

The Feasts of the Lord (Moedim) and Their Fulfillment in Messiah Yeshua

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Bible begins with the words, “In the beginning God created...” We see throughout the creation process that God laid out His creation with a foreordained plan towards its inhabitation by His last and most remarkable creation: mankind.

Before man was created He said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years...” (Genesis 1:14). None of the animals on the earth, birds of the sky, swarming insects or fish in the waters would appreciate the purpose of these “lights.” Seasons affect, but mean nothing, to the lower animals of creation. They cannot comprehend the meaning of stars or seasons. They cannot appreciate the knowledge of the sun and moon in their lives. Only mankind, who was made in the “image” of God (Genesis 1:26) would, two days later in the creation process, begin to appreciate them for what they were.

Built within the notion of “seasons” is the calendar system:

The Calendar System

It is in people's nature to want to know exactly when something occurred, or when it is going to occur. That's why they invented the calendar.

Today, the entire world uses the Gregorian calendar. Still, the Jewish calendar is used along with about 40 other calendar systems throughout the world.

Established by Pope Gregory in 1582, the Gregorian calendar was influenced by the Jewish calendar. Its main purpose was to replace the older Julian calendar of 45 BCE. “Over time, the celebration of Easter had drifted away from its springtime position and its proximity to Passover. In Christian theology, the two celebrations are linked.

The Gregorian is a solar calendar based on the tropical year of the sun and the seasons. Unlike the Jewish calendar, it ignores lunar cycles.

Initially, Protestants refused to follow the new Gregorian calendar, though eventually they fell into line. Eastern Orthodox Christians continue to follow the Julian calendar.

In Israel, there is no legally official calendar. However, all government documents and correspondence use both the Jewish and Gregorian.

The United States has also never adopted an official calendar. Its acceptance of the Gregorian is based on a British Act of Parliament of 1751.

Most calendars number the years in relation to an historical event. Some systems count the years according to the tenure of a reigning monarch. Even Britain, which uses the Gregorian calendar, cited acts of Parliament passed before 1963 by the year of the monarch's reign. A 1925 act would be cited as 15 & 16 Geo.5 (the 15th and 16th year of the reign of King George V).

In the Gregorian calendar, the year number was supposed to designate the number of years since the birth of Jesus. For this reason, the year was always followed by the Latin 'AD' (meaning: "In the year of our Lord"). Scholars however, think that Jesus was actually born several years before the first calendar year. Jews and many others when using the Gregorian year refer to that period as CE, or "Common Era". The designation BC ("Before Christ") has been replaced with BCE ("Before the Common Era").

The Jewish calendar ensured that religious festivals occurred during the appropriate seasons. Tradition has that it was divinely given. Year number is based on the year of Creation. This would have placed the traditional Jewish date of Creation, according to the Gregorian calendar, on Sunday, September 6, 3761 BCE.

All calendars had to be adjusted every so often so that religious celebrations did not move out of place. The Jewish calendar has an elaborate system to keep lunar months in line with solar seasons.

Like other calendars, it is set up in a cyclical format. It repeats itself every 19 years during which an additional month is added in years three, six, eight, 11, 14, 17 and 19. Each year consists of 12 or 13 months, with each month having 29 or 30 days. When a leap year occurs, the month of Adar with 29 days, increases to 30. The additional month of Adar II is added with 29 days.

Some years are regarded as "deficient" and some as "complete." In a complete year, the number of days in the month of Cheshvan changes

from 29 to 30, and in a deficient year Kislev changes from 30 to 29. By contrast, the Gregorian calendar repeats itself every 400 years.

Based on the story of Creation, each week in the Jewish calendar has seven days. The days do not have names, with the exception of the seventh, Shabbat. The entire week leads up to Shabbat. The Gregorian calendar copied this seven-day week.

Both the Gregorian and Jewish years have 12 months, except in a Jewish leap year. The Gregorian year begins January 1st. The Hebrew year begins on the 1st day of the month of Tishrei, the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. The year number changes on that date. The first month is actually Nissan, which occurs in the spring.

The Gregorian day starts at midnight, whereas the Jewish day begins at sundown. Hours are divided into 1080 *chalakim* (parts). Each *celek* is $3 \frac{1}{3}$ seconds. Throughout the world, all time is set by Greenwich (England) Mean Time, or what is now called Universal Time. In the Jewish calendar, mean time is that of the meridian of Jerusalem.

