

## **The Feasts of Israel**

### **Lesson Three - The Fall Feasts**

The redemptive work of Messiah's first coming, which the four spring feasts depict, is history. Men can look back at these events, and they can be examined by historical facts. The three fall feasts have not been fulfilled. They predict, with absolute certainty, events that will yet unfold. As the four spring feasts or holidays were fulfilled literally and right on schedule in connection with Messiah's first coming, the three fall holidays will likewise be fulfilled literally and right on schedule in connection with His Second Coming.

#### The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets is the first of the fall feasts. It occurs on the first day of the Hebrew month Tishri. This occurs at the New Moon when only the slightest crescent is visible. Thus, watchfulness was a critical ingredient of the feast. The rabbis later added a second day to this feast to make sure they did not miss it. This need for watchfulness and preparedness in connection with the Feast of Trumpets is echoed and reechoed throughout the New Testament in connection with the Second Coming of Messiah Jesus.

The Jewish people call the Feast of Trumpets Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah literally means, "head of the year" and is observed as start of the CIVIL year (in contrast to the religious year which starts just prior to Passover) on the Jewish calendar. However, this designation was never given to the Feast of Trumpets in the Bible. The idea of associating the Feast of Trumpets with the Jewish New Year began in the second century A.D. (shortly after the destruction of the Temple) and more than 1,500 years after its inception in the time of Moses. The Feast of Trumpets is so important in Jewish thinking that it stands along side Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement) to comprise what Judaism calls "the high holy days."

The interval of time between the last of the spring feasts (Pentecost) and the first of the fall feasts (Trumpets) corresponds to this present age. Put another way, we are presently living in Israel's fourth spring feast – Pentecost – and its fifth feast – Trumpets. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost commenced the Church Age; and Trumpets, which will signal Messiah's second coming to rapture the Church and judge the wicked, will end the church age, but not the age of Grace. God's grace will continue to be offered to men up until the end of the Tribulation. When Jesus comes back WITH THE CHURCH, He will judge the nations and begin the Millennium Age that will be a combination of Law and Grace. It will be ruled by Christ and the saints with a rod of iron for the wicked, but full of grace and glory to the repentant.

In Israel's religious ritual, she utilized two different kinds of trumpets. One was long and flared and made of silver (Numbers 10:2)

***Num 10:2 - Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shall thou make them: that you may use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.***

The other was a ram's horn and is called, in Hebrew, the *shofar*. It is this second instrument that is utilized in the elaborate service connected with the Feasts of Trumpets. The blowing of trumpets or a trumpet in ancient Israel had two primary functions. The first was to call a solemn assembly; that is, when the children of Israel were to be summoned to God's presence, the trumpet was blown.

***Exod 19:13-19 - There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.***

And second, when Israel, under divine direction, was to go to war, the trumpet was to be blown.

***Num 10:9 - And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.***

***Jer. 4:19-21 - My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.***

Joshua blew the shofar in the conquest at Jericho. Gideon blew the trumpet in the battle with the Midianites. Nehemiah commanded that the trumpet be blown in the event of attack when rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. <Neh. 4:18; Judges 7:18; Joshua 6:20>

The prophets of Israel repeatedly spoke of a future day when God would directly intervene in the affairs of men. They called that day "the DAY OF THE LORD." <Isa. 13:6-13; Ezek. 13:3-8; 30:2-3; Joel 1:15; 3:14-16; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:14-2:3; Zech. 14:1-4; Mal. 4:5-6> Two major themes associated with the day of the Lord is the deliverance of the righteous. The second is the judgment of the wicked. In connection with His coming, Messiah will call His own to Himself and then go to war with His enemies. It is the blowing of a trumpet that will signal those two events.

At the Rapture, the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout and the TRUMP OF GOD. When the trump sounds, we will be gathered and called to His presence. And then, as seen in 1 Thessalonians 5, the Day of the Lord will commence, during which time His wrath will be poured out upon the wicked. In most basic terms, the Feast of Trumpets – the first of the three fall feasts – depicts the Messiah coming to rapture the Church and judge the wicked

## The Day of Atonement

Whereas Trumpets occurred on the first day of the Hebrew month Tishri at the New Moon, the Day of Atonement occurred nine days later on the tenth of the month. The ten days from Trumpets through the Day of Atonement are known as the “days of awe.”

According to Jewish tradition, three books are opened in heaven on the Feast of Trumpets. One is the Book of Life for the righteous. The second is the Book of Life for the unrighteous. The third is the Book of Life for the in-between. If a man is deemed righteous, his name is written in the Book of Life for the righteous at the Feast of Trumpets. If a man is unrighteous, his name is written in the Book of Life for the unrighteous, and he will not survive the year. If a man is deemed in-between, judgment is delayed from the Feast of Trumpets to the Day of Atonement. It is during that period of time that he is given opportunity to repent before the book is closed and his destiny sealed.

The outpouring of the Lord’s wrath will take place after the Rapture, which is typified in the Feasts of Trumpets. At His physical return to the earth, many Jews who survived the Lord’s purging of the earth will be saved. The prophet Zechariah recorded this:

***Zech 12:9-10 - And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. .***

And Paul, in the context of a believing remnant from among the nation of Israel at the end of the age, wrote:

***Rom 11:25-26 - For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.***

But it will not only be Israel’s Day of Atonement. From among the nations of the world, many individuals will not take the mark of the Antichrist. And when the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, many will repent of the sins before the Book of Life is forever closed. The Lord has these Gentiles in mind in His Olivet Discourse. He taught:

***Matt 25:31-34 - When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.***

It is this multitude from among the nations, along with those from among the sons of Jacob, who will enter the Messianic Kingdom still in mortal bodies (as distinct from the raptured and glorified Church who will inhabit New Jerusalem)

## The Feast of Tabernacles

On the fifteenth of Tishri, the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles commences. It is the seventh and final feast. It usually occurs in October. Observant Jews erect little “huts” or “booths” from bulrushes as a reminder of the temporary housing erected by their forefathers during the Exodus wanderings. Samples of the fall crop are hung in each family’s booth to acknowledge God’s faithfulness in providing for His people.

Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles was filled with important festivity. Each day, the high priest of Israel, in a great processional made up of priests and tens of thousands of worshippers, descended from the Temple Mount to pause briefly at the Pool of Siloam. A pitcher was filled with water, and the procession continued via a different route back to the Temple Mount. Here, in the midst of great ceremony, the high priest poured the water out of the pitcher onto the brazen altar. In Israel, the rains usually stop in March, and there is no rain for almost seven months. If God does not provide the “early” rains in October and November, there will be no spring crop, and famine is at the doorstep. This ceremony, then, was intended to invoke God’s blessings on the nation so that He might provide life-giving water.

It is in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles that the Gospel of John records the great discourse of Christ concerning the Holy Spirit:

***John 7:37-39 - In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.***

The Son of God was saying in the clearest possibly way that HE ALONE was the source of life and blessing – that He could meet every need of the human heart. The Feast of Tabernacles speaks of the Messianic Kingdom – of a new beginning without the ravages of the curse of sin. In that day, the earth will give her full bounty, all animals will be docile, armies will no longer march, every man will sit under his own fig tree, and righteousness will become a reality in the earth. Some 1,500 years before the birth of the Messiah, the seven feasts

foretold, in type, the major redemptive works of His life. The four spring feasts related to His first coming. His death is predicted in the Passover; that His body would not decay and He would be a spotless sacrifice was seen in the Feast of Unleavened Bread; His resurrection is illustrated in the Feast of Firstfruits; and the commencement of the Church and New Covenant is typified in the Feast of Weeks.

The three fall festivals portray events associated with His Second Coming. The Feast of Trumpets depicts the Rapture of the Church. The Day of Atonement points to a great host of people, Jews and Gentiles, who will be saved when they see Him coming and appropriate the benefits of His death. The Feast of Tabernacles speaks of the day when the Messiah Himself will tabernacle among men, wipe away every tear, and bring in the utopian age or “golden age” of which man have dreamed since the dawn of time.

## The Feasts of Israel and the Church

Israel and the Church are distinct entities. The Church is not Israel, and Israel is not the Church. There are promises made to both. It is equally clear, however, that there is a contiguous relationship between Israel and the Church. Every blessing that the Church enjoys comes out of covenants and provisions that God made with Israel. Therefore, it should not seem strange or unusual that the feasts that the Lord gave to Israel are but shadows and types of what He is doing and plans to do in and through the Church of the Lord Jesus.

- *The Feast of Passover was given to Israel, but it depicts the Messiah’s death on Calvary for the sins of the world. It’s provision goes beyond Israel*
- *The Feast of Unleavened Bread was given to Israel, but it depicts the fact the Lord’s body would not decay in the grave. Again, crucial Church doctrine.*
- *The Feast of Firstfruits was given to Israel. However, it depicts the Lord’s triumphant resurrection. It is because He lives that believers will also live.*
- *The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was given to Israel, but it depicts the birth of the Church through the New Covenant. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles become one in the Messiah.*
- *The Abrahamic Covenant was made with the father of the Jewish nation. It is a source and wellspring of every blessing the church possesses.*
- *The Davidic Covenant was made with Israel’s king, but it is the basis of Messiah’s return as the Son of David and Lion of the tribe of Judah to take His rightful throne as the King of kings and Lord of lords.*
- *The New Covenant was made with Israel but the Church has entered into it (been grafted in) and its provision for salvation.*
- *The Lord’s Table was initiated with the elements of the Jewish Passover table with Jewish disciples, but it is one of the ordinances of the Church.*

- *The command to evangelize the world was given to eleven Jewish disciples, but it is commonly known as “the Great Commission of the Church.”*
- *The Church is built upon the “foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:20). The apostles were Jewish, the prophets were Jewish, and the Savior of the world was Jewish.*

**Excessive and forced dispensationalist views has, in attempts to defend some of it’s teaching, built a chasm between Israel and the Church that the Bible never sanctions. It is from this mentality that sprang the horrific events of 1939-1945. Hitler used much of the Church’s teaching (especially Luther) to defend his actions saying he was doing God a service by removing Jews from the universe. Don’t think it stopped with Hitler. The Anti-Semitic feeling in the church today rivals anything done by Hitler’s Germany in the 1940s. This spirit must be broken!!!!**

## Summary

Israel’s feasts are infinitely more important than just a series of cultural observances. The Lord appoints these feasts, and the Lord owns them. He calls them “MY FEASTS. The feasts of Leviticus 23 are also more than feasts in the sense of special occasions or holidays. Many have no food connected with them at all, and some are very somber in tone. The Hebrew word *moed* has more of a meaning of a “solemn appointed time.” These “feasts” in actuality are “appointments” or “set times” with the Lord. Some are appointed days, and some are appointed weeks. Collectively, the “feasts” of the Lord form the divine appointment calendar for the church, with Jerusalem as the meeting place.

*Isa 33:20-24 - Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us. Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.*