

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

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As we approach the season of the Fall Feasts of The Lord, it is good to remind ourselves that these Biblical Feasts are relevant to *all* believers. This month we recall and celebrate along with Jewish people everywhere the Feast of Trumpets, September 16th; the day of Atonement, September 25th and the Feast Of Tabernacles September 30th

God gave Israel seven feasts to celebrate each year. (See Leviticus 23 and Exodus 23) They seven feasts are:

- **Passover**
- **Unleavened Bread**
- **First Fruits**
- **Pentecost**
- **Trumpets**
- **Atonement**
- **Tabernacles**

Each of these feasts has a **triple application**

- They commemorate, or point to an event in Israel's history
- They point prophetically to a dimension of The Messiah, Jesus' redemptive Work
- They also point to a dimension of the believers' personal walk.

Jesus fulfilled in history what each of these Feasts symbolizes, and He fulfilled them on the exact day of the Feasts in the Hebrew calendar. This was one of the ways He fulfilled the law and the prophets" *"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."* (Matt. 5: 17)

Passover commemorates the emancipation of the people of Israel from Egypt. At the first Passover each family applied the blood of a slain lamb to their door post and by trusting in the blood of the Passover Lamb they survived the destruction that went through Egypt. God said *"And the blood shall be a sign to you upon the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And the plague shall not be upon you for destruction when I smite in the land of Egypt."* (Exodus 12:13) In this way they escaped a life of bondage and misery in Egypt and began to move towards a new destiny in the Land of Promise.

Jesus fulfilled this feast when He shed His blood on Calvary exactly on the Feast of Passover. He came to be the once for all Passover Lamb. John the Baptist introduced Him as the Lamb of God. *"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29) Jesus declared that the Passover was symbolic of Him and of His death. Believers are to remember the Passover not only as the emancipation from Egypt but

also the emancipation from sin and its power, which He accomplished by His eternal blood. At Passover He said: *"Do this in remembrance of me."* (Luke 22:19)

The Passover from Egypt and its fulfillment by Jesus are two historic facts. We experience our personal Passover when we activate the benefits of Jesus' redemption and put our personal faith in Him. The children of Israel were required to **individually** apply the blood to the doorpost of their homes. Similarly believers must **individually** put our faith in the blood of Yeshua for the remission of sins and for reconciliation with God the Father. When we put our faith on the finished work of Jesus on the Cross we are saved from our sins and justified. *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."* (Ephesians 1:7)

The Feast Of Unleavened Bread recalls that, after the application of the Passover blood, the Children of Israel left their lives in Egypt. They left behind their old lives to embrace their new destiny and because of their haste they had no time to permit the bread to rise.

On the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus lay dead in the tomb. Through His death, He broke our connection with our sinful Adamic life and inheritance and gave us a New Life.

We enter the personal reality of Unleavened Bread when (after our personal Passover) we leave behind our old sinful, Adamic way of living to embrace His call and destiny for our own lives. This is formalized by water baptism, which symbolizes our death to our old life just as the crossing of the Red Sea symbolized for the ancient Israelites, that they were finished with their old lives in Egypt.

Jesus bore the leaven of sin of all of us to remove it from our lives. We can now reckon our old, Adamic, sin dominated, man dead (Romans 6.6) and embrace our new destiny in God's Kingdom. Salvation is not only remission of sin but emancipation from our past sinful lives and embracing our new destiny in God.

The Feast Of First Fruits recalls the beginning of the new life, which the children of Israel began once they had left Pharaoh's dominion and had crossed the Red Sea. Jesus fulfilled this feast when He rose from the dead, exactly on the Feast of First Fruits, and inaugurated a new beginning for all who believe in Him. He rose from the dead and breathed His Spirit into His believing disciples. When we receive Him into our hearts we receive a new life and a new beginning.

Jesus was resurrected exactly on the Biblical Feast of First Fruits and became the first fruits of the **New Creation Humanity**. We enter our personal First Fruits when we

receive Jesus as our Life, Lord and Leader. First Fruits emphasizes the Lordship of Jesus as we start on a new journey in obedience to His leadership and empowered by His Life

Pentecost. The Hebrew name of this feast is “Shavuot” or “Sevens”. It comes seven weeks and a day after Passover. The name Pentecost comes from the Greek word for ‘fiftieth’, which is ‘pentekostse’. It is the feast of the fiftieth day.

