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Leviticus 23

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Leviticus 23.

FOCUS: ISRAEL'S SEVEN ANNUAL FEASTS

Topics.

- The LORD's appointed feasts, Sabbaths and holy convocations.
- The fifteenth day of the first month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- The priest shall wave the sheaf of the firstfruits before the LORD.
- You shall wave the sheaf and offer a lamb, a grain and drink offering.
- You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath.
- Offer one goat for a sin offering, two lambs for peace offerings.
- The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits
- You shall not reap your field right up to its edge.
- You shall observe a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets.
- A Day of Atonement, to make atonement before the LORD your God.
- On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Feast of Booths.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

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- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: covered laws for Aaron and his sons and their descendants, and laws concerning eating unclean and clean animals; a priest's daughter marrying a layman; a priest marrying a divorced woman; peace, vow and freewill offerings; offering animals with crushed testicles or from foreigners, food offerings and the eighth day and killing a cow or ewe and her young in one day.

LEVITICUS 23:1-3

The LORD's Appointed Feasts, Sabbaths and Holy Convocations.

- **Leviticus 23:1-3:** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts. ³"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwelling places.

Though Moses has previously mentioned these annual feasts of the LORD, and the times of assembling the people before God, he sets them all down in this chapter according to the order of time in which they were to be kept. This means that this chapter could serve the Jews as a general table of all their religious festivals. Since Moses could not speak to the entire nation at the same time, he most likely spoke to the priests and elders who then spoke to the heads of their tribes who then spoke to the heads of the families and in this manner the laws of the LORD would have been spread throughout the nation.

The seven appointed feasts mentioned in this chapter are in addition to the vow and freewill offerings that are presented with the burnt, the grain, the drink and the peace offerings. (Num. 29:39). The feasts were festivals that God claims as His, they were to be held at the sanctuary of the nation, on an appointed fixed time, for meeting together for solemn worship and service or joyful festivity.

HOLY CONVOCATIONS

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Holy convocations: the word convocation comes from the Hebrew word (*miqra' and qara'*). It carries the idea of something being called out (i.e., to publish and read etc.). In the context of Scripture, it refers to the people being called out to a public meeting or an assembly for hearing the reading of the LORD's word, for worship or for a festival. It embraces all the days of sabbatical rest for all the people of Israel and the name given for God's special holy occasions when the people in masses assembled together in a solemn manner to worship the LORD and feast and fellowship together in a unique manner. They are called "Holy," because they are separated from other days, and set apart for holy purposes and solemn services for God's glory. After they were appointed, they were then called feasts, even though the people had to fast on one of them (the Day of Atonement). All Holy Convocations demanded a cessation from work, labour and business. They were gatherings for:

- Religious edification, fellowship and worship, which, in later times, was probably held in every town and village in the holy land.
- Evidences of God's divine wisdom, in keeping Israel together as a nation and maintaining their religious knowledge, their right standing before God and their faith.

THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH

Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath: (v3) The Old Testament Sabbath Day was based on God's creative week in Genesis Chapter One. Six days God created and on the seventh He rested. This is the basis for the understanding of the days of the week. God created on day one through to, day six and rested on day seven and therefore the Sabbath was held on the seventh day of the week, which was also the last day of the week.

- For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exod. 20:11).
- Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. (Exod. 31:15).
- It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. (Exod. 31:17).

God commanded that the seventh day be observed as the Sabbath. Saturday is the seventh day of the week, while Sunday is the first day of the week. The yearly feasts stood out above all other feasts, because of their great attendance at the sanctuary, but they were not to be regarded as being more holy than the seventh day weekly Sabbath. The people must withdraw from all business of the world on the weekly Sabbath Day, for it is a Sabbath of rest from all forms of ordinary work to rest in God and worship Him. This Sabbath was to be religiously observed in every house, by every family throughout the land of Israel.

THE PASSOVER FEAST

LEVITICUS 23:4-5

In the First Month, on the Fourteenth Day is the LORD's Passover.

- **Leviticus 23:4-5:** “These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. ⁵In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight (at even in KJV), is the LORD 's Passover.

The first Jewish month is called Abib (also called Nisan), it is the month that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and it was for this reason that it was made the first Jewish month in the year. (About the beginning of our April).

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- This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. (Exod. 12:2).
- You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. (Exod. 12:6).
- In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. (Exodus 12:11).
- This day shall be for you a memorial-day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. (Exodus 12:14).
- Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out (from Egypt, the house of slavery). (Exodus 13:4).
- Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. (Deut. 16:1).

The month of Abib is called Nisan in the later books of Scripture.

- In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman. (Esther 3:7) (Neh. 2:1).
- The day, which was called the preparation for the Passover and the first day of Passover.
- Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He (Pilate) said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” (John 19:14).

No leaven was to be eaten on the fourteenth day or the seven days following it.

- In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. (Exod. 12:18).

The following verses clearly show that strictly speaking the Passover Feast, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, are two distinct feasts.

- You shall keep it (the Passover lamb) until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. (Exodus 12:6).
- In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the LORD's Passover. (Lev. 23:5).
- On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's Passover,¹⁷ and on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast (of unleavened bread). Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. (Num. 28:16-17).
- Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Exod. 12:15).
- You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt, therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. (Exod. 12:17).

However, though the Passover Feast, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, are two distinct feasts, they are sometimes spoken of as one Feast since they are linked together.

At twilight (even in KJV), is the LORD 's Passover: (v5) the time for keeping the Passover was between two evenings, meaning, from sunset (the sixth hour) and onward, to the sunset of the following evening.

- In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. (Exod. 12:18).

The 15th day of the month began on the evening (i.e., sunset) of the 14th day, immediately following this, the Sabbath day of holy convocation of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread began and continued through to the end of the evening (sunset) of the 21st day.

- On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's Passover,¹⁷ and on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast. Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. (Numbers 28:16-17).

Jesus crucifixion was in the middle of the day (around 3pm) of Passover Day and Joseph laid his body in the tomb late afternoon when the sun began to decline, before the Sabbath of the feast of Unleavened Bread began. All the Jewish festivals were kept from evening to evening, their day beginning in the evening and ending at sunset of the following evening. The day of Passover was to be a perpetual memorial of the circumstances concerning the Israelites deliverance from Egypt the house of bondage, but by extension signifies the greater deliverance from the bondage of sin through faith in the perfect Passover Lamb of God without blemish the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus blood flows back to Adam: Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God, but they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish, they signified the Saviours' sacrifice (i.e., the innocent for the guilty). It was not the blood of bulls and goats that cleansed them, but Jesus blood. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

Here we read that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world and the following verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, before time began, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: -

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

Josephus, who was an eye-witness to the Passover: tells us in the reign of Nero, there were 2,700,000 people, when 256,500 lambs were sacrificed, which means that most of the Jews must have camped in tents outside the walls of the city, as the Mohammedan pilgrims now do at Mecca. This was one of the reasons the Romans took great precaution, using both force and pacifying measures, during the festivals.

THE SEVEN DAY FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

LEVITICUS 23:6-8

The Fifteenth Day of the First Month is Feast of Unleavened Bread.

- **Leviticus 23:6-8:** And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ⁸But you shall present a food offering to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work."

