanctification, deliverance, redemption, and acceptance before God.

THE FIRST CUP: SANCTIFICATION

Hold up a cup of juice.

Explain: The first cup is sanctification, representing God's promise to bring us out from under the oppression of the Egyptians, symbolic of sin, and set us apart for relationship with Him and His purposes. As we drink this cup, we are committing to keep ourselves set apart for Him, by obeying the instructions given in His Holy Word.

Read the Scripture:

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:14-20)

Say the blessing: Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the cup.

THE SECOND CUP: DELIVERANCE.

Hold up a cup of juice.

Explain: This cup represents your deliverance from Egypt, which symbolic of the sins and bondages of your past.

Say the blessing: Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the cup.

THE MATZAH

Hold up a wafer of matzah.

Explain: Matzah is unleavened bread that is pierced and striped. It represents Christ's body which was broken for you:

They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as one grieves for a first born son. (Zechariah 12:10)

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and with his stripes, we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

The Matzah bread speaks of the stripes on Christ's back from the 40 lashes He took on His way to the cross. In Luke 22:19, Jesus "... took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"

Jesus declared:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. (John 6:51-58)

As we eat this unleavened bread tonight, we are renewing our covenant with Christ who dwells within us. We are once again inviting Jesus into our hearts and lives, so that He may give us life. Let's share the bread together as He commanded us.

Please break the matzah, share it, and eat it.

THE LAMB SHANK

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. (Exodus 12:7-10)

Explain: When God told the Hebrews to smear the blood of the lamb on the doorframe, He was inviting them into covenant with Him. By so doing, the angel of death could see that this home and family was in covenant with God and pass them by.

Exodus 12:11 instructs: *“And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste.”* Wearing a belt and sandals and carrying a staff were things one did when they prepared to travel. In the case of the Exodus, later that night they left Egypt.

The word translated as “haste” actually means “fear” in Hebrew, as in fear and trembling. Just outside of Goshen, the lives of the firstborn sons were being taken. This is a perilous moment as we recognize that it is only by the blood of the lamb that we are saved. This is the attitude with which we are to eat this Passover meal.

The Lamb shank symbolizes an offering to atone for sin. In the New Testament, we see Jesus fulfilling the role of the lamb as He became our sin offering. John declared Him to be, *“The Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.”* Isaiah declared: *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”*

The blood was applied on the doorway in three places: The two sides of the door frame, and the top. This formed a triangle pointing to God. On the cross, the blood flowed from Christ’s two hands and feet. This formed a triangle pointing down to man. The first was man reaching up to God, the second was God reaching down to man. Placed together, it forms the sign of Israel, the Star of David.

Eat the lamb.

THE THIRD CUP: REDEMPTION

Hold up a cup of juice.

Explain: This cup symbolizes God’s promise of redemption from the slavery of sin. It was this cup that Jesus lifted up after the Passover meal with His disciples and said: *“This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.”* Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins, a debt that we could never repay. He is the perfect unblemished lamb of God that shed His blood for our sins, thereby breaking down the wall between God and man. As you drink this cup, you are acknowledging your submission to Him in agreeing to the New Covenant.

Say the blessing:

Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

BITTER HERBS

Hold up parsley.

Explain: We are also commanded to eat bitter herbs on this night.

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. (Exodus 12:8)

The bitter herbs remind us of the sorrow, persecution, and the suffering of the fathers of our faith. We also remember the bitter suffering of Jesus for the atonement for our sins. We eat these herbs dipped in bitter horseradish with gratefulness that He brought us out of slavery and sin into freedom.

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:34-36)

Take some parsley and dip it in the horseradish and eat it.

THE EGG

Explain: The egg, a symbol of new life, is sliced and dipped in salty water which represents tears. For Jews, it symbolizes mourning over the destruction of the Temple. For Believers, the egg symbolizes the promise of new life and that God will eventually wipe away all of our tears.

Have each person eat a portion of the sliced egg.

THE FOURTH CUP: ACCEPTANCE

Hold up a cup of grape juice.

Explain: The fourth cup of juice is the Cup of Acceptance. We are accepting Jesus as our Passover Lamb and accepting the covenant that the Lamb represents. We rejoice that we are accepted into the Kingdom, ready for the wedding feast of the Lamb, that our names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. With this cup, we look forward to the time when the Lord will gather all His people to Himself in His eternal Kingdom.

Say the blessing:

Blessed are You, Adonai, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the cup.

