

Types and Shadows

7

The Feasts of Israel

In the first lesson of this module, we noted Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 10:11**. The *New King James Version* translates Paul's words in this way:

“Now all these things happened to them (Israel) as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”

The Greek word translated “examples” can also be translated “types.” As we have seen, there is an amazing relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament – the first providing the type and the second providing the antitype, according to a simple principle of “first the natural, then the spiritual,” as expressed in **1 Corinthians 15:46**.

One rich source of Old Testament types is the feasts (or festivals) of Israel. You will find that the spiritual significance of the feasts is found not only throughout the Old Testament, but also throughout the New Testament as well. Once you understand the symbology contained within Israel's religious festivals, you will find allusions to them everywhere in the New Testament – in the Gospel accounts, in the book of **Acts**, in the Epistles, even in the book of **Revelation**.

The *Amplified Bible* extracts multiple shades of meaning from **Psalm 89:15**:

“Blessed – happy, fortunate (to be envied) – are the people who know the joyful sound (*who understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts*); they shall walk, O Lord, in the light and favor of your countenance.”

The Hebrew word translated “joyful noise” literally means “a loud noise; a tumult; especially, shouts of joy, or rejoicing.”¹ This word is particularly applicable, in the context of **Psalm 89:15**, to the sounding of the trumpets that accompanied

A Tapestry of Types

The Tabernacle of Moses

The Tabernacle of David

The Sacrificial System

The Restoration of the Temple

The Gates of Jerusalem

▶ The Feasts of Israel ◀

Two Mountains

The High Priest

The Torn Veil

the beginning of the major festivals of Israel. As the *New Commentary on the Whole Bible* explains the meaning of “joyful noise”:

“Shouts of joy were expressed at festivals where the rule of God was celebrated.”²

The blessings of knowing the “joyful sound” of the feasts of Israel are for you to enjoy too! In this lesson, we will just scratch the surface of understanding “the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts.” But as you will see, even this foretaste will prove to be an eye-opener. So let’s begin!

Understanding the Feasts

Two main portions of Scripture detail God’s requirements for the annual festivals of Israel – **Leviticus 23:4-44** and **Numbers 28:16-29:40** – with a summarized version in **Deuteronomy 16:1-17**. But let’s take a look at an overview of the feasts before we study them in finer detail.

Two Hebrew words are translated “feast” (KJV) or “festival” (NIV):

- *Mo-ed* – “an appointed time or assembly”*
- *Hag* – “to dance”

These two words are applied to three major feasts in the annual life of Israel.

Read Deuteronomy 16:16

This verse lists the three annual pilgrimage festivals of Israel:

- The Feast of Passover (also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread)
- The Feast of Weeks (called Pentecost in the Greek New Testament)
- The Feast of Tabernacles (or the Feast of Booths)

These three major feasts, however, are also sub-divided into a total of seven minor feasts. The **Feast of Passover** comprised three sub-feasts – 1) Passover proper, 2) the Feast of Unleavened Bread and 3) the Sheaf of Firstfruits. The **Feast of Weeks** stood on its own. The **Feast of Tabernacles** comprised three sub-feasts – 1) the Feast of Trumpets, 2) the Day of Atonement and 3) the Feast of Tabernacles proper.

In the same way that Israel’s worship revolved around three major festivals, so too there are three distinct spiritual experiences for the Church. The type of the feasts of Israel find their fullest expression and completion in Christ and his Church. They prefigure and typify the whole Church age beginning with the Cross and consummating in the end-time display of God’s power and glory through his Body.

Israel was told to “proclaim (the feasts) at their appointed times” (**Leviticus 23:4**). Let’s take a detailed look now at each of the feasts they were told to proclaim and see the significance they hold for us today.

* The Hebrew word *mo-ed* is also translated “congregation” or “meeting” in the phrase “tabernacle of the congregation” (KJV) or “tent of meeting” (NIV).

The Feast of Passover

Read Leviticus 23:4-5

Read Deuteronomy 16:1-7

Passover was a celebration of deliverance – specifically Israel’s deliverance out of slavery to Egypt. Each year, Israel celebrated the awesome “passing over” over the angel of death, sent by God to wreak judgment against the firstborn of Egypt.