The Jewish calendar developed a rather complicated system for specific religious reasons (i.e. so that Yom Kippur would not fall the day before or after Shabbat). These adjustments are called *dechiyot* (postponements).

Ordinarily, the Jewish year consists of 50 weeks plus three, four or five days, depending on the calendar designation of what sort of year it is, as compared to the Gregorian year of 52 weeks. A Jewish leap year, which adds an extra month is 54 weeks plus, five, six or seven days.

The origins of the Jewish calendar are uncertain, though we do know that the basic rules were set down by Hillel II around 400 CE.

When Jews were exiled in Babylon in 600 BCE, they were exposed to the Babylonian calendar. Certain similarities exist between it and the Jewish calendar. The 19-year cycle is common to both. Many of the names of the months are similar. The Babylonian month of Nisannu is the Jewish month of Nisan. Addaru becomes Adar, Tishritu is Tishri, and Abu is Av. This serves as a reminder to many Jews of the exile in Babylon.

The Jewish calendar is lunisolar, combining the cycles of the sun and the moon. The Islamic calendar is purely lunar. It also has a seven-day week and 12 months, with the years beginning from the Era of the Hijra, the migration of Mohammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. A 30-year cycle is used with 11 leap years in each cycle. As with the Jewish calendar, the day begins at sunset.

Other societies have developed calendars. Calendar reform took place in India in 1957 that established a lunisolar calendar, in which leap years coincide with the Gregorian calendar. Holidays are set according to local and ethnic traditions.

China also uses the Gregorian calendar for administrative purposes, but the traditional Chinese calendar is used for festivals. Of all the calendars, the Chinese is one of the oldest, dating back to the Shang Dynasty of 1400 BCE. Before the 1911 revolution, years were counted from the accession of an emperor.

The Aztecs of Latin America also had a sophisticated calendar system linked to agricultural cycles and various religious ceremonies. It had 18 months, each with 20 days, each week consisting of five days. Its year had 365 days, which included five empty days when all normal activities would cease.”¹

The Jewish Calendar System

Since Biblical times the months and years of the Jewish calendar have been established by the cycles of the moon and the sun. The traditional law prescribes that the months shall follow closely the course of the moon, from its Molad (birth, conjunction) to the next New Moon. Furthermore, the lunar months must always correspond to the seasons of the year, which are governed by the sun. The month of Nisan with the Passover Festival, for instance, must occur in the Spring and the month of Tishri with the harvest festival of Succoth in the Fall.

Thus, the Jewish calendar is Luni-Solar. It is in contrast to our civil calendar, the Gregorian, which is purely solar, and in which the months have completely lost their relation to the moon. But it is also quite different from the Mohammedan calendar, an absolutely lunar system, in which every month follows the moon closely but wanders through all four seasons during the period of 33 years.

Unlike these, which are either altogether solar, or altogether lunar, the Jewish calendar must meet two requirements, both solar and lunar. This accounts for its relatively complicated structure. Since the solar year of about 365 days is approximately 11 days longer than 12 lunar months, the Jewish calendar is faced with the problem of balancing the solar with the lunar years.

¹ Rozovsky, Lorne, *It's About Time*, copyright 2001-2007, Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center, Available from <http://www.chabad.org/library/article.asp?print=true&AID=407511>, copyright 2001-2007 Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center

In the early times of our history the solution was found by the following practical procedure: The beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the new moon. Then those beginnings of the months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation and duly accepted. The Jewish communities were notified of the beginning of the months (Rosh Hodesh) in earlier time by kindling of night fires on the mountains, and later on by messengers.

A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so-called Calendar Council (Sod Haibbur) calculated the beginnings of the seasons (Tekufoth) on the basis of astronomical figures which had been handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in Spring and not retrogress toward winter. However, the astronomical calculation was not the only basis for intercalation of a thirteenth month. "The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor. The Talmudic sources report that the Council intercalated a year when the barley in the fields had not yet ripened, when the fruit on the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Passover pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged. The Council on intercalation considered the astronomical facts together with the religious requirements of Passover and the natural conditions of the country.

This method of observation and intercalation was in use throughout the period of the second temple (516 B.C.E - 70 C.E.), and about three centuries after its destruction, as long as there was an independent Sanhedrin. In the fourth century, however, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent the Jews scattered all over the surface of the earth from celebrating their New Moons, festivals and holidays at different times, he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret. It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season.