Ordinary work (servile work in KJV): comes from the Hebrew word (*`abodah from `abad*) and embraces work and labour of any kind and in any sense and by implication, to serve, to enslave and to be kept in bondage. The English Dictionary defines servile work as work that is willing done to please others, especially characteristic of slaves, servants and those in menial positions or forced labour. When the Bible forbids servile work, it means that slaves and servants are not to be forced to do any work for no one is to work on a Sabbath Day.

Work: comes from the Hebrew word (*m^ela'kah*) meaning deputyship (i.e. ministry), but generally refers to employment, labour and work, (never servile), such as business, farming cattle and sheep etc., industrious work, building things and such like labour and work.

The reason for unleavened bread: was because the children of Israel went out of Egypt in such haste on this day that they had no time to leaven their bread, this, is why the Israelites were commanded to eat unleavened bread for seven days.

- You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt, therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. (Exod. 12:17).
- You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. (Exod. 23:15).
- On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's Passover, ¹⁷and on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast (of unleavened bread). Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. (Num. 28:16-17).

The 15th day of the month began on the evening (i.e., sunset) of the 14th day, immediately following this, the Sabbath day of holy convocation of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread began and continued through to the end of the evening (sunset) of the 21st day.

- Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Exod. 12:15).

The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed the day of Passover. These seven days were not frivolous days spent in idle leisure or sport, but sacred days set aside for the LORD, for prayer, praise, meditation and worship. The following three festivals were often called the great festivals:

1. **Passover** (inclusive of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread),

- In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the LORD's Passover. ⁶And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. (Leviticus 23:5-7).

2. **Pentecost** (also called Feast of Weeks), fifty days later. It is called the Feast of 50 days, because the people were to count seven weeks or forty-nine days from the day after the Sabbath Day (15th of Abib), that immediately followed Passover Day (14th of Abib), which was the (16th of Abib) and the fiftieth day was the Day of Pentecost. It was on this day that they brought the sheaf to the priest to wave before the LORD and from this day that they were to count forty-nine days to the day of Pentecost. (Lev. 23:15-17).

3. **Booths** (also called tabernacles).

- Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. (Lev 23:34).
- The first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. (Leviticus 23:39).
- You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in in the seventh month. (Leviticus 23:41).

The following shows that only the male Israelites had to attend the following three feast and appear before the LORD.

1. The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. The Feast of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks, because fifty days were counted to it.
3. The seven-day Feast of Booths (also called tabernacles)
 - Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD. (Exod. 23:17).
 - Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. (Exod. 34:23).
 - Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. (Deut. 16:16).

Jesus crucifixion was in the middle of the day (around 3pm) of Passover Day and Joseph laid his body in the tomb late afternoon when the sun began to decline, before the Sabbath of the feast of Unleavened Bread began. All the Jewish festivals were kept from evening to evening, their

day beginning in the evening (sunset) and ending at sunset of the following evening. No man was to appear before the LORD empty-handed, but give as he was able, according to the blessing the LORD had given them. (Deut. 16:16-17). In later times these three feasts were commonly called, "pilgrimage feasts," for all the men of Israel would travel to the national sanctuary of the LORD in Jerusalem, much like Moslems pilgrimage to their sanctuary in Mecca.

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

LEVITICUS 23:9-11

The Priest shall Wave the Sheaf of the Firstfruits Before the LORD.

- **Leviticus 23:9-14:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, ¹¹and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

At this present time Israel was in the wilderness, so there was no sowing or reaping, nor any harvest. Though the following laws are given now, they could not take place until they entered the land of Canaan, which they were about to do. After they had entered Canaan, which God promised their father He would give to them and settled in the land of their inheritance, and farmed and sowed the land with seed and it thrived and flourished into a great harvest they were not to eat any of it until they had brought a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest to the priest to wave before the LORD. Israel was to eat the Passover in the evening at sunset (the time they came out of Egypt) at the national sanctuary in the first month Abib (also called Nisan) because God brought them out of Egypt by night (Deut. 16:1-8). No leavened bread was to be eaten for seven days. The seventh day was a solemn assembly to the LORD no work was to be done.

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In the book of Deuteronomy, it is written:

- You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. (Deut. 16:9).

This means that from the day they first put the sickle to the standing grain to obtain the sheaf of barley the first ripe corn for the wave offering, they were to count off seven weeks or forty-nine days and the fiftieth day was the Day of Pentecost (also called the Feast of Weeks) (Deut. 16:9). They first put the sickle to the standing grain on the same day that the priest waved the sheaf, which was the day after the Sabbath (the 15th day) that immediately followed Passover Day (the 14th day), which means that the sickle was first put to the standing grain on the 16th day of Abib. From this 16th day they were to count off seven weeks or forty-nine days and the next day, the fiftieth day was the Day of Pentecost). Then they were to keep the Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks) to the LORD (Deut. 16:10). Following is a brief overview of the seven annual feasts.

Feasts in the First Month.

1. **Passover:** was held for one day on the 14th day of the first month Abib (Lev. 23:5). (Signifying salvation from sin).
2. **Unleavened Bread:** followed for seven days starting on the 15th of the first month Abib (Lev. 23:6). (Signifying the body of the Lord Jesus Christ).
3. **Firstfruits:** followed for one day on the 16th of the first month Abib (the second day of the seven-day feast of Unleavened Bread). It was on this day they waved the sheaf of their firstfruits (Lev. 23:10-11). (Signifying the resurrection of the Lord).

4. **Pentecost:** (also called the Feast of Weeks) followed fifty days later, counting forty-nine days from the 16th of the first month Abib. It was held on the fiftieth day for one day (Lev. 23:17). (Signifying sinful man, redeemed and resurrected).

Feasts in the Seventh Month.

5. **Trumpets:** followed for one day on the first day of the seventh month. (Lev. 23:24). (Signifying the rapture of the church).
6. **Atonement:** followed for one day on the tenth day of the seventh month. (Lev. 23:27). (Signifying the salvation of sinners).
7. **Booths/Tabernacle:** followed for eight days on the fifteenth day of the seventh month) immediately followed by seven days. (Lev. 23:34). (Signifying the Kingdom age).

In the name of the whole congregation the priest, at the tabernacle (later the temple), where the presence of God was would take the sheaf (the omer) of barley in his hand and wave it before the LORD. He would lift it up toward heaven, with prayer, as an acknowledgment to LORD of heaven and earth of His goodness, for the fruits of the earth and to give Him the praise and glory for their following harvest.

On the day after the Sabbath: (v11) the word Sabbath here is an alternative term for a Day of Holy Convocation, which refers to the day after the Sabbath which was Abib 16th. On this day the inhabitants of the surrounding towns of Jerusalem gathered together with great joy after the sheaf had been waved, to reap the barley harvest with great joy.

The priest was to wave the sheaf that Israel would be accepted: (v11) for God to accept the people and bless the rest of their harvest no one was to eat of the fully-grown crop until the sheaf had been waved as a thanksgiving to LORD for the growth of the seed that they had planted in their land, which was now fully grown and ready to harvest. It is common courtesy to express thankfulness toward others who give us gifts or do favours for us, this same courtesy and principal applies to God. No parent gets any joy from a child that has a sense of entitlement and total lack of gratitude and shows no thankfulness for the gifts and good things that their parents do for them. Likewise, God takes no delight when His people take His goodness for granted and show no sign of gratitude and thankfulness.