Read Exodus 12:1-14,21-51

Passover is an incredible picture of our deliverance, through Christ, out of slavery to sin and Satan. In **1 Corinthians 5:7**, Jesus is described in Passover terms:

“Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

The Old Testament Feast of Passover is a prophetic picture of the sacrifice of the Jesus upon the Cross (**John 1:29**). Incredibly, Jesus was crucified on the literal day of Passover (**Luke 22:1,15-20**)! At the precise time that families all over Israel were slaying their Passover lamb, Jesus died on the Cross! This is the kind of exactness we see constantly in the fulfillment of feast typology in the New Testament, something that we will discover in the later feasts.

Let’s take a closer look at just some of the rich typology of Passover and see how applicable the picture of Passover is to its New Testament fulfillment.

Passover meant a new calendar for Israel (**Exodus 12:2**). This spoke of a new beginning for them as they left the life of bondage they had known in Egypt. For us, too, the Cross means a total new beginning – a new covenant (**Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13**) and a new birth (**John 3:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17**).

In **Exodus 12:3,6**, you will note that the people were instructed to select the Passover lamb on the 10th of the month, but to keep it until the 14th before killing it – a total of four days. **2 Peter 3:8** tells us that “[w]ith the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” If you count the genealogies from Adam to Christ, the recorded period is 4000 years – figuratively, four “days.” Jesus is “the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (**Revelation 13:8**), and “when the time had fully come, God sent his Son” (**Galatians 4:4**). **1 Peter 1:20** explicitly states:

“[Christ] was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”

Exodus 12:5 also gives instructions that the Passover lamb must be “without blemish” (NKJV) and “without defect” (NIV). **1 Peter 1:19** describes Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or defect.” Likewise in **Exodus 12:46**, God instructed the people of Israel specifically:

“Do not break any of the bones.”

This amazing type found its fulfillment in the death of Christ (**John 19:31-36**).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Read **Leviticus 23:6-8**

Read **Exodus 12:15-20,31-39; 13:3-10**

Starting on the 15th day of the 1st month (the day after Passover), and lasting for a full week, the Israelites were commanded to bake bread without leaven (yeast). The reason given for making unleavened bread is the commemoration of the hasty departure of the Israelites from Egypt (**Exodus 12:39**). This is also why the day of Passover, one day previous to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is also called the Day of Preparation (**John 19:14,42**). While people were allowed to work on the Day of Preparation (in order to prepare for the following week), the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were “special Sabbaths,” also called “high days” or “high Sabbaths” – on which no work of any kind was allowed. This was why the Jews rushed to take Jesus down off the Cross and why the women could not embalm his body – because the eve of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was fast approaching.

Understanding the Feast of Unleavened Bread also explains Jesus’ declaration that he would be “three days and three nights” in the grave (**Matthew 12:39-40**). Traditionally, Jesus is presumed to have been crucified on the Friday, since the next day was the Sabbath. This Sabbath, however, was not an ordinary Sabbath, but rather a “special Sabbath” (**John 19:31**) – the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus, according to the Passover calendar, this is how the crucifixion week looked:*

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE GRAVE

14th, 3pm to sunset – **Thursday (Passover)** – *Jesus dies and is buried* – **Day 1**
 15th, sunset to sunrise – **Friday (High Sabbath)** – *Jesus is in the grave* – **Evening 1**
 15th, sunrise to sunset – **Friday (High Sabbath)** – *Jesus is in the grave* – **Day 2**
 16th, sunset to sunrise – **Saturday (ordinary Sabbath)** – *Jesus is in the grave* – **Evening 2**
 16th, sunrise to sunset – **Saturday (ordinary Sabbath)** – *Jesus is in the grave* – **Day 3**
 17th, sunset to sunrise – **Sunday (end of double Sabbath)** – *Jesus is in the grave* – **Evening 3**
 17th, at sunrise – **Sunday (end of double Sabbath)** – *Jesus rises from the grave!*

While there is obviously no problem in celebrating Good Friday as usual, together with most other Christians, this helps us to understand how Jesus was indeed a literal three days and three nights “in the heart of the earth.”

Also of interest to our study, Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was on the previous Sunday, the 10th day of the month, exactly four days before Passover, thus fulfilling the prescription to take the Passover lamb on the 10th of the month and keep it for four days before slaying it. This is just how precisely the types found in

* Note that the Hebrew day begins and ends at sunset, and the partial day on the 14th is counted as a full day.

the feasts of Israel have been fulfilled in Christ!