In accordance with this system, Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years until such time as a new, recognized Sanhedrin would be established in Israel. This is the permanent

calendar according to which the New Moons and Festivals are calculated and celebrated today by the Jews all over the world. Like the former system of observation, it is based on the Luni-Solar principle. It also applies certain rules by which the astronomical facts are combined with the religious requirements into an admirable calendar system.”²

Contrast the Gentile Calendar System

So begins the calendar, and the signs in the sky that would one day benefit all mankind and find their true fulfillment in the One sent from God to redeem that fallen man: the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus).

It was a “sign” of a star in the sky that the magi sought out the Messiah saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). Even the stars speak of Him!

It is with deliberate purpose that the Lord God set this into motion, culminating with His Son as the second Adam, who would restore to the descendants of the first Adam that which was lost in the Fall. This includes the “calendar” of events written in the stars that would unfold through the centuries.

There are two Christian scholars who, about a century ago, have written on the “Gospel” that is clearly shown in the stars.³ That is, the constellations (Hebrew: “Mazzaroth”) testify of the Messiah and tell the gospel story in picture form.

² Spier, Arthur, *HISTORICAL REMARKS ON THE JEWISH CALENDAR*, Copyright 1995 - 2007 U.S. Judaica, Inc., Available from <http://www.judaism.com/calendar/history.asp>

³ Seiss, Joseph, *The Gospel in the Stars* (Philadelphia: Claxton, 1882) reprinted by Kregel (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972) and Bullinger, E.W., *The Witness of the Stars* (London, 1893) reprinted by Kregel (1967).

Below is a brief outline of the usual zodiac interpretations by Seiss and Bullinger:

<i>Zodiac Interpretations</i>		
Constellation	Picture	Interpretations
Virgo	Virgin	Virgin Mary
Libra	Scales	Sin must be paid for
Scorpius	Scorpion	Sin brings death
Sagittarius	archer	Demonism
Capricorn	Goat-fish	Earth corruption
Aquarius	Water pourer	Living water or Noah's flood
Pisces	Fish	God's remnant
Aries	Ram	Sacrifice
Taurus	Bull	Resurrection
Gemini	Twins	Christ's dual nature
Cancer	Crab	Gathering of redeemed
Leo	Lion	The King

Table 1

Early writings on this subject went into great detail regarding different parts of the constellations, so that practically every star was assigned a special meaning. The gospel message may well have been purposely written in the skies by the Lord. In that case, perhaps the star signs served as memory aids before Scripture was available.

Dr. D. James Kennedy, in his book *The Real Meaning of the Zodiac* writes about the signs written in the heavens by God: “A sign is something which proclaims a message. What is the message proclaimed by the stars? I would like to talk to you about what might be called “Biblical Astrology,” or as I have titled it for our investigation: “The Real Meaning of the Zodiac.”

There exists in the writings of virtually all civilized nations a description of the major stars in the heavens – something which might be called their “Constellations of the Zodiac” or the “Signs of the Zodiac,” of which there

are twelve. If you go back in time to Rome, or beyond that to Greece, or before that to Egypt, Persia, Assyria, or Babylonia – regardless of how far back you go, there is a remarkable phenomenon: Nearly all nations had the same twelve signs, representing the same twelve things, placed in the same order. Archaeologists, historians, and antiquarians have searched the dustiest libraries, uncovered the oldest tablets, ciphered the most difficult hieroglyphics, and have failed to discover how it is that in so many nations all over the world the same signs exist.

Remarkably, the stars in the heaven which represent those twelve signs bear absolutely no resemblance to the pictures of the signs themselves. For example, what we call the Big Dipper has been called Ursa Major (Great Bear). One thing it does not look like is a great bear. Neither do any of the other signs look like what they are supposed to represent.

Where did the signs come from? The book of Job, which is thought by many to be the oldest book in the Bible, goes back to approximately 2150 B.C., which is 650 years before Moses came upon the scene to write the Pentateuch; over 1,100 years before Homer wrote the Odyssey and the Illiad; and 1,500 years before Thales, the first of the philosophers, was born. In chapter 38, God finally breaks in and speaks to Job and to his false comforters. As He is questioning Job, showing Him and his companions their ignorance, God says to them: ‘Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? (Job 38:31, 32).

