

## The Biblical Festivals -Their Meaning and Significance

Written by Institute of Religion  
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### The Biblical Festivals -Their Meaning and Significance

**The Spring Holy Days** The festivals that occur in the spring are the **Passover**, **Days of Unleavened Bread**

, and

**Pentecost**

. Christ fulfilled the Passover's spiritual meaning with his First Coming.

**Passover - The History** The prefiguring of the plan of salvation began when God sent ten plagues on Egypt to force the authorities into letting the people of Israel go. The last and tenth plague was death of every firstborn in Egypt. Not one Israelite was harmed the night the tenth plague struck. God gave specific instructions to the people to sacrifice a lamb and place portions of its blood on the doorposts of their homes. That night, the death angel passed over every house marked with lamb's blood. It is a common but an incorrect assumption that the Passover is only for the Jews. It is also very Christian and has deep spiritual meaning. Paul emphasized this view to the church in 1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5: 7.

**Christ the Passover Lamb** For centuries, the nation of Israel kept the Passover as instructed by God but in a manner which created much doubt in their understanding of the symbolism. For them, it was a memorial of the night they were spared by the Death Angel and were finally released from the bondage of Egypt.

This is the command given by God:

**Exodus 12:1** The LORD said to  
**Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. 4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. 5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. 6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. KJV**

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God's commandment was to separate a lamb from the flock and to take care of (quarantine) it for four days. After four days, this purged lamb became like a member of the household. By the time they were to sacrifice it, it had become more like a pet than just some animal they were going to eat. This was to symbolize the relationship God had with Christ and how difficult it was for God to sacrifice his Son for mankind's sins. The difficulty that many of the families had in killing the lamb was symbolic of the agony God went through sacrificing his Son. Christ, the Lamb of God, was killed during the day of Passover. The Last Supper with his disciples was at twilight the evening beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. Later that night he was arrested. During the day about 3:00 clock P.M., (before sunset), he was crucified. Christ was literally mankind's Passover lamb because he was killed on Passover day. For centuries, the sacrificing of the lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan was a symbolic of Christ being the ultimate sacrifice so eternal death could pass over all of mankind in this (Egypt type) world.

**Passover – The Spiritual Meaning** Christ's sacrifice was the first step so mankind could have an intimate relationship with God the Father. Christ taught this truth and was killed for it. The Passover lamb was eaten, but Christ eventually taught what the true spiritual symbolism meant. The Disciples of Christ were in dismay when he taught the message of eating his flesh.

**John 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." 52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." KJV**

Later this symbolism was understood when Christ had his Last Supper with the disciples.

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**Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. KJV**

Christ was more clearly understood by his disciples as he poured out his soul to God the Father on their behalf.

**John 17:9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. KJV**

He prayed that his disciples may become one as he and the Father are one, and to be one with God. Christ was one with the Father for he obeyed the Father and submitted to the Law of God. This sets the stage to understanding the meaning of the seven days that follow right after Passover.

**John 17:21 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. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 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.**

Christ died so that by having one's sins washed clean one could have access to God the Father. Sin cuts mankind off from God, but Christ died so all of mankind could be brought back to God.

**1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God... NIV**

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Later in the day when Christ's death occurred, there was a miracle that gave a strong message that access to God was now available to mankind.

**Matthew 27:50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The Earth shook and the rocks split. **52** The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. KJV

**Luke 23:44** And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the Earth until the ninth hour. **45** And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. **46** And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. KJV

The curtain, or veil, was before the innermost part of the temple that represented the Throne of God. By law only the high priest could enter, and only at certain times. Now all had access to the throne of God, permission to approach God directly.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. KJV

Christ, the Passover Lamb, died so that all of mankind may have access to God. The eating of the unleavened bread on Passover night is symbolic of Christ within. Christ replaced the eating of lamb's flesh with his flesh, symbolized by the unleavened bread. The drinking of the wine is symbolic of Christ's blood, which represents the forgiveness of sins. Sin separates mankind from God. Now, even that barrier is gone. Christ instituted new symbols for keeping the Passover. The Passover is the most important memorial Christians can keep yearly, as instructed by Christ.

**John 13:1** 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. **2** And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; **3** Jesus

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**knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. KJV**

Every year Christians should assemble and partake of the symbols of Passover. Those symbols are the foot washing ceremony, the symbols of unleavened bread and the red wine.