The Feast of Unleavened Bread has a strong spiritual significance for the New Testament believer. God specifically told the people of Israel: “Let no yeast (leaven) be found in your possession in all your land for seven days” (**Deuteronomy 16:4**) and God tells the Christian to do exactly the same thing in **1 Corinthians 5:7**:

“Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are.”

In the New Testament, leaven is a symbol of sin. It works silently and steadily, gradually spreading its influence and power through the whole lump of dough until all is affected and permeated.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Just as the Feast of Passover speaks of the *death* of Christ on the Cross, so the Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of the *life* of Christ, the sinless Son of God, extended toward you. He was the unleavened Bread that came down from heaven (**John 6:48-58**), so that your life may become unleavened like his.

There are five types of spiritual leaven spoken of in the New Testament:

- **The leaven of Herod (Mark 8:15)** – the contaminating yeast of Herod was *a love for this world*. In the story of the death of John the Baptist, Herod gives in to public pressure at a party and orders the beheading of John (**Matthew 14:6-10**).
- **The leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:6)** – the contaminating yeast of the Sadducees was *a disbelief in the supernatural* (**Matthew 16:1-4; Acts 23:6-8**).
- **The leaven of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1; Matthew 16:6,12; Mark 8:15)** – the contaminating yeast of the Pharisees was *hypocrisy* (**Matthew 23:1-28**).
- **The leaven of Galatia (Galatians 5:4-9)** – the contaminating yeast of Galatia was *legalism* (**Galatians 3:1-5**).
- **The leaven of Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-7)** – the contaminating yeast of Corinth was *immorality* (**1 Corinthians 6:18-20**).

Read Exodus 12:15

The putting away of all leaven pictures repentance – the removal of the contamination of sin (note **Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-17**).

Read 1 Timothy 6:9-11

One more thing is worth noting about the Passover/Unleavened Bread celebration. Jesus specifically took a major focus of this feast – the Passover meal – and made it into an object lesson for us. On the eve of the Passover, just before he himself was about to be slain as the true Passover Lamb, Jesus gathered his dis-

ciples together and established what we now call the Lord's Table, the Communion Table or, in some traditions, the Eucharist.

Read Luke 22:14-20

The unleavened bread and the cup were part of Passover celebration. The host of the meal would take the bread and dip it into a sauce of bitter herbs (note **John 13:26**) and as he broke it to pass around, he would say: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate when they left Egypt." Instead, Christ takes the bread, dips it in the bitter herbs, and as he breaks it to pass around, he says: "This is my body which is for you..." (**Luke 22:19**).

The Passover tradition was established as a point of remembrance for the people of Israel – that they would remember the great deliverance that took place in the original Passover of Exodus. When Jesus instituted the Communion, he said: "...do this in remembrance of me" (**Luke 22:19**). A new Passover celebration had been established – a new remembrance meal for a new deliverance. Christ was declaring that the Passover had found its complete fulfillment in him!

Sheaf of Firstfruits

Read Leviticus 23:9-14

Passover marked the beginning of the barley harvest. Before there was any reaping of the harvest, however, *one sheaf* was garnered and waved before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath, symbolizing the offering of that harvest to the Lord. Like the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Sheaf of Firstfruits is prophetic of one vital aspect of the salvation wrought in Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

In the Sheaf of Firstfruits ceremony, a single sheaf would be lifted before God as a wave-offering – waved before the Lord. This was the "sheaf of firstfruits." Just as Joseph was represented by a sheaf (**Genesis 37:5-11**), this sheaf is a picture of the Lord Jesus himself, presented before the Father as the "firstfruits" of the coming harvest of redeemed lives.

The firstfruits were always the choicest and the best. They were counted as most holy to the Lord and presented always to God *first*. This was because the one sheaf was *representative* of the whole harvest. In accepting that one sheaf, God was accepting *in that sheaf* the entire harvest that was to come.

What an incredible picture of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! And most incredible of all is how God timed everything. At the precise moment the high priest was standing in the court of the Temple, waving the sheaf of firstfruits before the Lord,* this type was being fulfilled in Christ! The Lord Jesus was being raised from the dead!

Read Luke 24:1-5

* Incidentally, the high priest that year would have been waving the sheaf of firstfruits before a veil that had been rent from top to bottom, and probably hastily repaired (note **Matthew 27:51**).