We see here reference to the constellations of Orion and Pleiades, and the star Arcturus. Also in the book of Job there is reference to Cetus, the Sea Monster, and to Draco, the Great Dragon. I would call your attention to Job 38:32a: ‘Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?’ Mazzaroth is a Hebrew word which means “The Constellations of the Zodiac.” In what may be the oldest book in all of human history, we find that the constellations of the zodiac were already clearly known and understood.⁴

The Bible tells us that God called all of the stars ‘the host of heaven’ – that He numbered them, and set them in the firmament to be signs. Their original meaning has been corrupted into something which is demonic, something which is satanic, something which is counterfeit, something which has given birth to what is known as modern astrology, and which the Bible repeatedly condemns and warns Christians against. It is a corruption which began at the Tower of Babel.⁵

⁴ Kennedy, D. James, Ph.D., *The Real Meaning of the Zodiac*, 1989 by D. James Kennedy, Ph.D., pages 8, 9

⁵ IBID., pages 9, 10

While it is not the intent of this manuscript to delve into this aspect of the patterns of the stars, it is worth investigation and serious consideration. Again, that which God has ordained gets perverted by mankind. Instead of the God-given names for months – man has replaced with other names – that is - of his gods. So, instead of observing God’s holy days, man observes their own pagan days.

Again, as with the “signs” in the stars and constellations, this “occults” (darkens or conceals) the meaning that God intends for man to understand and replaces Gods meanings with human or satanically originated ones.

Yet, for all this perversion, Gods Word *still* stands and His “holy” days stand, too. Regardless of the perversions of man, His Word is an enduring testimony for His eternal truth. What we must do is to return to that which God established: back to the understanding of what is reflected in His creation and back to the practices found in His Holy Scripture.

So we come to the purpose of this dissertation – to return the Body of Messiah back to the observance and meaning of the Moedim (Leviticus 23 - “Appointed Times”) in the light of their fulfillment by our Messiah Yeshua, who said in Luke 24:44-47 - "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

Messianic Rabbi Barney Kasdan in his book, *God's Appointed Times, A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays* expresses how tragic it is that the Christian community has not understood the rich heritage upon which its faith is built,

It is, I believe, a tragedy that the Christian community has not understood, for the most part, the rich heritage on which its faith is built. Many believers, however, rediscovering these connections, are wondering just how they can understand the Jewishness of their faith in a practical way. The biblical holy days are a pragmatic way. These feasts were revealed by God for his own particular reasons, and through them all believers can be blessed, Jews and Gentiles.⁶

It is through the biblical feasts that God speaks to all His people concerning the prophetic plan of redemption! It behooves all believers in Jesus to understand them.

Some believers understand, at least in a theoretical way, that the feasts provide excellent teaching for believers. Yet, because of certain popular theological positions, these believers question the value of continuing the celebrations today. Their contention is that these holy days are no longer relevant because Jesus fulfilled all their symbolism in his earthly life and ministry. While there is a fulfillment to the holy days, there is also a continuation of the practical expression of these feasts.

Yeshua himself observed the various feasts during his earthly life. The Gospel writers tell us that his custom was to worship on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). It was during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) that Yeshua offered 'living water' to the Jewish multitude (John 7:37-39). One of his most powerful sermons, in which he proclaimed his Messiahship, took place in the Temple at Hanukkah (John 10:22-30). The earthly life and ministry of Messiah show the continuity of the biblical holy days.

This continuity did not suddenly cease with the apostolic generation that followed. Although there are several statements in the New Testament that cause us to think carefully about a proper balance concerning the holy days, there is clear indication that the early followers of Yeshua continued the practices.

⁶ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times, A Practical Guide for Understanding and Celebrating the Biblical Holidays*, 1993, Lederer Books, Messianic Jewish Publishers, Clarksville, MD., page vii

It was at Shavuot/Pentecost that the first believers gathered for worship to proclaim the risen Messiah (Acts 2). In his discussion about the spiritual significance of Passover, Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers (a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles) to ‘celebrate the Seder’ (1 Corinthians 5:8) with right understanding. There is abundant evidence that the disciples understood and continued to celebrate the wonderful truth of God through the holy days delineated in the Scriptures. This is an example for believers today. Much can be gained by continuing to observe the holy days in the present generation.⁷

As Rabbi Kasdan noted, Yeshua observed these Feasts in His lifetime. Seven feasts are mentioned in the Gospels (Luke 2:42; Matthew 26:2, 17; 27:15, 62; Mark 14:1, 12, 14; 15:6; Luke 22:1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15; 23:17, 54; John 2:13-25; 5:1; 6:4; 7; 10:22-39; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1, 29; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42), six of which Yeshua is recorded as having attended, beginning with a Passover which Yeshua observed with His parents in Jerusalem at the age of twelve (Luke 2:42); including one further Passover (John 2:13-25), which He attended in the first year of His earthly ministry; an unnamed feast (John 5:1), which may or may not have been a Passover; a Feast of Tabernacles, which He attended in the final year of His earthly ministry (John 7); a Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39); and finishing with that Passover which, according to the traditional understanding of the accounts given in the gospels of the Last Supper, He celebrated with His disciples “on the night that he was betrayed”.