**Mark 14:22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." NKJV**

It was Passover, not Easter, that was the right and proper way to honor Christ's sacrifice for mankind. Why did Christianity switch from observing the Passover, as instructed by Christ, to keeping the pagan holiday of Easter? Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, taught baptized Gentiles to keep the Passover. History shows that the churches in Asia Minor continued to keep the New Testament Passover long after most other churches had abandoned the practice for Easter. This became a controversy when Anicetus was the head of the Church of Rome in AD 154. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, had a conference with Anicetus over questions concerning the Passover.

But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and acquainted with many that had seen Christ, but was also appointed by apostles in Asia bishop of the church of Smyrna. He also was



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**Deuteronomy 16:8 For six days eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the LORD your God and do no work. NIV**

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, made it plain that Christians were to keep the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread and explained their significance and new Christian meaning.

**1 Corinthians 5: 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. NIV**

Christ is the Passover lamb sacrificed for mankind's sins. The Feast of Unleavened Bread represents a new life as Christians strive to remove sin from daily life.

**Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. KJV**

Christ's death did not finish the plan of salvation, it begins it instead. The rest of the Holy Days foreshadow the rest of God's great plan. The most important aspect of Christian living is the removal of sin from a Christian's daily life. The Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, which begin the day after Passover, symbolizes the removal of sin. Unleavened bread is bread free from yeast. Yeast puffs up and is the symbol of wickedness during the Days of Unleavened Bread. A Christian's goal is to be as free from wickedness as unleavened bread is from yeast. Ancient Israel kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a reminder that God brought them out of Egypt. The emphasis exercised during the Days of Unleavened Bread should continue in our daily living. Christians should beware of being locked only in the symbolism of these days lest we sabotage our own process of election.

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**Exodus 12:16** On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. **17** So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. **18** In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. NKJV

Egypt represents bondage and slavery. Egypt also represents sin just as Sodom and Gomorrah does. The worldly system that exists around us today is actually the modernized Egypt. God is still calling us to, "...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Revelation 11:8

**Deuteronomy 6:12** then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. NKJV

**Revelation 11:8** Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt... NIV

Sin is a form of bondage and slavery.

**John 8:34** Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say to you, every one that practices sin is the bondman of sin. **John 8:34** Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. NIV

Christ was prophesied to come out of Egypt. Without Christ dying for mankind's sin, no one could come out of the bondage of sin. Christ came out of spiritual Egypt for us.

**Matthew 2:14** So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, **15** where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."



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Eating unleavened bread represents the perfect law, which is the opposite of malice and wickedness. Keeping the perfect law of God brings freedom.

**1 Corinthians 5: 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. NIV**

**James 1:25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. NIV**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the keeping of God's commandments, which is another way of saying, the putting away of sin and the putting on of righteousness. As we literally remove the leaven from our surroundings we symbolize the putting away of sin from our lives. As we literally eat the matzos and drink the wine we symbolize the taking in of Christ. We also believe that these emblems are indeed the body and blood of our Lord.

**Feast of Pentecost** The third festival for the spring goes by several names: **Feast of Weeks, Pentecost**

,  
**Feast of First Fruits**  
and the  
**Feast of Harvest**

. Pentecost means to count fifty. This name derives from how God commanded the Israelites to determine when the spring harvest feast was to be held. The Greek translations of the New Testament rendered it as Pentekostos, which means fiftieth.

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

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God's Holy Days were planned to coincide with the harvest seasons, which is symbolic of the meaning of the Holy Days from a spiritual perspective. The Holy Days are a foreshadowing of God harvesting people into eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

**Exodus 23:14 "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); 16 and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field. NKJV**

For centuries, the people of Israel kept the Feast of Harvest as God commanded as a joyous occasion. The first fruits were an offering to God as a way to honor the blessing from God for a good harvest. In the New Testament, the new expanded meaning of this day signifies the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is how God is beginning the early harvest of all of mankind. Christ told his disciples that after he returned to the Father, he would send the Holy Spirit as a comforter. This came to pass on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's death on Passover.

**Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. KJV**

Pentecost looked forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit, which begins the early harvest of men. In order to be saved, one must have the Holy Spirit. Today is not the only day of salvation. This is expanded and clarified later in the section about the Last Great Day. Those that are called now make up the first fruits. This spiritual early harvest explains why Christ said, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

**Matthew 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. KJV**

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In his Epistle, James compared Christians to firstfruits.

**James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. KJV**

The coming of the Holy Spirit was also the beginning of God's Church. God's Church throughout the ages is how God is performing a spiritual spring harvest. The greater harvest for the majority of mankind is coming in the fall harvest. The spring festivals illustrate to God's Church yearly that those He calls into His Church in this age are the "firstfruits"—the first group to be given God's Spirit and offered salvation—the relatively small beginning of His spiritual harvest. To be one of the first fruits requires more than just saying that Christ is accepted as one's personal savior. In his Pentecost sermon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter laid out how the Holy Spirit is received.

**Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." NKJV**

There are three components to the Plan of God as it applies to becoming one of the firstfruits. [1—Be called by God. [2—Repent of sins. [3—Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Christ taught that now was not the only time of salvation. This is why Peter told called-out Christians:

**2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. NIV**

What is repentance? Repentance is to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life. It is not only being sorry for past sins, but it is also a determination to remove sin from one's life completely.

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**Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. KJV**

Baptism is the symbol that the old person is dead and that Christians begin new lives with Christ dwelling within in them.

**Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. KJV**

**Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. KJV**

However, the Plan of God is not over. The rest of the Holy Days prophetically spell out the remaining Plan of God and show how the rest of mankind can be saved.

### The Fall Holy Days – Their Spiritual Meaning

The next set of Festivals occur in the Fall and are the **Feast of Trumpets**, **The Day of Atonement**, **Feast of Tabernacles** and the **Last Great Day**

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. In the future, Christ will fulfill special functions and the fall holy days symbolize the rest of the plan.

**The Feast of Trumpets** The Old Testament records this day as a commanded assembly for Israel that includes a blowing of trumpets. Trumpets have special meaning for they are used as a warning. Ancient Israel used trumpets to warn of war and to call the people together. Trumpet blasts also proceeded important occasions such as the crowning of a new King.

**Numbers 29:1 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. KJV**

The Jews call the Feast of Trumpets Rosh Hashanah. The Jews consider the ten days between the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) as having special meaning. "The ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are called Aseret Yemei Teshuvah, the Ten Days of Repentance". Revelation also speaks of repentance in conjunction with the blowing of trumpets. It speaks of a great tribulation where God sends his wrath on the Earth to punish mankind for its sins. The punishments are a call to repentance. God gives mankind one last chance to turn from evil before Christ returns. There are seven trumpets each blown by an angel of God. Each trumpet precedes an important event that occurs just before Christ returns. The symbolism of the seven trumpets is detailed in Revelation 8,9 and 11. Six of the trumpet blasts represent a warning of plagues and woes upon mankind. The seventh trumpet blast announces the triumphant return of Christ to rule all of the kingdoms of the world. The Feast of Trumpets, during the time of the Old Testament was a commanded assembly with a blowing of trumpets. It foreshadows the upcoming 7 trumpets spoken of in Revelation.

**Revelation 8: 1, And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**

This is the coming great tribulation where God sends his wrath on the earth to punish mankind for its sins so that they will repent and turn away from their evil. The seven trumpets are seven great plagues.

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**Revelation 9: 20** And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: **21** Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The last (seventh) trump is when Christ returns. **1 Thessalonians 4: 16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

**The Day of Atonement** The original ritual God commanded Israel on the day of atonement involved fasting and two goats. Lots were cast over the goats. One was sacrificed and one was led into the wilderness.

**Leviticus 16: 7** And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. **8** And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. **9** And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. **10** 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.

Christ represents the goat that was sacrificed for sins. Notice it was the goat in "which the LORD's lot fell". Satan is represented by the goat led into the wilderness. Scapegoat is not the best translation because Satan is actually charged as being responsible for the sins of mankind. Young's Literal Translation uses the more accurate phrase 'goat of departure'. This Holy Day is a shadow of when Christ returns right after the plague of the seven trumpets and it is when Satan is bound for a thousand years.

**Revelation 20: 1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, **3** And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

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The original observance that God commanded Israel for the Day of Atonement involved a 24-hour fast and a ritual with two goats. Lots were cast over the goats. One was sacrificed, and one was led into the wilderness.

**Leviticus 16:7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. 10 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. KJV**

The goat that was sacrificed for sins represents Christ. It was the goat in "which the Lord's lot fell." The goat led into the wilderness represents Satan. Scapegoat is not an accurate translation because Satan is actually charged as being responsible for the sins of mankind. A scapegoat has the meaning of one unjustly accused. This is another word that translates poorly into English. There is no word for word equivalence from Hebrew to English. The original Hebrew word is aza'zel {az-aw-zale'}. It is derived from two Hebrew words, azal {aw-zal'} [to go away, fail, to disappear] and ez {aze} [goat]. Its full meaning is goat of departure or the goat of failure. Satan is the ultimate failure for he is the father of rebellion and evil. This is appropriate because this Holy Day foreshadows the time when Satan will be locked away for a thousand years. This day allows for mankind to finally be AT-ONE-MENT with God because Satan, mankind's spiritual adversary, is removed and prevented from deceiving mankind for one thousand years.

**Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. KJV**

The Day of Atonement is the Holy Day that symbolically foreshadows the time when Satan is bound for 1,000 years. Because Christ defeated Satan during his time on Earth as a man, Christ will replace him as ruler of this world at his return. The fulfillment of the Plan of God is to dispose of Satan and install Christ as the King of the World! Satan, the god of this World, must be banished before God sets up the Kingdom of God on Earth with Christ as King. This was also prophesied in Daniel 2. The prophecy in Daniel details the four major empires of the world. The fourth and final empire is represented as existing at the close of the age by the feet and

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toes of clay and iron. When the final World Empire (ruled by the beast and the false prophet) is destroyed by the return of Christ, Satan's rule on this Earth ends also. The mountain spoken of in the prophecy represents the Kingdom of God which will be ruled and setup by Christ at his return.

**Daniel 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole Earth. KJV**

The New Testament Church kept the Day of Atonement.

And we find this annual holy day recognized in the New Testament. In Acts 27:9, when Paul was on his perilous sea voyage to Rome, it is recorded that "when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past..." See the margin in your Bible. The fast refers to the Day of Atonement the 10th day of the seventh month. Now this day could not then have been past on that particular year unless that day was still in full effect and force and existence..

After Satan is banished and Christ replaces him, the 1,000 years of Christ's rule begins.

**Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day** This portion of the article will give you an overview of the Feast of Tabernacles -- or Feast of Booths -- the sixth festival listed in Leviticus chapter 23. This festival shows us the picture of the Millennium, the 1,000 year period of time following Christ's visible return from heaven! Let us notice the instruction concerning this occasion:

**"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 ....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 ... and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:13-17).**



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Here is the Festival of Tabernacles, to be kept for seven days, beginning the 15th day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. Notice Leviticus 23:33-35: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein." On the first of these days is a holy convocation -- that is, a set-apart commanded assembly. No work is to be done. "... And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days .... It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month" (Lev. 23:40-41). Notice that it is commanded forever.

Here are pictured those final culminating events in God's great plan. The earlier holy days show other parts of God's plan: After Christ died for our sins to redeem mankind (commemorated in the spring by the Passover), after He has sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His Name to become kings and priests through the thousand years (observed at Pentecost), after His glorious Second Coming (shown by the Feast of Trumpets at the beginning of the seventh lunar month), after He has finally restored the redeemed by placing all the sins upon the head of Satan, their real author, and separating both him and the sins from the presence of God and His people (re-enacted at the Day of Atonement), thus finally perfecting the at-one-ment, making us finally joined in one -- then we are ready for that final series of events, the commencement of the "Marriage of the Lamb," the actual making of the New Covenant, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the reaping of the great harvest of souls for a thousand years.

**Pictures the Millennium** To portray His plan, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in ancient Israel as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls. In the Holy Land there are two annual harvest seasons. The first season is in the spring, when grains are harvested. Later in the year comes the main harvest of fruit. Notice that the Festival of Tabernacles is to be held "at the year's end" (Ex. 34:22). In this verse the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths is specifically called the "feast of ingathering." The harvest year ended at the beginning of autumn. Just as Pentecost pictures the early harvest -- this church age -- so the Festival of Ingatherings or Tabernacles pictures the fall harvest -- the great harvest of souls in the Millennium!

Turn to the book of Zechariah. In the 12th and 13th chapters we have a picture of Christ returning and the reconciliation of the world commencing. Here the meaning of the Festivals of Trumpets and Atonement is made plain. Next, notice the 14th chapter. The time is the Millennium. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one ... there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (verses 9, 11). It is the time when "living waters" -- salvation, the Holy Spirit -- "shall go out from Jerusalem" (verse 8). The "waters" are literal as well as figurative. God often pictures His spiritual plan by material events.

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In that day, when the earth is safely inhabited, when the Holy Spirit is granted to all mortal flesh, what happens? "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" (verse 16).

**Gentiles Will Keep the Feast of Tabernacles** Notice this 16th verse of Zechariah 14. After Christ returns, the nations -- mortal Gentiles who have not yet received salvation -- will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! And what will happen if they refuse to obey God? "And it shall be, that whosoever 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" (verse 17). Strong words these! The nations will be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, from year to year, when Christ is ruling the earth! And if the nations still won't obey? "... there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen" -- there are still heathen nations just beginning to learn the way of salvation -- "that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment ... of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (verses 18-19).