LEVITICUS 23:12-14

Wave the Sheaf and Offer a Lamb, a Grain and Drink Offering.

- **Leviticus 23:12-14:** And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the LORD with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. ¹⁴And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

On the very day the priest waved the sheaf, the people were to offer:

- A male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD.
- Grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah (around 4 litres) of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the LORD with a pleasing aroma
- Drink offering with it shall be of wine a fourth of a hin (about ¾ litre).

You shall not eat: (v14) no one in any household in all the towns of Israel was to eat parched or fresh bread or grain, until the sheaf had been waved before the LORD and the lamb had been offered on the brazen

altar of burnt offering in the outer court with its accompanying grain and drink offering. This command was to be a statute forever throughout all Israel's generations until the Messiah came.

Symbolism of the sheaf of first-fruits was typical of the Lord Jesus, who is risen from the dead as the First-fruits of all who are sleeping in Christ. Here is the wonder of Scripture: Jesus rose from the dead on the very same day that the first-fruits were offered. Following are five possible symbolisms:

1. One sheaf was waved for all the people, may signify that Christ is the one Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer for all sinners who would come to God.
2. The single sheaf contains many stalks and grains, likewise Christ has within him God's pardon and power, forgiveness of sin, God's promises, eternal life, the Spirit of wisdom and many blessings.
3. The waving of the one sheaf, prepared the harvest for reaping, the resurrection of one man prepared the worldly harvest of sinners for reaping, by the power of the Gospel.
4. The waving of the single sheath sanctified the whole harvest, likewise, faith in one man, the Lord Jesus Christ sanctifies all in the global Kingdom of God.
5. The single sheaf being raised before God, signifies the resurrection of Christ who rose from the dead to ascend to his heavenly father on the very day the first-fruits were offered.
 - Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20).

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

LEVITICUS 23:15-17

You shall Count Fifty Days to the Day after the Seventh Sabbath.

- **Leviticus 23:15-17:** "You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath (from the morrow after the sabbath in KJV), from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. ¹⁶You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the LORD.

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) (Heb. Shavuot) was distinguished from the two other great annual feasts (Passover and Tabernacles) for it was only a single day.

You shall count seven full weeks: (v15) the counting of the forty-nine days begins the day after the Sabbath (from the morrow after the Sabbath in KJV) (v15). After the seventh Sabbath, meaning the day after the seven complete weeks, or the forty-nine days, is the Day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, it is from the number fifty that this feast is given the name, "Pentecost," (meaning fiftieth-day), which is what this feast is called in the New Testament.

- When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (Acts 2:1).
- Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 20:16).
- I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost. (1 Cor. 16:8).

And called the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament.

- Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. (Exodus 34:12).
- Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. (Deut. 16:10).
- Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. (Deut. 16:16).
- As the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses for the Sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths. (2 Chron. 8:13).

According to the Jewish canons, the fiftieth day could fall on the 5th day, the 6th day or the 7th day of Sivan, the third month of the Jewish year, (i.e., from the new moon of May to the new moon of June).

You shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD: (V16) this is not the new grain and first fruits of the sheaf (omer), that had previously been waved, for that was the new grain and firstfruits of the barley-harvest, whereas this is the new grain and first-fruits of the wheat-harvest which concluded the harvest of the two different grains. It commemorates the creation of the world and marks the beginning of the Days of Awe, a ten-day period of introspection and repentance that concludes with the Day of Atonement.

Numbering the fifty days: everyone was to number the days themselves. It is said by Jewish writers that after sunset of Passover Day (14th) a Sabbath Day began (15th), and when sunset of this Sabbath Day came, the first day of the seven-day feast of unleavened bread began (16th) and after the evening prayer of this first day they would start counting in the following manner. On the first day they would say, "this is one day," until they came to the seven days; then say, "this is the seventh day, which is one week and on the eighth day say, "this is the eighth day, which is one week and one day. They would then continue in this way until they came to the fourteenth and then say, "this is the fourteenth day, which make two weeks. They would continue in this way counting the numbers until the forty ninth day, after which they would say, "you will offer a new meat offering unto the LORD; that is of new corn." Some explain it as the offering of wheat; because it was the offering for the wheat harvest, which was offered on the fiftieth day in contrast to the offering of the sheaf or omer of the barley for the barley harvest.

Symbolism of the three Feasts: Jesus was crucified as the "Passover Lamb" and rose from the grave at the Feast of Firstfruits. Fifty days after His resurrection and after ascending to heaven to sit at the right hand of God, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to indwell the disciples and empower them for ministry as promised.

- I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17).

The promised Holy Spirit arrived on the Day of Pentecost, which is another name for the Feast of Weeks. Some see the two loaves of leavened bread (the barley loaf and the Wheat loaf) that were to be a wave offering as foreshadowing the time when the Messiah would make both Jew and Gentile to be one in Him.

- For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. (Ephesians. 2:14-15).

This is also the only feast where leavened bread is used. Leaven in Scripture is often used symbolically of sin, and the leavened bread used in the Feast of Weeks is thought to be representative of the fact that there

is still sin within the church (the global body of Christ) and will be until Christ returns. On the Day of Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks), the "firstfruits" of the church were gathered by Christ as some 3,000 people heard Peter present the Gospel after the Holy Spirit had empowered and indwelt the disciples as promised.

- Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41).

With the promised indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the first fruits of God's spiritual harvest under the New Covenant began. Today that harvest continues as people continue to be saved, but there is also another coming harvest whereby God will again turn His attention back to Israel so that "all of Israel will be saved."

- And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. 11:26).

LEVITICUS 23:18-19

Present with the Bread Seven Lambs One Bull and Two Rams.

- **Leviticus 23:18-19:** And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

The additional sacrifices for the feast day consisted of two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, which were a burnt offering, and of a goat as a sin offering (this is repeated in (Num. 28:26-27) (Num. 28:30). Besides the two bullocks, the ram, the seven lambs and the goat they were to offer a grain and drink offering.

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Two wave loaves of two tenth of an ephah: (v17) one ephah is around 13kg, which means each loaf weighed around 2½kg. These loaves were made of fine wheat flour. The loaves used at the Feast of Unleavened Bread were unleavened, whereas the loaves used here at Pentecost were leavened. Following are three possible reasons for this:

1. The Passover loaves were a memorial of the bread that was not mixed with leaven, because the people had to hastily depart from Egypt.
2. The Passover Feast also foreshadowed Christ the true Passover Lamb of God without blemish.
3. The bread of Pentecost signified the outpouring of the firstfruits of the Spirit upon Gentiles.

LEVITICUS 23:19

Offer One Goat for a Sin Offering, Two Lambs for Peace Offerings.

- **Leviticus 23:19:** And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings.

As well as the two bullocks, the ram the lamb and the grain and drink offerings the people were to offer a goat for a sin offering and two lambs for a peace offering. In Leviticus chapter four the sin-offering for the people is a bullock.

- When the sin which they (the whole congregation of Israel) have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 4:14).

But here it is a goat, the reason for the difference maybe, because the bullock was for some unintentional sin that the whole congregation of Israel had committed before the LORD, became known, whereas the goat here covers all individual sins (i.e., not a collective sin against the LORD), but general sins of the people. The goats for a sin offering symbolised the innocent dying for the guilty and foreshadowed Christ, who laid down his life as an offering for sin, so that all believers could enjoy the fruits and blessings of God's divine grace.