THE PASSOVER MEAL

At this point, you may serve a Passover meal with foods of your choice.

THE BLESSING OVER THE MEAL

Say the blessing over the meal.

Serve the meal.

CONCLUDING THE MEAL

SING A HYMN

Explain: In Matthew chapter 26, it tells us one more detail about Christ's last Passover Seder. It says:

"...when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 16:30)

It is traditional to recite Psalm 113 through 118 and Psalm 136 after a Jewish Passover Seder. It is believed that these chapters were the hymn that Jesus and His disciples sang after their Seder.

Tonight, we will recite just Psalms 136. Each verse ends with "His love endures forever." I will say the first part of the verse, and we will say the last line of each verse together.

Read Psalm 136

Ps 136

*136 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.
2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever.
3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever:
4 To Him who alone does great wonders, For His mercy endures forever;
5 To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, For His mercy endures forever;
6 To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, For His mercy endures forever;
7 To Him who made great lights, For His mercy endures forever —
8 The sun to rule by day, For His mercy endures forever;
9 The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever.
10 To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn, For His mercy endures forever;
11 And brought out Israel from among them, For His mercy endures forever;
12 With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, For His mercy endures forever;
13 To Him who divided the Red Sea in two, For His mercy endures forever;
14 And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His mercy endures forever;
15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His mercy endures forever;
16 To Him who led His people through the wilderness, For His mercy endures forever;
17 To Him who struck down great kings, For His mercy endures forever;
18 And slew famous kings, For His mercy endures forever —
19 Sihon king of the Amorites, For His mercy endures forever;
20 And Og king of Bashan, For His mercy endures forever —
21 And gave their land as a heritage, For His mercy endures forever;
22 A heritage to Israel His servant, For His mercy endures forever.
23 Who remembered us in our lowly state, For His mercy endures forever;
24 And rescued us from our enemies, For His mercy endures forever;
25 Who gives food to all flesh, For His mercy endures forever.
26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.*

NKJV

CONCLUSION

Explain: It is traditional to end the Passover meal with the proclamation: “Next year in Jerusalem!” In centuries past, this expressed the hope of a homeland for Jewish people, a prayer which we have seen answered with the establishment of Israel as a nation with Jerusalem.

As Believers, our declaration of “Next year in Jerusalem” is an expression of our hope for the eminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the celebration of Passover with Him in the New Jerusalem of His eternal Kingdom.

Everyone declare together:
Next year in Jerusalem!

APPENDIX THREE

FIRST FRUITS:

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

KEY REFERENCES

Key references describing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Death

Matthew 26:47-chapter 27
Mark 14-15
Luke 22-23
John 18-19

Resurrection

Matthew 28
Mark 16
Luke 24
John 20

CONFIRMATIONS OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION

-Old Testament prophecies foretold His betrayal and death:

- Jesus was betrayed by a friend: Psalm 41:9.
- He was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver: Zechariah 11:12-13.
- Jesus was abused: Isaiah 50:6.
- Jesus was silent before His accusers: Isaiah 53:7.
- Jesus was crucified for our sins: Isaiah 53:4-6.
- Zechariah described the crucifixion: Zechariah 12:10.
- Jesus would be numbered with the transgressors: Isaiah 53:12.
- Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb: Isaiah 53:9.

-Old Testament writers foretold His resurrection: Examples: Hosea 6:1-2; Psalm 16:10.

-New Testament writers confirmed His death: Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-23; John 18-19.

-New Testament writers confirmed His resurrection:

- Complete accounts are given in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20.
- Angels confirmed it: Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:12.
- New Testament writers spend much time on the subject of the resurrection. A classic example is in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul says that if Christ is not risen from the dead then He died in vain; He lied and we continue to lie; preaching and practicing our faith is useless because a dead Savior can save no one so we are lost in our sins; our dead loved ones are gone forever; and we are to be pitied! But Paul concludes that these things are not true because Jesus Christ lives!

-Jesus made many documented appearances after His resurrection:

- His first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, on resurrection morning: Mark 16:9; John 20:10-18.
- He appeared to the women returning from the tomb: Matthew 28:9-10.
- Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus: Luke 24:13-32; Mark 16:12-13.
- He appeared to Peter in Jerusalem: Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5.
- He appeared to His disciples (Thomas absent): Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23.
- Jesus again appeared to His disciples with Thomas present: John 20:24-29.
- He appeared to seven disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: John 21:1-24.
- Jesus was seen by 500 Believers at one time: 1 Corinthians 15:5-7.
- He appeared to James: 1 Corinthians 15:7.
- He appeared on the Mount of Olives, and then ascended into Heaven: Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:50-53.
- He was seen by Paul on the road to Damascus: Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8.
- He was seen ascending into Heaven: Acts 1:3-11.