To receive salvation, even the Gentiles will have to keep this festival. As we saw earlier, it is commanded forever! We customarily quote Isaiah 66:23, showing that the Sabbath will be kept in the Millennium, as proof we must keep it now. When we read Zechariah 14:16, showing that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept in the Millennium, will we be consistent by keeping it today? Would God resurrect us as His sons -- kings and priests -- ruling with Christ on His throne, assisting Christ at that time, if we now refuse to keep these festivals? Notice that Christ kept the Feast of Tabernacles. The Apostle John devoted an entire chapter of his gospel -- the seventh chapter -- to describe what Jesus said and did during the Feast of Tabernacles in the last year of His ministry.

**Why Called the Feast of Tabernacles** During the Millennium, the Kingdom of God (into which we can be born) will rule the nations. The billions of mortal men alive during the Millennium will still be heirs to the Kingdom of God. They will not yet have inherited it as long as they remain mortal flesh, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). "Ye must be born again" -- "of the Spirit" -- to inherit the Kingdom, said Jesus. Remember that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were merely heirs when they dwelled on earth (Heb. 11:9). While heirs they dwelled in tabernacles, or booths, sojourning in the land of promise. Booths or temporary dwellings pictured that they were not yet inheritors. Thus we read of the Feast of Tabernacles that "ye shall dwell in booths seven days ... 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" (Lev. 23:42-43). Israel dwelled in booths in the wilderness before they entered the promised land. Those booths pictured that they were only heirs. Even during the Millennium, when the Kingdom

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of God is ruling over mortal nations, the people will be only heirs to the Kingdom. They must overcome and grow in knowledge and wisdom to inherit the promises.

What a marvelous picture. God says of Ephraim (a type of all Israel) that they will "dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast" (Hosea 12:9). Israel in the wilderness was a type of all people who must go through trials and tribulations to inherit the promises. They were wanderers, waiting to inherit the promises of salvation. The contention, held by some sects, that mortal human beings in the Millennium will remain flesh and blood forever is plainly denied by the Feast of Tabernacles, for the festival itself points toward an eternal inheritance. Besides, after Jesus gathers the Church to Himself, and after He is seated on His throne where we will be ruling with Him, He will gather the nations before Him and say: "Inherit the Kingdom" (Matt. 25:34).

**The Last Great Day!** Few people have noticed that the Feast of Tabernacles is only the sixth festival? There is yet another -- the seventh! The Feast of Tabernacles is, strictly speaking, seven days long -- to picture the entire Millennium. Seven is God's number of completeness. Therefore, there must also be seven festivals. Let us notice where it is mentioned: "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord ... on the eighth day [the twenty-second day of the seventh month] shall be an holy convocation unto you ... it is a [day of] solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein' (Lev. 23:34, 36). This eighth day, technically a separate feast, is called "the last day, that great day of the feast" (John 7:37). We often refer to it as "The Last Great Day." What does this final holy day represent?

Notice what Jesus preached about on that day: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink ... out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive ... )" (John 7:37-39).

This was Jesus' sermon giving the meaning of the last great day!

Now turn to Revelation 20. After the Millennium, what happens? A resurrection! The dead stand before God. This couldn't include true Christians today, as they will be resurrected to appear before the judgment seat when Christ returns. It couldn't refer to those converted during the Millennium. They have already inherited the Kingdom during the Millennium, after living out a normal life span. Those in this resurrection are the people who died in ignorance in past ages! They are not brought back to life until after the Millennium (Rev. 20:5).

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**Pictures the Day of Judgment** This is that judgment day mentioned in Matthew 10:15. It is a time when Gentiles who died in ignorance will be given an opportunity to receive salvation. Ezekiel 16:53-55 makes this very plain. Even those in Israel who died in their sins will be given their first opportunity to understand the truth of God and His way (Ezek. 37). The prophet wrote that God would pour out His Spirit on those resurrected (verse 14). This is precisely the salvation that Jesus mentioned in His sermon on that great day of the feast.

This eighth day, which immediately follows the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, pictures the completion of the plan of redemption. It is just prior to the new heaven and the new earth. All -- parents and children, young and old -- will be resurrected.

Notice that the "book of life" -- typifying salvation -- is opened (Rev. 20:12). Revelation presents the final view of the "judgment day" as the present material heaven and earth are perishing -- and the faithful are receiving their eternal reward at the throne of Christ. The wicked -- those who disobey -- are seen perishing in the lake of fire!

What a marvelous plan! All will have an equal opportunity.

And finally, notice in Leviticus 23: 2, "...These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of Yahweh, which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations. We are, then, to keep all the Sabbaths of the Lord. "The man who says I know him but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ... This is how we know we are in him..." 1 John 2: 3-6