LEVITICUS 23:20-21

The Priest shall Wave them with the Bread of the Firstfruits

- **Leviticus 23:20-21:** And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹And you shall make proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work (servile work in KJV). It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits, this does not mean that the priest waved the whole animal, since they would be too large and far too heavy, but that he waved some part of them with the bread of the firstfruits in the name of the whole offering. Similar, to when the priest waved the shoulder and breast before the LORD of other sacrifices. The part that the priest did wave, was considered most holy and was for the priest to eat as it was in other offerings.

On the same day you shall hold a holy convocation: (v21) the fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks) was to be a Sabbath Day, a day of holy convocation, in which they were to do no ordinary work (servile work in KJV). The word servile comes from the Hebrew word (*`abodah* from *`abad*), it embraces work and labour of any kind and in any sense and by implication means, to serve, to enslave and to be kept in bondage. The English Dictionary defines servile work as work that is willing done to please others, and is, especially characteristic of slaves, servants and those in menial positions or forced labour.

When the Bible forbids servile work, it means that slaves and servants are not to be forced to do any work for no one is to work on a Sabbath Day. In contrast to the word "work," comes from the Hebrew word (*m^ela'kah*) meaning deputyship (i.e. ministry), but generally refers to employment, labour and work, (never servile), such as business, farming cattle and sheep etc., industrious work, building things and such like labour and work.

They were to hold a holy convocation:

1. Partly in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, by bringing them to Sinai the mountain of God as He had promised
 2. Partly for forming them into a commonwealth under His own immediate government
 3. Partly in gratitude and thanksgiving for their barley and wheat harvest and all other blessings.
 4. Partly to thank the LORD for bringing them to Mount Sinai and giving them the law, it, interesting to notice that it is was on the day of Pentecost that the apostles of Christ, especially Peter proclaimed the word of the Lord and the Gospel from Jerusalem and it went out to all nations.
- Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. (Acts 2:14).

It is a statute forever throughout your generations: (v21) the Israelites to this day sacredly keep this festival, however, the greater prominence is given to honouring and celebrating the giving of the Law on Sinai, rather than to the harvest of the land. This is most likely a natural transformation since reaping a harvest in our modern age is not the same or as clear cut as it was in ancient times. This matters little, since Christ's death and resurrection abolished all these feasts and their sacrifices. Nevertheless, they adorn their synagogues and private houses with flowers and various herbs and the male members purify themselves for its celebration by immersion and confessing sin, and many spend all night in places of worship.

LEVITICUS 23:22

You shall Not Reap Your Field Right Up to its Edge.

- **Leviticus 23:22:** "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge (make clean riddance of the corners in KJV), nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God."

In, the midst of rejoicing and thankfulness to God for a bountiful harvest, Israel was to consider the poor and needy so that they could have a share in what the land produced. This duty applied to every person who had a harvest to reap, it shows that for Israel's devotion and worship to God to be fully accepted by him, their worship should be accompanied with acts of charity. This law was previously mentioned in chapter nineteen:

- When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. (Lev. 19:9).

It is no doubt repeated here to remind all who owned farmlands ready to harvest to show charity and to instruct all their workers of the harvest not to reap their fields to the edges or gather up any of the grain, kernels or sheaves that fell to the ground or out of their wagons and baskets. This law, applied to the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and the beginning of the year, and the day of Atonement. It teaches when Israel came together to express their thankfulness to God, they should at the same time show charity to the poor.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

LEVITICUS 23:23-25

You shall Observe a Memorial Proclaimed with Blast of Trumpets.

- **Leviticus 23:23-25:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets (blowing of trumpets in KJV), a holy convocation. ²⁵You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD."

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel," this embraces all the people of Israel, the priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and servants and all families. Since Moses could not speak to the entire nation at the same time, he most likely spoke to the priests and elders who then spoke to the heads of their tribes who then spoke to the heads of the families and in this manner the laws of the LORD would have been spread throughout the nation.

In the seventh month: called Tisri, the seventh Jewish month, in the Old Testament it is also called Ethanim: -

- All the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. (1 Kings 8:2).

But, in later times was called Tisri. The first day of the seventh month was a Sabbath a memorial of blowing of trumpets Following are the three different views concerning the first day of the seventh month.

1. It was the first day of the festival of the New year.
2. It was a commemoration of the Creation of the world.
3. It was the anniversary of the giving of the Law.

The seventh month was very memorable for the following holy feasts:

- On the first day, the Feasts of Trumpets was held.
- On the tenth day, the Day of Atonement was held.
- On the fifteenth day, the Feast of Tabernacles began.

These are three major Feasts, therefore the sounding of the trumpets being prior to these Feasts may well have been to put the people in mind to prepare for the Day of Atonement which was near at hand (nine days away), with this in mind some believe that the sound of the trumpets was to strike the people with fear to motivate them to repentance and make right what was wrong, so that they would be ready for the Day of Atonement. Some commentators feel that this was a figure of the ministry of John the Baptist and the Gospel which awakens sinners to a sense of their sin and danger and calls them to repentance for the remission of sins and atonement, and afterward, hearing the joyful sound of God's love, grace, mercy, peace and pardon and receiving righteousness that leads to salvation through faith in Christ.

The Seven Feasts: may be divided into two groups of "four" and "three." The first group includes the following four feasts:

1. Feast of Passover.
2. Feasts of Unleavened Bread.
3. Feast of First-Fruits.
4. Feast of Pentecost.

Then there was an interval of four months, and in the seventh month they were followed by the following three feasts:

1. Feasts of Trumpets (the first day).
2. Day of Atonement (the tenth day).
3. Tabernacles (the fifteenth day).

The three great festivals were the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. They extended from the 14th day of the first month to the 22nd day of the seventh month.

With a blast of trumpets (blowing of trumpets in KJV): (v24) the first day of the seventh month Tisri was a memorial announced with a blowing of trumpets. It is said that they began blowing the trumpets at sunrise in the city of Jerusalem as well as in all cities, towns, villages of Israel. What this blowing of trumpets was a memorial of is not easy to say, since there is no specific reason given for blowing the trumpets, following are some of the most common thoughts:

1. The trumpets were sounded to call to the mind of Gods people Israel to the Creator of the world and the One who gave birth to their nation. Rabbinic Judaism teaches that on the Feast of Trumpets God created the heavens and the earth and that it was on this occasion that all the sons of God shouted for joy.