Feast of Weeks

Read Exodus 34:22

Read Deuteronomy 16:10,16

Read 2 Chronicles 8:13

The Feast of Weeks was so named because it was celebrated after seven complete weeks had passed from the waving of the Sheaf of First Fruits. In this way, the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Weeks are linked together by a countdown of 50 days (49 days, plus one).

The Feast of Weeks also has another name, one that is far more familiar to most Christians. It is called the Day of Pentecost (the Greek word *pentecost* means “fifty”). Now you’ve probably already guessed how the type of the Feast of Weeks is fulfilled in the New Testament. Yes, you’re right! The Feast of Weeks (or the Feast of Pentecost) pre-pictures the glorious outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the birth of the Church!

Read Acts 2:1

Notice the wording of Luke’s account of the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He writes: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come...” (NKJV). This means that 50 days had already been counted from the waving of the Sheaf of First Fruits and thus from the resurrection of Christ. The Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven just 10 days earlier (after spending 40 days with his disciples after the resurrection – note **Acts 1:3-5**). Now the 120 people in the upper room were waiting in prayer, as instructed, until “clothed with power from on high” (**Luke 24:49**).

When the Jews celebrated the Feast of Weeks, what was it they were celebrating? In the life of Israel, the historical event celebrated at Pentecost took place at Mount Sinai, in the third month after they had left Egypt (**Exodus 19:1**). At Sinai, God uttered a special promise to Israel, recorded in **Exodus 19:5-6**:

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...”

Now this promise has been declared fulfilled in the Church. In **1 Peter 2:9**, Peter proclaims:

“But *you* are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

The Feast of Weeks was fulfilled in minute detail in the birth of the Church. Let’s take a parallel look at what happened at Sinai (in the original Pentecost) and what happened to the Church (in the fulfilled Pentecost).

In order for the promise of **Exodus 19:5-6** to be fulfilled, God revealed himself in three ways at Mount Sinai:

The Power of God

- ☞ **Sinai** – fire, darkness, trumpet voice, quaking, thunders, lightnings (**Exodus 19:16-19; Hebrews 12:18-21; Deuteronomy 4:33,36**).
- ☞ **Pentecost** – wind, fire, tongues and, later, shaking (**Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 4:31**).

The Law of Moses

- ☞ **Sinai** – God’s holy standard written by the finger of God on tablets of stone – a ministry that produced death – 3,000 died in one day (**Exodus 32:28**).
- ☞ **Pentecost** – God’s holy standard written by the Spirit of God on fleshly tablets of the heart – a ministry that produced life (see **2 Corinthians 3:3-18**) – 3,000 came to life in one day (**Acts 2:41**).

The Pattern of the Tabernacle

- ☞ **Sinai** – the pattern for the natural tabernacle, designed by God to house his glory, given and enacted (**Exodus 25-31; 35-40**).
- ☞ **Pentecost** – the pattern of the tabernacle fulfilled in the Church, also designed by God to house his glory (**Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:11-28**).

Just as with Passover, so now with Pentecost – at the exact time the Jews were celebrating the natural feast, God was fulfilling it in reality!

Like the other three feasts studied so far, the Feast of Weeks is brimming with rich typology, far too much for us to look at in just one lesson. But it is worth looking at one more item.

The Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost) also had two others names:

- ☞ **The Feast of Harvest** (**Exodus 23:16**) – so called because it coincided with the ingathering of the *wheat* harvest)
- ☞ **The Day of Firstfruits** (**Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26**) – not to be confused with the Sheaf of Firstfruits, which was a celebration of the ingathering of the *barley* harvest, 50 days earlier.

Like Passover, Pentecost was a harvest festival. And in this harvest, we see a wonderful picture of the tremendous ingathering of redeemed lives that took place with the birth of the Church.

Just as in the Sheaf of Firstfruits, the firstfruits of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord, so on the Day of Firstfruits (the Day of Pentecost), the firstfruits of the wheat harvest was waved before the Lord. So the Church of Pentecost became a wave offering of firstfruits, representing the massive harvest of souls that was to come.

Read James 1:18

The Dry Season

Between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets were four dry, barren months. This dry season had meaning in the Scripture on three levels:

Literally in the agricultural calendar

The spring rains fell during the Feast of Passover to ripen the grain. The barley harvest was reaped at Passover and the wheat harvest at Pentecost. Then followed the dry season before the fall of the autumn rains at the Feast of Tabernacles, which ripened the fruit harvest – the grape and the olive* (**Deuteronomy 11:13-17; Jeremiah 5:24**).