**WHAT THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION
OF JESUS MEANS TO BELIEVERS**

-Verification that Jesus is God's Son: John 10:17-18.

-Verification of the truth of Scripture: Psalm 16:10 and 110:1 are examples of the many Old Testament references fulfilled by Jesus.

-Access to God: Ephesians 2:14; Mark 15:38; Hebrews 10:19-22.

-Forgiveness of sin: Isaiah 53:5.

-Sickness is healed: Isaiah 53:5.

-Shame is eliminated: Hebrews 12:2.

-Peace with God and of God: Luke 2:14; Acts 10:36; Ephesians 2:14; Romans 5:1; John 14:27; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15.

-Supernatural power: The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in Believers: Romans 8:11.

-New hope: Isaiah 53:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

-Joyful living: John 15:11; 17:13; Psalms 16:11; James 1:2; 2 Corinthians 7:4.

-Assurance of your future inheritance: 1 Peter 1:3-5.

-Eternal life: Acts 2:24; John 11:25-26.

-Assurance of your resurrection: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

APPENDIX FOUR CELEBRATING HANUKKAH

Date: Chislev 25. Celebrated for eight days, sometime in November/December.

Hanukkah commemorates the Maccabean (Hasmonean) victories over the evil forces of the Seleucid King Antiochus IV and the rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE. Antiochus had invaded Judaea, killed many Jews, forced pagan religion on them, and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem by offering swine on the sacred altar.

The Maccabees were Jews who fought to defend their religious beliefs at the cost of their lives in a rebellion led by Mattathias and his son, Judas Maccabeus. Following the Jewish victory after a three-year struggle against Antiochus, Judas ordered the cleansing and restoration of the Temple.

Due to the oppression of the enemy, there was only one jar of holy oil remaining to light the Menorah, the sacred light of the Holy Place. Although there was only enough oil for one day, God miraculously multiplied it so that it continued to burn for eight days which gave the priests time to new create a supply.

Judas proclaimed that this miracle of the should be celebrated every year in an eight-day celebration called Hanukkah, which means “dedication”. In many ways, Hanukkah celebrations resemble those commemorating the birth of Jesus, Gifts, decorations, and special deserts are used to celebrate the event. It is a time to be with family joyfully commemorating God’s deliverance of Israel and His miraculous provision.

A nine-branched Menorah is used for this celebration. Eight branches represent the eight days Hanukkah. The additional branch which stands above the others is called the “shammash” or “servant”. This light is kindled each night and is the one from which the other lights are lit on their appointed days.

In Israel today, Hanukkah is a national holiday. A highlight of the eight-day festival is an annual relay from Modi’in to Jerusalem. Runners carry burning torches through the streets. When the final torchbearer arrives at the Western Wall which is the last remnant of the Temple, the torch is handed to the chief rabbi, who uses it to light the first candle of a giant menorah.

For Believers, Hanukkah can be a time to cleanse our spiritual temples and rekindle the light of God’s presence in our lives:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
(2 Corinthians 7:1)*

The “servant” candle reminds Believers that we are called to serve others rather than to be served:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

Who can you serve today?

The Menorah which lights the Holy Place reminds us that we are the light of the world:

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

To what dark corner of this world can you spread your light today?

APPENDIX FIVE

CELEBRATING PURIM

Purim commemorates God's protection of Israel from annihilation planned by the wicked Haman, a story recorded in the book of Esther. Purim occurs one month before Passover.

Jews celebrate Purim by listening to the public reading of the book of Esther. Each time the name of Haman is mentioned, loud noise is made to drown out his name. They also send food to friends, give gifts to the poor, and enjoy a festive meal—all of which are ways you may choose to observe this Feast.

The book of Esther records the origin of the Feast of Purim. One of the great truths of this story is that, like Esther, you have a divine destiny in His plan. As you study the story of Esther and the Feast of Purim, thank God that He is preparing you for your Kingdom assignment.

MAIN CHARACTERS:

Ahasuerus: The king over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia.