Fifty days after leaving Egypt the children of Israel came to Sinai where Moses received God’s commandments and ordinances. This is why at Pentecost the Jewish people commemorate the giving of the Law to Israel On Mount Sinai

Fifty Days after His resurrection, exactly on the Feast of Pentecost, Jesus sent His Spirit upon His disciples. As He ascended to heaven He had told His followers to wait until the day of Pentecost.

On the first Pentecost at Sinai, the Bible recalls, that fire came down from heaven and wrote the Law on tablets of stone. Three thousand people were killed because of idolatry On the Pentecost after Jesus’ Resurrection fire came down on the disciples at Mount Zion and wrote the law of love on their hearts and three thousand **came to life** at the preaching of the word of the gospel.

Trumpets Atonement & Tabernacles.

These last three Feasts of Israel are the harvest festivals which are celebrated in the Fall of the year. They were not fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming.

The Feast of Trumpets, Yom Turah, is also known as **Rosh Hashanah** (the head of the year) as it marks the beginning of Israel’s new civic year. It recalls the trumpets, which were blown when Joshua summoned the people of Israel to enter the land of promise. Trumpets therefore recalls the entry of Israel into The Land Of Promise.

The present return of the Jewish people to their land, and more specifically the return of Jerusalem to Israeli rule in 1967, is a **modern-day fulfillment** of the Feast of Trumpets. Jesus said that His own return would be preceded by recognizable public events by which His disciples would know that His return was soon. Chief among these signs is the return of Jerusalem to Jewish control. *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (Luke 21:24)*

The return of Jerusalem to Israel’s control in 1967 means that the time of Gentile domination of Jerusalem is over and therefore ‘the times of the Gentiles’ is fulfilled.’ Trumpets were also blown to announce a new season. The return of Jerusalem to Jewish control is the worldwide sign that Jesus Himself said would signal His coming again. This is confirmed by Isaiah who declared that the return of the Jewish people from the nations is “The Great Trumpet.” “So

it shall be in that day that THE GREAT TRUMPET will be blown. They will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria and they who are outcasts in the Land of Egypt and shall worship the Lord in the Holy Mount in Jerusalem.”(Isaiah 27.13) There can be little doubt that the return of the Jews to their land and the return of the City of Jerusalem to their dominion is the fulfillment of Feast of Trumpets (although this is not yet commonly taught.)

We personally experience Trumpets when we respond **to the signs of the times**, show solidarity with God’s plans for Israel and, laying aside all antisemitism, set our hope on Messiah’s return.

Atonement (known in Israel as **Yom Kippur**) recalls the annual Day of Atonement when **the sin of the nation** was covered and removed through the atoning work of the Temple High Priest. This was accomplished by symbolically confessing the sins of the people on the head of a goat and then leading that goat – the Scapegoat – into the wilderness, symbolizing the removal of sin. The other goat was sacrificed in the presence of the Lord. (See Leviticus 16) This is a day of fasting, national repentance and *“affliction of soul.”* It also symbolizes the fact that, before the Yeshua’s return, Israel as a nation will come to faith in Him as Zechariah foretold. *“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son.” (Zech. 12.10)*

Believers in Yeshua experience the personal side of the Day of Atonement when we **continue** to turn towards Him, repent and put away sin from our lives. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua his Son goes on cleansing us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)*

The Day of Atonement reminds us that we cannot escape seasons of affliction of soul and tribulation which God uses for our refinement and for our good.

The Feast of Tabernacles recalls that the children of Israel, when living in tents in the wilderness were sustained by God’s faithful provision. This Feast expresses the enjoyment of God’s bountiful provision when they lived in tents open to God’s creation, living in total dependance on Him.

The Feast of Tabernacles anticipates the fulfillment of God’s plan for Israel and for all nations when He returns. At that time the earth will be redeemed from its bondage to war, unjust systems of government and decay.(See Isaiah 2.4) Yeshua, the King of Israel, will rule over His people and over all nations. For believers, Tabernacles also anticipates the redemption of their bodies which they will receive at Yeshua’s return. *“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be: “The Lord is one,” And His name one.” (Zec.14.9)*

Jesus made it clear that no one knows the day or the hour of His return **but we should RECOGNIZE the signs of the times.** (Mt.24.36; Mt.16.3)