Read Hosea 6:3

Read Joel 2:23-24

Read Psalm 72:6

This dry spell, between the two periods of harvest, holds tremendous prophetic significance for both historical Israel and today's Church.

Read Job 6:15-17

Historically in Israel

The children of Israel experienced Passover in Egypt, Pentecost at Sinai, and God planned for them to experience Tabernacles in Canaan, the Promised Land. But at Kadesh-Barnea, when the ten spies brought back an evil report, the people fell into unbelief and desired to return to Egypt. As a result, God caused Israel to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

Prophetically in the Church

The “spring rains” of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit fell at the time of the early Church. But in Church history, there followed a “dry season” as the Church gradually lost its glory and entered into what we now call the Dark Ages. Since the time of the Reformation, the spiritual “spring rains” have begun falling on the Church, restoring the truths (pictured in the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost) that had been lost to the Church. As we enter into the time of the prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in these last days, the Church will experience the outpouring of the “autumn rains” (**Joel 2:23**).

It is to this dry spell that Jesus refers when he says in **John 4:35-36**:

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”

* The term “grain, wine and oil” (NIV) and “the corn, the wine and the oil” (KJV) is used throughout Scripture to represent the three harvests of Israel's agricultural year – the harvest of barley and the harvest of wheat (called collectively “the grain” or “the corn”) and the harvest of fruit (the grape and the olive – called “the wine and the oil”). Keep an eye open for these terms as you study both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Feast of Trumpets

Read Leviticus 23:23-25

Read Numbers 29:1-6

The Feast of Trumpets marked the New Year in Israel's civil and agricultural calendar, but was found in the seventh month of the religious calendar instituted by the Lord at Passover (**Exodus 12:2**).

In Scripture, trumpets are equated with the prophetic voice (see **Isaiah 18:3; 58:1**). In their natural usage, trumpet blasts, sounded from the Temple, were used to call Israel to:

- **Repent!** – The distinctive message of the Feast of Trumpets was the call to get hearts and lives right with God. The Lord is calling his people today in exactly the same way (read **Acts 3:19**).
- **Awake!** – The Feast of Trumpets was also known as “The Day of the Awakening Blast.” So the call has come to the Church in these last days: “Awake!” (**Romans 13:11; 1 Corinthians 15:34; Ephesians 5:14**). Three specific calls to Israel to “awake” in **Isaiah 51:9-52:12** have strong significance for the Church today: “Awake, as in days gone by...” (**51:9**); “Awake, awake! Rise up...” (**51:17**); and, “Awake, awake...put on your garments of splendor...” (**51:1**).
- **Prepare!** – The message of the trumpets sounded at the Feast of Trumpets was a message of preparation, for in just ten days would be the Day of Atonement – the day of national cleansing, the highlight of Israel's year. These ten days of preparation were often called “the ten days of awe.”

The trumpets were to be blown by Aaron and his four sons (**Numbers 10:8; Exodus 28:1**), foreshadowing the task of the five-fold ministry, described in **Ephesians 4:11-13**:

“It was he (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God's people* for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, *attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*”

God is restoring the ministries of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher in our day for a specific purpose – to sound the trumpet in preparation for what he is about to do. In Old Testament times, these trumpet blasts had distinct sounds, calling the people to prepare for certain specific things:

- **The calling of the assembly (**Numbers 10:2-3**)** – A dual trumpet blast called all the tribes to gather as one man at the door of the Tabernacle. This is a picture of what the Lord is doing in our generation – calling his people to come together as one (**John 17:22-23**).

- **The calling of the leaders (Numbers 10:4)** – A single trumpet blast called the leaders to gather to hear the Word of God. God’s method is to go to the leaders first (**Amos 3:6-7**).
- **The journeying of the camps (Numbers 10:2,5-6)** – When the cloud of God’s manifested presence began to move, the trumpets were blown, calling the people to prepare to follow the cloud (read **Numbers 9:15-23**).
- **The warning of enemy attack (Numbers 10:9)** – When an enemy attacked, trumpets of alarm were sounded (**Joel 2:1**). This trumpet blast was a preparation for war (note **1 Corinthians 14:8; Ezekiel 33:1-7**).
- **The celebration of the feasts (Numbers 10:9)** – The trumpets blew to announce the beginning of all the festivals (**Leviticus 23:4; Psalm 47:5**). They were also used to announce the restoration of God’s presence with his people (**1 Chronicles 15:24-29**) and as an expression of worship and praise (**Psalm 150:3**).