Vashti: The queen who refused the king's orders and by so doing lost her position.

Esther: The new queen, a Hebrew woman for whom the book is named. Her Persian name, Esther, means star. Her Jewish name, Hadassah, means myrtle.

Haman: An officer of the king's court and an enemy of the Jews.

Mordecai: Esther's cousin who raised her.

OTHER CHARACTERS:

Hegai: The servant who prepared Esther for her appearance before the king.

Seven princes of Persia: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan.

The king's chamberlains: Shaashgaz, Harbonah, Bigthan, and Teresh. The latter two men plotted to kill the king, but were put to death themselves when their plan was revealed by Mordecai.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER:

Chapter 1:

- I. Setting for the story. (1-3)
- II. The first feast. (3-4)
- III. The second feast. (5-8)
- IV. The feast for the women. (9)
- V. The problem on the seventh day of the second feast. (10-12)
- VI. The king consults the wise men. (13-15)
- VII. Memucan answers. (16-20)
- VIII. The king's response. (21-22)

Chapter 2:

- I. After these things (*the things that occurred in chapter one*), when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what was decreed against her. (1)
- II. A word from the king's servants. (2-4)
- III. Mordecai's background. (5-7)
- IV. Esther comes to the palace. (8-11)
- V. Standing before the king. (12-14)
- VI. Esther before the king. (15-17)
- VII. Esther's feast. (18-20)
- VIII. The plot to kill the king. (21-23)

Chapter 3:

- I. Haman's promotion. After these things (*which are recorded in the previous chapters*), King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite. (1-2)
- II. Mordecai's resistance. (2-4)
- III. Haman's response to Mordecai. (5-7)
- IV. Haman's request of the king. (8-9)
- V. The king's response. (10-11)
- VI. The letters to the provinces. (12-15)
- VII. The response of the king, Haman, and the city. (15)

Chapter 4:

- I. The response of the Jews. (1-3)
- II. Esther's initial response. (4)
- III. Hatach's first mission to Mordecai. (5-6)
- IV. Mordecai's response to Esther. (7-9)
- V. Hatach's second mission to Mordecai. (10-12)
- VI. Mordecai's response to Esther. (13-14)
- VII. Esther's answer to Mordecai. (15-16)
- VIII. Mordecai's response. (17)

Chapter 5:

- I. Esther appears before the king. (1-5)
- II. Esther's first banquet. (6-8)
- III. Haman's response. (9-14)

Chapter 6:

- I. The king's sleepless night. (1-2)
- II. A plan to honor Mordecai. (3-10)
- III. Haman and Mordecai. (11-12)
- IV. Haman in mourning. (13)
- V. Haman is taken to the banquet Esther had prepared. (14)

Chapter 7:

- I. Esther's second banquet with the king and Haman. (1)
- II. The king's question. (2)
- III. Esther's answer. (3-4)
- IV. Haman's plot revealed. (5-6)
- V. The king's response and Haman's appeal. (7-8)
- VI. Haman's judgment. (9-10)

Chapter 8:

- I. The events in this chapter occurred on the day that Haman died. (1-2)
- II. Esther appears again before the king. (3-6)
- III. The king's edict.
- IV. The dissemination of the message. (9-10, 13-14)
- V. Contents of the edict. (11-12)
- VI. Mordecai honored: He went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple. (15)
- VII. The response. (15-17)

Chapter 9:

- I. The Jews rise up to fight. (1-5)
- II. The battle: Day one—the 13th day of Adar. (6-10)
- III. A report to the king and the response to Esther's request. (11-14)
- IV. The battle: Day two—the 14th day of Adar. (14-17)
- V. A time of celebration. (17-19)
- VI. **The feast of Purim is instituted. (20-32)**
 - A. **Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far.**
 - B. **The purpose of the letters was to establish among them the tradition of observing the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar each year in remembrance.**
 - C. **It would be a commemoration of when the Jews rested from their enemies and the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning into a good day. (*It is important to remember and celebrate the victories God gives you. Purim became a symbolic reminder to the Jews of how God used circumstances to deliver them, specifically the casting of the lot: Pur.*)**
 - D. **That they should make them days of:**
 1. **Feasting.**
 2. **Rejoicing.**
 3. **Generosity to others.**
 4. **Charity to the poor.**
 - E. **And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them.**
 - F. **The celebration marked the judgment upon Haman and the deliverance of the Jews:**

1. How Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur--that is, the lot--to consume and destroy them.
 2. How Esther came before the king and he commanded by letters that Haman's wicked device which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.
- G. Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them. (*Pur was the custom of casting lots and had been used to determine the time of the demise of the Jews. See Proverbs 21:1; 16:33; and Isaiah 54:7.*)
- H. The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year.
1. That these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city.
 2. That these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.
- I. Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.
1. And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth.
 2. The letter confirmed these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fasting and their cry.
 3. And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim.
 4. And it was written in the book (*in the royal archives*).