These have been tabulated for ease of reference, as follows:

Feast	Event	Scripture references
Passover	The boy Yeshuas’ visit to Jerusalem	Luke 2:42
Passover	The first cleansing of the Temple	John 2:13-25
A feast of the Jews (Purim/Passover?)	The healing of the paralytic man	John 5:1

⁷ IBID., page ix

Passover	The feeding of the five thousand	John 6:4
The Feast of Tabernacles	“He also went up to the Feast”	John 7:2-53
The Feast of Dedication	“If you are the Christ, tell us plainly”	John 10:22-39
The Final Passover	The Last Supper	Matthew 26:2, 17; 27:15, 62; Mark 14:1, 12, 14; 15:6; Luke 22:1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15; 23:17, 54; John 11:55; 12:1; 13:1, 29; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42

Table 2

So we can see, Yeshua was a faithful observer of these Biblical Feasts, even from His youth. Furthermore, as we shall see, He was also the *fulfiller* of those same Feasts; not the one who does away with them!

Fulfill versus Abolish

When Yeshua spoke on the mountain in Matthew 5, He said, ¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

It's been wrongly argued by some Christians that they don't have to obey the Torah or observe the Biblical Feasts because Yeshua "fulfilled" it for them. It seems that most believers confuse "fulfillment" with "obedience." Yeshua's obedience to Torah is separate from His fulfilling Torah. Many Christians seem to think that Yeshua's obedience replaces our own obedience. That is like saying that because Yeshua ate kosher, we don't have to; or that because Yeshua kept the Sabbath, we don't have to.

The convolution in thinking occurs in how the Church treats a “fulfilled” prophecy as opposed to a fulfilled Torah command, including those commands regarding the Biblical Feasts. This is exemplified when the church says that Jesus fulfilled a prophetic passage and they mean that He accomplished what the passage said and did not do away with that passage. Yet, when the Church says Jesus fulfilled a Torah passage, it's as if “fulfill” suddenly changes to mean that Jesus made the passage irrelevant by destroying or abolishing it.

They try to have it both ways: on the one hand, fulfillment means doing away with that passage (Torah) and on the other, it means accomplishing what that passage (Prophets) says and not doing away with it.

Let me illustrate with a few examples. There are many Messianic prophecies in Scripture, we are going to look at two cases of literal “fulfillments” in the Prophets:

Micah 5:1 - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days."

Matthew 2:4, 5 - "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Messiah should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet."

Yeshua was born in Bethlehem, thus fulfilling this prophecy. Yet, by fulfilling this prophecy through Yeshua it didn't mean Bethlehem was destroyed or abolished following His birth! It would be absurd to argue otherwise.

Here's another example of “fulfillment” from the Prophets:

Isaiah 53:4, 5 - "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Matthew 8:17 - "That it might be *fulfilled* which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Again, the church doesn't dispute that by Yeshua "fulfilling" this prophecy as the prophesied Suffering Servant that He “did away with” the perpetuity of the healing by the stripes of Yeshua to this very day. Yeshua literally fulfilled the prophecy by doing exactly as the prophecy predicted Messiah would. His blood still heals those who believe in Him!

Most Christians would readily agree that the Isaiah 53 passage isn't abolished or destroyed just because Yeshua fulfilled it. Thus, we see that when the church applies “fulfill” to the Prophets, they use it in its literal, normal sense. But somehow, when the church applies "fulfill" to Torah, suddenly it means “destroy,” “abolish” or “overthrow.”

So, with this twisting of logic by many believers in Jesus, I believe it is extremely important that we get back to the *real* meaning of what Yeshua is saying in Matthew 5. The question is: “What exactly *is* Yeshua trying to say when He talks about “abolish” and “fulfill?”

In order to answer this, we must use *exegesis* – reading “out of” the Scriptures, not *isogesis* – reading “into” the Scriptures and interpret the Matthew 5 passage in its most literal sense.