Many Christians are waiting for the last trumpet to sound, but we must hear the others first.

The Day of Atonement

Read Leviticus 23:26-32

This was the most solemn, yet the greatest day in the life of the nation of Israel. It was the day of the cleansing of all sin for the priesthood, the sanctuary, and the whole nation. On this day alone, once a year, the high priest entered through the veil into the Holy of Holies. This feast is prophetic of the cleansing of the Church. It marks the maturity of the Body of Christ. It represents our coming into the fullness of the glorious expression Christ has planned for his Bride.

Read Ephesians 5:25-27

God has a glorious plan for his Church. This plan involves a transformation process, whereby we are being conformed “into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (**2 Corinthians 3:18**). As the *Amplified Bible* declares in **Proverbs 4:18**:

“But the path of the uncompromisingly just and righteousness is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more – brighter and clearer – until [it reaches its full strength and glory in] the perfect (to-be-prepared) day.”

On the Day of Atonement, the full manifestation of the finished work of the Cross and the Resurrection will be seen on earth in the Church.

Read Romans 8:18-30

Let’s take a look at the various instructions that God gave in regard to the Day of Atonement ceremony, for in these we see the pre-picture of what God has planned for us as his Church.

Read Leviticus 16

- **A time of self-denial (verses 29-31)** – The Day of Atonement took place on the 10th day of the 7th month. Prior to this, the distinctive message of the Feast of Trumpets, blown on the 1st day of the month, was the call to all Israel to prepare for this day of national cleansing. These were ten days of intensive preparation (in repentance), which climaxed in the Day of Atonement itself, a day set aside as a day of national fasting (**Numbers 29:7**) and so became known as “The Fast” (**Acts 27:9**). The interval of time between Trumpets and the Day of Atonement speaks of great trial and sifting for God’s people (**Isaiah 58; Joel 2; 1 Peter 1:3-7; 4:12-19**).
- **A day of total rest (verse 31)** – No manner of work was to be done. The high priest did all the work for that day. In a similar way, our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, has done all the work. We rest in faith in his finished work (**Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 6:19-10:25**).
- **A removal of sin (verses 5-10,15)** – The Day of Atonement ceremony involved two goats. The first goat is sacrificed for the people, its blood then taken within the veil and sprinkled on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, picturing once again the shed blood of Jesus for us (**Ephesians 1:7**). The second goat – the scapegoat – is called Azazel in Hebrew, which literally means “an entire removal.” The high priest lays his hands upon this goat and the sin of Israel is transferred to it. It is then taken into the wilderness and left there, symbolizing the total removal of sin from the nation of Israel.
- **The cleansing of the sanctuary (verse 14)** – The Day of Atonement was a day for the cleansing of the sanctuary. God has planned for a cleansing of his Church in preparation for a double-portion infilling of his glory.
- **The entry into the Holiest of All (verse 2,12-13)** – The Day of Atonement was the only day in the whole year that the Holiest of All was entered (**Hebrews 9:7-9; 6:19-20**). The high priest, representing the whole nation, came into the intense brilliance of God’s full glory. The Day of Atonement pre-pictures the Church entering into the full outworking of all that Christ has accomplished. Although even now we have bold access into the glory of God’s presence (**Hebrews 4:16**), God has planned for that glory to be fully revealed *in us* to the world.

Read Revelation 8:1-6

This passage is wedged in the middle of two sets of judgments in the book of **Revelation**. Unless we understand the language and symbolism of the feasts, we cannot appreciate what is happening during this sudden hiatus in God’s judgment against the world.

What is being described in this passage is nothing less than the Day of Atonement ceremony. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would take the golden censer off the altar of incense, just before the final veil, and take it through with him into the glorious presence of God. We already know from our studies that the

altar of incense represents the prayers of the saints (**Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8**). God is restoring a ministry of prayer to his Church – not just “praying,” but deep prayer and intercession – as a preparation for the Day of Atonement he has planned for his Church. And what is the nature of this prayer? It is nothing less than the Church joining with the prayer of Jesus, as recorded in **John 17:20-26**:

“...I pray...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world...I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

The Feast of Tabernacles

Read Leviticus 23:33-44

Read Deuteronomy 16:13-17

Read Numbers 29:12-35

The Feast of Tabernacles (proper) began on the 15th day of the 7th month, and lasted until the 21st, with the 22nd an additional High Sabbath. This feast was the consummation of all the feasts of Israel and the time of greatest rejoicing. Like the other feasts it was a harvest festival, and pictures the final ingathering of souls in the end of the age.