(Purim was not a divine institution so it is not called a holy day or Feast of the Lord. The Jews chose to celebrate the days that they could have died and that celebration continues to this day as a lasting reminder of God's faithfulness. The pur became a symbol of God's using circumstances to deliver His people. The feast was called Purim because of Haman's use of the pur—a casting of the lot—to determine the execution date for the Jews.

If you observe Purim, instead of dwelling on the pain of your past, celebrate it. God brought you through! You are still serving Him. You did not die! Celebrate the present and face the future with a reminder of God's faithfulness.)

Chapter 10:

- I. King Ahasuerus laid a tribute (*tax*) upon the land and the isles of the sea. (1)
- II. All the acts of his power, his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai and how the king advanced him are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. (2)
(This is not the book of Chronicles in the Bible.)
- III. Mordecai, the Jew, was promoted to be second only to King Ahasuerus. (3)

APPENDIX SIX

THE SABBATH

The Sabbath recalls God's rest from creation and was instituted as a covenant sign between God and Israel. The rainbow was the sign of God's covenant with Noah. Circumcision was the sign of His covenant with Abraham. The Sabbath was the sign given by God as part of the Mosaic covenant with the people of Israel.

Sometimes people call Sunday the Christian Sabbath, but this term is not used in scripture. The Sabbath is the seventh day and speaks of rest after works. Sunday is the Lord's day, the first day of the week when the resurrection occurred, and it speaks of rest before works. The Sabbath belongs to the old creation, the Lord's day to the new creation in Christ. Ultimately, Christ is our Sabbath rest. As Believers, the Sabbath symbolizes the spiritual rest promised to us in passages like Matthew 11:28 and Hebrews 4:11.

The earliest Believers gathered together on Sunday because they recognized that they had entered into Christ, the Sabbath rest. This is confirmed in various places of the Scriptures where it notes that Believers met together on the first day of the week. For example, when a young man named Eutychus fell from the window while Paul was preaching it occurred on the "first day of the Sabbaths" (Acts 20:7). This phrase suggests that Believers had gathered the evening of the seventh day which would be the beginning of the first day of the week because the Jewish day goes from sundown to sundown. Other references regarding worship on the first day of the week are Acts 2:42 and 1 Corinthians 16.

Gathering to worship on Sunday does not rule out a Saturday Sabbath rest. Some people choose to rest on Saturday and worship on Sunday. Others observe Sunday as their day of rest and worship. The Apostle Paul states:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. (Romans 14:5-6)

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come. (Colossians 2:16-17);

If you are conflicted about this subject, remember that God's timetable runs from sundown to sundown. You can rest and worship personally after sundown on Friday and on Saturday (the Old Testament Sabbath), and then join other Believers to worship on Sunday.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO SABBATH

Exodus 16:23

23 And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Exodus 16:25

25 And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field.

Exodus 16:26

26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

Exodus 16:29

29 See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

Exodus 20:8

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exodus 20:10

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

Exodus 20:11

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 31:14

14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Exodus 31:15

15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 31:16

16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

Exodus 35:2

2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

Exodus 35:3

3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

Leviticus 16:31

31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever.

Leviticus 23:3

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.

Leviticus 23:11

11 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.

Leviticus 23:15

15 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.

Leviticus 23:16

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

Leviticus 23:24

24 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.

Leviticus 23:32

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.

Leviticus 23:39

39 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.

Leviticus 24:8

8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

Leviticus 25:2

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.

Leviticus 25:4

4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

Leviticus 25:6

6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee,

Numbers 15:32

32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

Numbers 28:9

9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof.

Numbers 28:10

10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Deuteronomy 5:12

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

Deuteronomy 5:14

14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

Deuteronomy 5:15

15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

2 Kings 4:23

23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him today? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.

2 Kings 11:5

5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house.

2 Kings 11:7

7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king.