- When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:7).
2. The trumpets were sounded in memory of the wars the people of Israel had with their enemies, the Amalekites and Canaanites, and the victories they obtained over them, especially in remembrance of the walls of Jericho falling-down at the sound of trumpets.
 3. The trumpets were sounded to call to mind Abraham's binding of Isaac and his being delivered through a ram that was sacrificed in his place, recorded in Genesis chapter twenty-one and chapter twenty-two, and because of this, it is said by some, that the trumpets blown were made of rams' horns.
 4. The trumpets were sounded to call the men of Israel together to offer thanks for the mercy and blessings of the previous year, and for the barley and wheat, the oil and the wine that they had previously gathered, and for the expected blessing to come in the following year.
 5. The trumpets were sounded to warn the people to prepare themselves for the seventh month feasts and Sabbaths, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Booths (also called Tabernacles) and bring them to an awareness of sin and encourage them to repent and turn from their sinful ways.
 6. The trumpets were sounded to put a special honour upon this seventh month, for it had more feasts and Sabbaths in this single month than in any other month, so in the same way that the seventh day was a Sabbath and the seventh year was a Sabbatical year, likewise the seventh month was a kind of Sabbatical month.
 7. The trumpets were sounded to call the people to rise-up from their spiritual lethargy and search their hearts and amend their ways and lay aside all their worldly business, that they might be fully given over to the LORD and hear His voice.
 8. The trumpets were sounded to alert the people to prepare themselves for the Day of Atonement (the most important day of the year) which followed nine days later, for it was a day that required the full focus of the mind and called for the humbling and repentance of the heart and invited the people to accept the salvation of God and become a separated people for Him (signified by the following feast of Tabernacles).
 9. The trumpets were sounded as a special and unique declaration to the LORD that the people of Israel had gathered together in gladness for the following appointed feasts, and to offer their sacrifices, their peace offerings and thanksgiving. (Num. 10:10).

From the time of the second temple the Feast of Trumpets has been called "the Festival of New Year." Today the Feast of Trumpets has largely been overshadowed by the rabbinic practices and the association with the new practice of Rosh Hashanah. Very few Jewish people call this day "the Feast of Trumpets," but rather, "Rosh Hashanah," which literally means "the head of the year," because they believe that God created the heavens and the earth on this day. For this reason, the feast of trumpets has become known as the beginning of the Jewish civil year.

Judaism has two calendars, a religious and civil new year. However, God only gave Israel one calendar and that is expressly stated in the book of Exodus. The day the people fled Egypt in haste after they had put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts (Exod. 12:6-7) and the LORD had passed through the land of Egypt, and struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, (Exod. 12:12-13), the LORD said to Moses and Aaron:

- This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. (Exod. 12:1-2).

This first month Abib (also called Nisan) (our February/March) is the only month God declared to be Israel's first month, which means that the month Tishrei (our August/ September) is clearly the seventh month and not the first.

A day of solemn rest, (a Sabbath in KJV) a holy convocation: (v24) the first day of the seventh month was a Sabbath in which they were not to do any ordinary work (no servile work in KJV) (v25). Servile work (ordinary work in modern Bibles). The word servile comes from the Hebrew word (*`abodah from `abad*), it embraces work and labour of any kind and in any sense and by implication means, to serve, to enslave and to be kept in bondage. The English Dictionary defines servile work as work that is willing done to please others, and is, especially characteristic of slaves, servants and those in menial positions or forced labour. When the Bible forbids servile work, it means that slaves and servants are not to be forced to do any work for no one is to work on a Sabbath Day. In contrast to the word "work," comes from the Hebrew word (*m^ela'kah*) meaning deputyship (i.e. ministry), but generally refers to employment, labour and work, (never servile), such as business, farming cattle and sheep etc., industrious work, building things and such like labour and work.

Trumpets and Christs return: it is interesting to notice in the Old Testament, that God's people Israel hear the blast of the trumpets and are called to the Day of Atonement, the day of salvation. In the New Testament, Christ's people hear the blast of the last trumpet and those who are alive and those who are sleeping in Christ are called to rise from the dead to immortality and enter Christ's millennial Kingdom age.

- Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

LEVITICUS 23:26-32

A Day of Atonement, to Make Atonement for You Before the LORD.

- **Leviticus 23:26-32:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷"Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. ²⁸And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³²It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath."

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel," this embraces all the people of Israel, the priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and servants and all families. Since Moses could not speak to the entire nation at the same time, he most likely spoke to the priests and elders who then spoke to the heads of their tribes who then spoke to the heads of the families and in this manner the laws of the LORD would have been spread throughout the nation. Based upon the following verse some sceptics claim that the Bible contradicts itself, because it claims that the Day of Atonement was on the ninth day.

- It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath." (Leviticus 23:32).

This may seem to be a contradiction to some, but it is easily explained since the Day of Atonement began in the evening (i.e., from sunset of the ninth day of the seventh month Tisri (part of our September and October) and continued to the evening (i.e., sunset) of the tenth day. At the time of this month they had gathered in all their fruits and were most at leisure for God's service. The Day of Atonement was a day:

- In which the people of Israel were invited to rejoice in God and called out to separate themselves from all other nations, which is signified by the following feast of Tabernacles.
- To shake off spiritual lethargy, lay aside all forms of worldly business, repent and amend their ways so that it would truly be a day of penitence and compensation for them.
- To rejoice and make peace with God and express gratitude and thankfulness for the blessings of the previous year and the year to come and set themselves aside from their normal duties of life for prayer and meditation upon their salvation and hear the voice of God, His priests and prophets more clearly.
- To make restitution and recompense, for any wrong they had done to others and for any injury and shame they had brought upon the LORD their God. It was a day for Israel to become united and reconciled to the LORD their God.

You shall afflict yourselves: (v27) the word afflict comes from the Hebrew word (*`anah*), it carries the idea of looking down and browbeating oneself, and to depress self, abase-self, afflict-self, chasten-self and humble-self. It does not mean that God's people should physically inflict pain on their bodies, as some do today by whipping their back until it bleeds or crawling on their knees to a place of prayer and arriving with blood flowing down their legs and such like things, but that they should fast and earnestly repent for their own sins and the sins of the nation and forsake their sinful ways and make amends where possible. The following verses clearly show that the expression, "You shall afflict yourselves," refers to fasting:

- But I, when they were sick—I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. (Psalm 35:13).
- Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves (afflicted our soul in KJV), and you take no knowledge of it? Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. (Isaiah 58:3).
- Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? (afflict his soul in KJV) Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD? (Isaiah 58:5).
- If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. (Isaiah 58:10).

The fast (the abstinence of food, including drink (except for water), humbling oneself, submitting to God and grieving over sin) some Jewish writers add, by abstaining from washing, the use of the bed and the wearing of sandals lasted from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day. It is rigorously kept by Jews to this day. Exceptions were made and still are made in the case of pregnant women, invalids and children.

You shall afflict yourselves (v29), not only embraces abstinence from food, but also means an abstinence from all kinds of secular and worldly work, it means that all places of business, trading, markets and any other practise or work that is intended to make money must be shut down for the entire day. (Lev. 23:27-31) (Num. 29:7). They were to prepare their food the day before and not to plant or plough their fields or prune their vineyards. Not only were the people of Israel and all proselytes to cease

from work, but so too were all servants and slaves for the day was to be a complete day of rest, so that they would be able to give complete focus to the worship of God and diligent attendance to His service. The Old Testament command, "to cess from work on the Day of Atonement," perfectly signifies the message of the Gospel of grace for Christians today for it proclaims:

- For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (Gal. 3:10-11).

For sinners to be saved, they must cease from dependence and trust in their own works of righteousness and by faith trust in Christ's righteousness. In this same chapter Paul tells us that the Old Testament ceremonial laws were:

- A guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,²⁶ for in Christ Jesus we are all sons of God, through faith. (Gal. 3:24-25).