Following the Day of Atonement, the harvest of the grape and olive took place and with it a transition from the somber mood of “The Fast” to a holiday of great rejoicing and celebration. For this celebration, the people were told to build booths out of branches and palm leaves and live in them during the festival. Historically this was commemorating them living in “tabernacles”, and God “tabernacling” with them (**Exodus 25:8**), during the journey to the Promised Land. It was also celebrating the ingathering of the fruit.

You will notice that in all the feasts, the number 7 dominates, but none more so than this festival. The Feast of Tabernacles is the 7th feast. For 7 days 70 bullocks, 14 rams, 98 lambs and 7 goats are offered – all these numbers are divisible by 7. The number 7 has the meaning of perfection, completion and rest, which is the essence of what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about.

- **A festival of unity (**Ezra 3:1-4**)** – Everything in this final feast was corporate in its expression, pre-picturing the coming together of the Body of Christ in unity.
- **A festival of dedication** – Solomon dedicated the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (**2 Chronicles 6:2-7:10**) and this speaks of the dedi-

cation of the Church in the last days and the glory of the Lord filling it.

- **A festival of joy** – There was great rejoicing through the seven-day period of the Feast of Tabernacles – a rejoicing inspired by their acceptance by God during the Day of Atonement and by the ingathered harvest of the wine and the oil (**Deuteronomy 16:13-14; Nehemiah 8:9-17; Psalm 126**).
- **A festival of light** – Jesus made the declaration, “I am the light of the world,” during the Feast of Tabernacles! (**John 7:2; 8:12**). The Church is now the Temple of God – the light of the world (**Matthew 5:14**).
- **A festival of harvest** (**Exodus 23:16; 34:22**) – Following the fall of the autumn rains, which brought the fruit (the grape and the olive) to full ripeness, came the great and final harvest of the year – the harvest of Israel’s wine and oil. Wine represents the joy of the Lord and the fullness of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:13-18; Ephesians 5:18**). Oil represents the anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit (**Psalm 89:20-29; 104:15**). In the last day harvest, multitudes will be gathered into the kingdom of God because of the revelation of God’s glory in and through the Church (**Joel 3:14; Matthew 13:30,39**).
- **A festival of the nations** (**Zechariah 14:16-18**) – The spiritual harvest that fulfills the Feast of Tabernacles in the Church is a harvest of people – from every nation, tribe and language (**Revelation 7:9-10**).

One more aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles should be mentioned. So great was the rejoicing experienced at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, by the time of Jesus the feast had been extended an extra day, with the last day of the feast being the greatest.

During this 8th day, the people had added a water pouring ceremony. This outpouring of water was often accompanied by an outpouring of intense and exuberant joy. It was during this time of the water-pouring ceremony that Jesus made a prophetic declaration:

“Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was drawing near...[and] on the final and most important day of the feast, Jesus stood forth and He cried in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink! He who believes in Me...Out from his innermost being springs and rivers of living water shall flow (continuously). But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom those who believed – trusted, had faith – in Him were afterward to receive. For the (Holy) Spirit had not yet been given; because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor).”

The Lord used the water-pouring ceremony to picture the outpouring of the Holy Spirit *upon* the believer and the outflowing *from* the believer. This prophecy was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost but also speaks of the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the last day Church.

A Four-Fold Application

Each of the feasts has a four-fold application:

- **In the history of Israel** – Each of the feasts celebrates a literal historical event.
- **In the life and ministry of Jesus** – Each of the feasts is fulfilled in Christ.
- **In the history of the Church** – Each of the feasts has a corresponding fulfillment in the progression of the Church toward the goal of full maturity in Christ.
- **In the experience of every believer** – Each of the feasts is also an experience that is entered into on a personal level.

No wonder the psalmist exclaims in **Psalm 89:15** (NKJV):

“Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.”

¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*, excerpted from QuickVerse 6.0, Deluxe Edition.

² *New Commentary on the Whole Bible*, excerpted from QuickVerse 6.0, Deluxe Edition.

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the Bible are from the New International Version, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

The Online Bible College can be accessed at www.online-bible-college.com