2 Kings 11:9

9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

2 Kings 16:18

18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria.

1 Chronicles 9:32

32 And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath.

2 Chronicles 23:4

4 This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors;

2 Chronicles 23:8

8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.

2 Chronicles 36:21

21 To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Nehemiah 9:14

14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.

Nehemiah 10:31

31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

Nehemiah 13:15

15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

Nehemiah 13:16

16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 13:17

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

Nehemiah 13:18

18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

Nehemiah 13:19

19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

Nehemiah 13:21

21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

Nehemiah 13:22

22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

Psalms 92:1

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day.

92 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.

Isaiah 56:2

2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

Isaiah 56:6

6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

Isaiah 58:13

13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.

Isaiah 66:23

23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 17:21

21 Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 17:22

22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

Jeremiah 17:24

24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein.

Jeremiah 17:27

27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Ezekiel 46:1

46 Thus saith the Lord God; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Ezekiel 46:4

4 And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the Lord in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

Ezekiel 46:12

12 Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the Lord, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.

Amos 8:5

5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

Matthew 12:1

12 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Matthew 12:2

2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Matthew 12:5

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Matthew 12:8

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Matthew 12:10

10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Matthew 12:11

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

Matthew 12:12

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

Matthew 24:20

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.

Matthew 28:1

28 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mark 1:21

21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

Mark 2:23

23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

Mark 2:24

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

Mark 2:27

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

Mark 2:28

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Mark 3:2

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Mark 3:4

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Mark 6:2

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mark 15:42

42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.

Mark 16:1

16 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Luke 4:16

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Luke 4:31

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

Luke 6:1

6 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

Luke 6:2

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

Luke 6:5

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Luke 6:6

6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

Luke 6:7

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Luke 6:9

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Luke 13:10

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

Luke 13:14

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luke 13:15

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

Luke 13:16

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Luke 14:1

14 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

Luke 14:3

3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

Luke 14:5

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

Luke 23:54

54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

Luke 23:56

56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

John 5:9

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

John 5:10

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

John 5:16

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

John 5:18

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

John 7:22

22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

John 7:23

23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

John 9:14

14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

John 9:16

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

John 19:31

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Acts 1:12

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

Acts 13:14

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

Acts 13:27

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

Acts 13:42

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Acts 13:44

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Acts 15:21

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Acts 16:13

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

Acts 17:2

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Acts 18:4

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Colossians 2:16

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.

APPENDIX SEVEN

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Every 50th year was to be a Year of Jubilee when everything and everyone was to be set free. Every person returned to the land originally belonging to him. Every debt was paid and every contract was voided.

This is a type of the spiritual Jubilee experienced by Believers in Jesus Christ: Our debt of sin is paid, we are set free, our losses are restored, and we are in the process of returning to our Promised land--our eternal home.

Use the following outline of Leviticus 25:7-55 to study about the Year of Jubilee:

- A. The timing of the Year of Jubilee. Count off seven Sabbaths of years--seven times seven years--so that the seven Sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. *(Every 50th year was to be the Year of Jubilee.)*
- B. The ceremonial announcement of the Year of Jubilee.
 - 1. Have the trumpet sound everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month.
 - 2. On the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land.
(The trumpet announcing the Year of Jubilee was blown on the Day of Atonement. A sacrifice for sin must be made before a person can be set free. Before you can be free, you must repent and experience atonement through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.)
- C. The mandates for observing the Year of Jubilee.
 - 1. Release: Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.
 - 2. Return. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.
 - 3. Rest. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you.
 - a. Do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines.
 - b. It is a jubilee and is to be holy for you.
 - c. Eat only what is taken directly from the fields.
 - 4. Restoration. In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. *(This was to remind them that the land was actually God's land.)*
 - a. If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other.
 - b. You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee.
 - c. He is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops.

- (1) When the years are many, you are to increase the price.
 - (2) When the years are few, you are to decrease the price.
 - (3) What he is really selling you is the number of crops.
- d. Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

(All business transactions were conducted in relation to the Year of Jubilee.)

- D. The promises for keeping the commands regarding the Year of Jubilee: Protection and provision.
1. Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land.
 2. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety.
 3. You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?"
 4. The answer:
 - a. I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years.
 - b. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

(During the Jubilee year, the people were not to work the fields but were to reap what grew of its own accord. The land rested and the farm animals rested. It would take faith to do this, because the previous year--the 49th--was a Sabbath year in which they also did not work the fields. They had to trust God to provide for them in the 49th and 50th years and during the 51st year while they waited for their harvest to come in. The lesson we can draw from this is that when we obey God, we can trust Him to fulfill His promises and provide in every area of our lives.)