Whoever is not afflicted will be cut off from his people: (v29) violation of this day incurred the severest penalty. The expression, "will be cut off," in Hebrew comes from the word (*karath*) and means cut off, cut down, cast asunder, and by implication to consume and destroy. It carries two ideas, firstly to be excommunicated from the people and secondly, to be put to death, since both are valid, we will look at them separately:

1. **To be excommunicated:** the following verses clearly show that the expression, "to be cut off from the people in some context," carries the idea that the people of Israel were to immediately:

- Excommunicate the offending person and treat them as an outlaw, not a friend.
- Deny them of all the privileges of the nation Israel.
- Remove them from their land, their home, their business and from their people.
- No longer consider them to be a person in a covenant relationship with the LORD.

2. **To be put to death:** the following verses clearly show that the expression, "to be cut off from the people in some context," is a Jewish idiom meaning to be put to death by stoning at the hand of the people or by capital punishment at the hand of a civil magistrate.

- I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood, to destroy the earth. (Genesis 9:11).

Since all mankind was killed by the flood except for Noah and his family the expression, "to be cut off," in this context carries the idea of being killed.

- You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes (defiles in KJV) it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. (Exod. 31:14).

In this verse the expression, "put to death," refers those who profane the Sabbath day while the statement, "to be cut off," refers to those who work on the Sabbath day, however, (Num. 15:30-36) shows that those who did work on the Sabbath day were to be put to death. In Leviticus chapter eighteen the expression, "shall be cut off," is used as the punishment for various crimes that various laws laid down in

Leviticus chapter twenty are to be punished with death. All these facts show that in certain contexts the expression, "to be cut off from the people," is a Jewish idiom meaning, to be put to death.

Overview: depending upon the nature of the offence or crime the expression, "to be cut off," can be taken to mean, to be cut off from the people of Israel and denied all privileges or to be literally put to death. Concerning the Day of Atonement, the following verses show that the penalty for any Israelite to do any work on the unique and sacred day was that the LORD would destroy them from among their people. (Lev. 23:26-29). The word destroy here comes from the Hebrew word (*'abad*) meaning, to wander away, to lose oneself, and by implication to perish, to break, to fail, to lose and to flee.

The repeating of the sacrifices: (v29) showed the following three things:

1. The body and blood of animals was insufficient in making permanent atonement.
 2. As, long as we dwell in our fallen sinful body, we will continually need atonement until we arrive where all tears, even those of repentance, will be wiped from our eyes.
 3. Such atonement could only be achieved by offering up the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Heb. 10:1-4).

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These verses show that the sacrifices of bulls and goats etc., could not take away sin, or cleanse the conscience from it, but acted as a shadow of the perfect sacrifice to come, the Lamb of God without blemish, the Saviour of the world the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

Some ask the question, "If Israel's sins were forgiven on the Day of Atonement every year, why did they need to offer sacrifices for their sins during the year. The answer to this, is that the sins that were covered on the Day of Atonement, were the collective sins Israel had committed as a nation, whereas the sacrifices individuals brought to the priest to be offered for sin, was for their own personal sins.

You shall do no manner of work: (v31) due to the great importance of this day and the seriousness of the punishment, the command to abstain from all forms of work is repeated to impress it more effectually upon the minds of the people and magnify how strictly God required this day to be kept and how much care they should take to keep it. This is, why they prepared everything on the ninth day and finished prior to sunset of the tenth day. There would have been no need to prepare food since it was a day of fasting. In Leviticus chapter sixteen we read:

- It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. ³²And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments. ³³He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." And Moses did as the LORD commanded him. (Lev. 16:31-34).

The high priest who was anointed and consecrated in his father's place, wearing the holy linen garments was to make atonement for the:

- The holy sanctuary and the tent of meeting.
- The brazen altar, the priests and the people.

Because of all Israel's sins this day of atonement was to be a statute forever for the people of Israel once every year. The order of the ceremony required that atonement should first be made for:

1. The high priest.
2. The Most Holy Place with the mercy-seat.
3. The Holy Place with the golden altar of incense.
4. The brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court. (v20, 33).
5. The people.

It is said that at the end of this ceremony the high priest in the presence of all the congregation would pronounce the following eight benedictions:

1. Blessings on God's divine law.
2. Blessings on Jerusalem.
3. Blessings on the Temple.
4. Blessings on Israel.
5. Blessings on the confession of the high priest.
6. Blessings on the priesthood.
7. Blessings on the people.
8. Blessings on the forgiveness of sins.

It is a statute forever throughout your generations: (v31), this included, those who were born of Hebrew blood, the stranger who sojourned amongst them, the foreigners of non-Jewish descent who had renounced idolatry and false gods, and voluntarily accepted the God and the faith of the Israelites and as such were under the blessing and protection of the nation of Israel and bound to obey the LORD's statutes, laws and commands. The day was to be held as a holy convocation a Sabbath Day or rest, not just at the national sanctuary and the city of Jerusalem, but in all their dwellings places, throughout all their cities, towns, villages farms and lands. All work of all types including the work of servants and slaves was to cease, so the day could be set aside for the whole nation to focus on God, unto the coming of the Messiah, who, by the atoning sacrifice of himself, would fulfil this law and put an end to it. The Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) (called the Sabbath of Sabbaths by the Jews) is the most solemn and important holy day of the Jewish calendar, in the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement was the day the high priest made reconciliation between the people and God, by offering an atoning sacrifice for their sins. Various pockets of Christians today keep the Jewish Holy day Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) by ceasing from all forms of work and commemorating it with a day of fasting.

Jesus the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement: the book of Hebrews tells us that after Jesus resurrection he took his own blood into the heavenly Holy of Holies and made atonement once and for all (Heb 9 v12). When Jesus breathed his last breath on the bloodstained cross of Calvary, the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the people was torn in two, from top to bottom, showing that access into God's presence had been made available to all nations.

- Behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matt. 27:51) (Mark. 15:38)

THE FEASTS OF BOOTHS (TABERNACLES IN KJV)

LEVITICUS 23:33-36

On the Fifteenth Day of the Seventh Month is the Feast of Booths.

- **Leviticus 23:33-36:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths (tabernacles in KJV) to the LORD. ³⁵On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ³⁶For seven days you shall present food offerings (an offering made by fire in KJV) to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel," this embraces all the people of Israel, the priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and servants and all families. Since Moses could not speak to the entire nation at the same time, he most likely spoke to the priests and elders who then spoke to the heads of their tribes who then spoke to the heads of the families and in this manner the laws of the LORD would have been spread throughout the nation. The fifteenth day of this seventh month (Tishri), corresponds to the end of our September and the beginning of October, and only four days after the Day of Atonement. It is called the Feast of Booths in the English Standard Bible and the Feast of Tabernacles in King James Bible.

The construction of the Booths/Tabernacles: we are not given any direction here as to how and these Booths were to be made or where they would be set up. However, after Israel's return from their seventy-year captivity in Babylon, the heads of the tribes with the priests and the Levites, went to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law and found it was written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that it should be proclaimed it and publish in Jerusalem and all the cities and towns of Israel. After reading this the heads of the tribes, the priests, the Levites and Ezra said to the people:

- Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Nehemiah 8:13-18).

All the people who had returned from the seventy-year Babylonian captivity made booths using branches of olive, myrtle and palm trees and any other leafy trees that could be thatched together to make booths. They set them up:

- On their flat roof tops and in the courts and squares of their cities
- In the courts of the House of God (Neh. 8:17-18), and in the square at the Water Gate of Jerusalem (a large area near the water supply).