- E. The laws of redemption for the land during the Year of Jubilee.
1. The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. *(God owns everything. We are merely managers of what He entrust to us. Are you caring for and using your resources in ways that please Him?)*
 2. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.
 3. If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. *(This is known as the Kinsman-Redeemer law and is illustrated in the book of Ruth. The Kinsman-Redeemer is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us, buying back all we lost through sin.)*
 4. If, however, a man has no one to redeem it for him but he himself prospers and acquires sufficient means to redeem it, he is to determine the value for the years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it:

- a. He can then go back to his own property.
 - b. But if he does not acquire the means to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee.
 - c. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and he can then go back to his property.
- F. The laws of redemption for houses during the Year of Jubilee.
- 1. Houses in a walled city.
 - a. If a man sells a house in a walled city, he retains the right of redemption a full year after its sale. During that time he may redeem it.
 - b. If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to the buyer and his descendants. It is not to be returned in the Jubilee.
 - 2. Houses in villages.
 - a. Houses in villages without walls around them are to be considered as open country.
 - b. They can be redeemed, and they are to be returned in the Jubilee.
 - 3. Houses of Levites.
 - a. The Levites always have the right to redeem their houses in the Levitical towns, which they possess.
 - b. So the property of the Levites is redeemable--that is, a house sold in any town they hold--and is to be returned in the Jubilee, because the houses in the towns of the Levites are their property among the Israelites.
 - c. But the pastureland belonging to their towns must not be sold; it is their permanent possession.
- G. Mandates regarding treatment of the poor.
- 1. If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you.
 - 2. Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear your God, so that your countryman may continue to live among you.
 - 3. You must not lend him money at interest or sell him food at a profit.
 - 4. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.
- (Repeatedly throughout the Bible, God expresses His concern for the poor. Believers should also be concerned about the poor, treating them with compassion and generosity.)*
- H. Regulations regarding servants in the Year of Jubilee.
- (The following passage does not endorse slavery, but regulates what was a reality in the culture of the times. The slavery of fellow Israelites described in the Old Testament was allowed by God only to provide relief from debt and included provisions for the release of slaves. They served only for six years. It was a way*

for a person to absolve their debts and was more like the contract workers of modern times. The kind of slavery practiced in American history, based on race and oppression, is condemned in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Abusive masters are accountable to God: Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1; Philemon. The Gospel of Jesus Christ equalizes people, since slaves are free in Christ and free men are slaves to Christ: 1 Corinthians 7:21-24; Philemon 16-17.)

1. If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave.
 2. He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee.
 3. Then he and his children are to be released, and he will go back to his own clan and to the property of his forefathers.
 4. Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. (*Believers are freed from the slavery of this world in order to serve God.*)
 5. Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.
 6. Slaves.
 - a. Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves.
 - b. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property.
 - c. You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.
- I. Regulations regarding indentured Israelis in the Year of Jubilee.
1. If an alien or a temporary resident among you becomes rich and one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells himself to the alien living among you or to a member of the alien's clan, he retains the right of redemption after he has sold himself.
 - a. One of his relatives may redeem him.
 - b. An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in his clan may redeem him.
 - c. Or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.
 2. He and his buyer are to count the time from the year he sold himself up to the Year of Jubilee.
 - a. The price for his release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired man for that number of years.
 - b. If many years remain, he must pay for his redemption a larger share of the price paid for him.
 - c. If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, he is to compute that and pay for his redemption accordingly.
 3. He is to be treated as a man hired from year-to-year (*as an employee*). You must see to it that his owner does not rule over him ruthlessly.

4. Even if he is not redeemed in any of these ways, he and his children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

The Year of Jubilee was marked by repentance: verse 9; release: 10,13; return: 24; rest: 11-12; restoration: 13-17; and redemption: 25-55.

Unfortunately, the Jewish people did not obey the laws given in this chapter and they received punishment from God for their disobedience.

Important truths to apply to our lives: There are practical as well as spiritual reasons for God's commands and we must obey them simply because He is God. If we obey His commands, He will provide for us. We are to seek first His Kingdom and His will, and all our needs will be provided: Matthew 6:25-28.