In the square at the Gate of Ephraim (one of the gates of Jerusalem) (2 Kings 14:13) (2 Chron. 25:23), on the side of the city looking toward Ephraim, the north side. The image here is of all the people of Israel setting up hundreds of booths throughout the land of Israel and living in them for the seven days of the feast and the eighth day of solemn

assembly. A good way to get some idea of what this would look like, is to imagine today's modern refugee camps in which thousands of dome-like tents are set up. From the first day to the last day, the high priest would read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Neh. 8:17-18). The Israelites would finish erecting their Booths on the fourteenth day of the seventh month, the day before the Day of Atonement, which was called the day of preparation. The pilgrims would come up to Jerusalem, just prior to the beginning of the Day of Atonement.

Nine facts concerning the feast:

1. Offerings were made on the altar every day, which meant it could only be celebrated at the tabernacle (later the temple).
2. The people were to dwell in booths for the whole period of the festival.
3. Booths were erected on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets and in fields.
4. The Booths were made from the branches of the citron tree, the palm, the myrtle and the willow, and any other leafy tree.
5. It was principally to remind the people of the time when they had no dwellings in the wilderness,
 - You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. (Lev. 23:43).
6. It was a day to bless God for His protection that He gave them during their wilderness journeys.
7. All the harvests of the year had been completely brought in.
8. They were to give thanks for the fruits and produce of their land that they had now gathered in. (Lev. 23:39).
9. To commemorate their forefathers dwelling in booths in open fields, wastelands and deserts; during their forty years' journeying in the wilderness when the LORD brought them out of the land of Egypt (Lev. 23:43). Whereas they are now dwelling in spacious cities, fortified towns, and houses; and in possession of various kingdoms and nations in the land of Canaan

For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD: (v36) the book of Numbers lays out the following animals to be sacrificed on each of the seven-days of the feast of Booths (Num. 29:12-38).

1. **On the fifteenth day:** of the seventh month they were to offer, thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering.
2. **On the sixteenth day:** twelve bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering
3. **On the seventeenth day:** eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat.
4. **On the eighteenth day:** ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering.
5. **On the ninetieth day:** nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering.
6. **On the twentieth day:** eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering.

7. **On the twenty first day:** seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs and one male goat for a sin offering.
8. **On the eighth day:** one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish and one male goat for a sin offering.

You shall present food offerings (an offering made by fire in KJV): (v36) on each of the seven days they were to offer to the LORD an offering made, by fire, this simply means they were to offer sacrifices on the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court.

NOTE: each of the bulls, the rams and the male lambs were to have a grain and drink offering in the prescribed quantities accompany them. The male goat for the sin offering, was not offered with a grain or drink offering (sin was not something to be celebrated or feasted over). The regular daily burnt offerings such as the morning and evening sacrifices with their grain and its drink offerings continued to be offered during the seven days of the feast of Booths.

OVERVIEW

The following verses are an overview of all that has been previously said.

- **Leviticus 23:37-44:** "These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the LORD food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day, ³⁸besides the LORD's Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD. ³⁹"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, (goodly trees in KJV), branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. ⁴¹You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴²You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites (all that are Israelites born in KJV) shall dwell in booths, ⁴³that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God." ⁴⁴Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD.

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These are the appointed feasts of the LORD: (v37) referring to the seven festivals previously named:

1. The LORD's Passover.
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread.
3. The Feast of Firstfruits of the harvest.
4. The Feast of Pentecost.
5. The Feast of Trumpets.
6. The Day of Atonement.
7. The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles.

The festivals conclude with the following words they were introduced with:

- "These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them." (Lev. 23:4).

Besides the LORD's Sabbaths: (v38) the sacrifices to be offered for each of these seven festivals are to be in addition to:

- The sacrifices that are appointed to be offered on each weekly Sabbath.

- The vow and voluntary and free-will-offerings that every individual brought to the priest to offer to the LORD.
- What they freely gave to the priests over and above their first-fruits and tithes and anything else they were commanded to offer.

No Sabbath sacrifice was diminished, because of the addition of other offerings and sacrifices. When any of the Feasts fell on a weekly Sabbath, it did not hinder the observance of the offerings that the people were commanded to offer on the Sabbath Day. Sabbath Day offerings and sacrifices were not to be omitted or diminished on the account of any Feast Day.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month: (v39) this is not a new addition but a repetition of the previous laws that have been covered in detail earlier in this chapter. The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles is here reintroduced, after the mention of it in (v34-36). The seventh month of Tisri was observed:

- To give thanks for the fruits of the earth that Israel had gathered in.
- To acknowledge the bounties of the LORD and express their gratitude to God who had blessed them with the harvest of the seed they had sown in their fields.
- To remind them of that time when they dwelt in booths in the wilderness, when the LORD brought them out of the land of Egypt. (Lev. 23:43).

On the fifteenth day when you have gathered in the produce: (v39), referring to the fruit of the land that ripens in the seventh month (the autumnal season), such as the grain of wheat and barley and the oil of olives and vintage of wine and fruits of their trees and vines of all kinds, which completed the harvest. This is, why this festival of Booths/Tabernacles is also called "The Feast of Ingathering"

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- You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. (Exod. 23:16).
- You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. (Exod. 34:22).

Fruit, branches, willows and leaves of splendid trees (goodly trees in KJV): (v40) the word "boughs," (v40) comes from the Hebrew word (*`anaph*) meaning to cover (i.e., to cover with twigs (as covering the limbs). The splendid and goodly trees refer to those spoken of in the following verses:

- They should proclaim it (that the people of Israel should dwell in booths) and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." (Neh. 8:15).

The expression, "splendid trees," carries the idea of trees that have beautiful green leaves that spread out, making them good for shade, and have leaves that thickly cover the wood of the branch and branches that are covered with three or more living shoots. From these they not only made their Booths, but also bound some of the branches of the olive, the myrtle, the palm, the willow and other leafy trees with their broad leaves and living shoots together to form one bundle, called, "lulabs" which is the traditional Jewish name given to the whole bundle. The people would carry these festive "lulabs" in their hands and wave them to and fro on this Sabbath eighth day. Pilgrims while standing or marching before the priests would hold the palms (lulabs), and wave them to and fro, while singing lyrics such as:

- Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!

- The LORD is on my side as my helper; refuge, my strength and my song.
- He has become my glad song of salvation, I shall not die, but I shall live.
- You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.
- Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! (Taken from Psalm one-hundred and eighteen).

When the song was finished, the priests in procession went around the altar once, exclaiming, "Hosanna, O Lord, give us help, O Lord! give prosperity!"

- Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! (Psalm 118:25).

When this solemn benediction was pronounced by the priests, the people dispersed amidst the repeated exclamations, "How beautiful art thou, O altar!" It is this part of the ritual which explains the welcome that the multitude gave Christ when they went to meet Him with palm-branches and shouts of hosanna.

- Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:8-9).
- When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant. (Matt. 21:15).
- The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" (John 12:12-13).

All native Israelites (all that are Israelites born in KJV) shall dwell in booths: (v42) this command shows that this seven-day feast was for those born an Israelite, and those who had forsaken their gods to embrace the law of Moses and their God (i.e., proselytes). Some Jewish writers say that this applies to all the males in Israel, including male children that do not need their mothers, but were old enough to sit in the shade and bless their Creator, and that women and servants, and the sick and those who nursed them were free from dwelling in booths. Dwelling in booths for seven days was a very appropriate symbol of the forty years Israel abode in tents in the wilderness.

Moses declared to Israel all the appointed feasts of the LORD: (v44) in accordance with the following command that Moses received at the beginning of this chapter:

- Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, these are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts. (Leviticus 23:2).

Moses in this chapter explains to the children of Israel the number of feasts and their purposes, the sacrifices and offerings and every sacred detail concerning these festivals, which means that the words, "Moses declared to Israel all the appointed feasts," is a very fitting conclusion to the whole chapter. Some say that New Testament Christians have good reason to be thankful since they do not have to keep these feasts of the LORD, which interrupted the daily life of every Israelite. This is certainly a true statement for Christians living in the world today. However, when the nation had a faithful king all the laws concerning Israel and their work were designed to allow for these annual feasts, and for the faithful there

would have been great excitement knowing a week was approaching in which they could separate themselves from the mundane duties of life to come together and spend a week of fellowship with other faithful believers to worship the LORD.

THE EIGHTH DAY

You shall dwell in booths seven days: verse thirty-six states:

- For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work. (Lev. 23:36)

And in verse forty-two we read:

- You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, (Leviticus 23:42)

The fact the people are told that they are to dwell in booths for only seven days implies that they were not obliged to dwell in them on the eighth day, which was a holy convocation, a Sabbath in which no servile work (ordinary work in modern Bibles) was to be done. (Lev. 23:36). This means that slaves and servants were not to be forced to do any work for no one was to do any work of any kind. It was a separate festival, when the temporary booths (belonging to camp life) that had been erected in the streets and gardens of Jerusalem, on the flat roofs of their houses and the surrounding towns, and villages were no longer used. This eighth day was a unique and special day by itself, a sort of an addition to the Feast of Booths (also called the feast of Tabernacles). It is certain they spent as much time as they could at the sanctuary and in fellowship and in worship, meditation and prayer to give thanks for the ingathering of the harvest of their land. (Lev. 23:39). According to the Jewish writers, as they went out of their Booths they would say:

- May it be the will of God that we may be worthy the next year to dwell in the Booth of Feast with the Messiah in the world to come.

During the eight days the Priest would read from the Book of the Law of God:

- All the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Nehemiah 8:17-18).

The eighth day finished the seven-day Feast of Booths and brought about the conclusion of the whole cycle of Feasts. Though strictly speaking the eighth day was separate too the seven days of the feast of Booths, in a larger sense, it belonged with these seven days, and is called the great day of the feast in the New Testament:

- On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37).

Today the Jews observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) for seven days.

- The first day is a full holiday, on which they abstain from work.
- The following five days are considered intermediary and half holidays.
- The seventh and last day is called, "Hoshana Rabba" and is a half-holiday

- The eighth day is called, "Shemini Atzeret," it is thought of as the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles and generally considered an independent and separate holiday to the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles.

The meaning of the number eight: the name of the festival, "Shemini Atzeret," means "The Eighth Assembly." It signifies the final holy day of God's Holy Day Plan. The seventh day was the day of completion and rest, so it naturally follows that the eighth day is over and above this perfect completion of days and signifies the first of the new world. Sunday is the first day of the week and Saturday the Sabbath the seventh and last day of the week, which completes and perfects the end of the week, which, means eight signifies the beginning of the new week and symbolize a new beginning. Following are some biblical examples supporting this idea. Peter tells us, there were eight people in the Ark of Noah, who began the New World after the flood:

- Because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (1 Peter 3:20).

In Ezekiel's vision of the future temple he sees seven steps leading into the outer court (Ezek.40:22, 26); and eight steps leading from the outer court into the inner court (Ezek.40:31, 34, 37). The first seven led to service for the Lord, while the eight steps leading into the inner court lead to intimate fellowship with God and pure worship! The consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests of God required seven days of being set apart (Lev.8:35), but it was on the "eighth day" that they were anointed as "priests," thus beginning a "new" ministry and office before God and the people.

- At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded." (Lev. 8:35).
- On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, ²and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. (Lev. 9:1-2).

David was the eighth son of Jesse, which means he was the beginning of a new dynasty in Israel when he became king (I Sam.16:10-11) (2 Sam.7:12). Eight in the following verses show that eight is connected to an entirely new order of things, signifying the resurrection and the New Kingdom Age to come.

- God did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, (the eighth person in KJV) a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2 Peter 2:5).

Noah stepped out of the Ark onto a new earth to establish a new world and commence a new order of things. Altogether eight people passed through the flood to the new establish the world.

- They (the old world) did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (1 Peter 3:20)

Added to the above, circumcision was to be performed on the eighth day.

- He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, (Gen. 17:12).

The first-born was to be given to Jehovah on the eighth day.

- You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. ³⁰You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me. (Exod. 22:29-30).

Four Possible Symbolisms of the Eighth Day.

1. Unlike the feast of Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles there are no outward rituals or symbols connected with the final eighth day festival, which may signify that the eighth day surpasses ritual and sacrifice and transcends from corrupt earthly things that can be seen to heavenly things which cannot be seen or corrupted, which beautifully pictures the Gospel of grace and believers moving from visible outward acts to earn salvation to the invisible inward act of faith. The apostle Paul wrote:
 - As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18).
2. The eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles completes harvest festival of the major feasts, Trumpets, Atonement and Booths/Tabernacles and the final day of harvesting and ingathering it beautifully signify the completion of God's plan of salvation for all mankind.
3. The eighth day of the Feast of Booths (also called feast of Tabernacles) occurs after all the major Feasts have been completed and right at the end of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the last of the seven Feasts. The eighth day immediately follows this last seventh day and begins a New Sabbath and holy convocation, which beautifully pictures the end of the church age and the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ (Rev.20:4; Isa.11).
4. The eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles celebrates the final days of harvest and ingathering of good and healthy fruit, signifying the final spiritual harvest to be reaped on earth, which beautifully pictures the Great White Throne judgment, when all those who ever lived are resurrected and judged according to their works (Rev.20:11-15).

The eighth day, the Holy City, New Jerusalem and the Great White Throne Judgement: The Feast of trumpets is a call to repentance, which is followed by the Day of Atonement, prophetically picturing a great and unique day of salvation or day of judgment (depending upon a person's standing before God) when God descends on a Great White Throne to judge the world. The Day of Atonement is followed by the seven-day Feast of Ingathering (Booths), which beautifully pictures eternity in all its perfect fulness. The apostle John in his vision saw:

- A new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW." (Rev. 21:1-5).

John then describes this magnificent "Holy City," the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal, with a great, high wall, with twelve gates and inscribed on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. The wall also had twelve foundations, with the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:10-16). The twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve names of the apostles signifies Jews and Gentiles in Christ that were raised in the first resurrection dwelling in this magnificent celestial, eternal Holy City of God, with the Father and the Son. People from all nations of the world that will be counted worthy at the universal Great White Throne Judgement, represented by the seventh and final day of the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles and who are given immortality and eternal life will dwell outside the celestial, eternal Holy City standing, in the midst of the magnificent New Earth.

- By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (Rev. 21:24-26).

For further information concerning the celestial Holy city and the New Earth see:

- Revelation Chapter 21.

In Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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