First, let us literally define the terminology: The word “fulfill” used here in Greek is *pleroo* (Strong's 4137) meaning "fill up" "make complete" "fully preach" "to supply" and "to perfect." “Destroy” here comes from the Greek *kataluo* (Strong's 2647) and means "to utterly destroy" or "overthrow completely."

Now, with these literal definitions, let's paraphrase Matthew 5:17, 18: "Think not that I am come to utterly destroy or overthrow the law or the prophets: I am not come to utterly destroy or completely overthrow, but to make complete and fully preach the law. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in NO wise pass from the law, till I have finished preaching and making complete."

Note that these comments apply not only to Torah (including the Moedim), but *also* to the Prophets!

Many Christian theologians misinterpret these verses because they believe the law is no longer relevant. However, Yeshua said He came to fulfill it, which does not mean it was lacking something but that the coming of the Messiah completed the picture. The law now “existed as God originally intended.”⁸ But to know what Yeshua really means with “fulfill” and “destroy”, we must go back to the Hebrew culture.

⁸ Bivin, David and Roy Blizzard Jr., *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, Destiny Image: PA 1994, page 113

Matt 5:17-18, "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled," is explained by showing the typical Hebrew rabbinic phrases employed in this statement evidently aimed at other rabbis. The Hebrew idiom "I have come" obviously means "it is my purpose to," and the terms "destroy" and "fulfill" were commonly employed in Jesus' day as technical terms in rabbinic argumentation. "When a rabbi felt that his colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, 'You are destroying the Law.' Needless to say, in most cases his colleague strongly disagreed. What was 'destroying the Law' for one rabbi, was 'fulfilling the Law' (correctly interpreting Scripture) for another"⁹

Thus, it is Jesus' method of interpretation that is under consideration here. Hence, to paraphrase, he is saying "never imagine for a moment that I intend to abrogate the Law by misinterpreting it. My intent is not to weaken or negate the Law, but by properly interpreting God's Written Word I aim to establish it, that is, make it even more lasting. I would never invalidate the Law by effectively removing something from it through interpretation. Heaven and earth would sooner disappear than something from the Law. Not the smallest letter in the alphabet, the yod nor even its decorative spur, will ever disappear from the Law"¹⁰

In reality, "to destroy the law" meant misinterpreting Scripture, while "fulfilling the law" meant correct interpretation – they were technical terms of rabbinic argumentation. What we therefore see in our passage is that Yeshua, having been accused of "destroying", i.e. misinterpreting, the Tanakh (the Torah and Naviim), gives his counterargument that He is actually "fulfilling", i.e. correctly interpreting it, and actually establishing the correct interpretation of the Tanakh. Dr. David H. Stern goes back to our first interpretation by concluding that these verses

enunciate three ways in which the *Torah* and the Prophets remain necessary, applicable and in force. The remainder of Chapter 5 gives six specific cases in which Yeshua explains the fuller spiritual meaning of points in the Jewish Law. In fact, this verse states the theme and agenda of the entire Sermon on the Mount, in which Yeshua completes, makes fuller,

⁹ Biven and Blizzard, page 154

¹⁰ Ibid., page 155

the understanding of his talmidim concerning the Torah and the Prophets, so that they can more fully express what being God's people is all about.¹¹

Thus we see that Yeshua is not abolishing the Law (Torah) and the Prophets – He is reaffirming them and correctly interpreting them in His fulfillment of them!

Yeshua, Fulfiller of the Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms

There are many Christian writers who say that Yeshua (Jesus), in His First Coming fulfilled *only* the Spring Feasts of the Lord and in His Second Coming will fulfill the Fall Feasts. In their book, *The Feasts of the Lord*, by Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, Marvin Rosenthal writes,

The seven feasts of the Lord, then, are His 'appointed times' during which He will meet with men for holy purposes. When completed, the seven holidays will bring this age to a triumphant end and usher in the 'Golden Age' to follow. During that age, every man will sit under his own fig tree (Micah 4:4). That concept is not intended to suggest boredom or a lack of creativity and activity, but completion and satisfaction. In that day, every good thing that the heart could desire will be possessed.

Four of the seven holidays occur in the spring of the year. The fulfillment of those feasts, if a colloquialism may be used to emphasize the truth, are 'a done deal.' That is to say, the events which the four spring feasts of the Lord typify in the Hebrew Scriptures have been fulfilled in the Messiah. In that sense, one can look back at and examine them. They are history. They occurred almost two thousand years ago. Their spiritual benefits, however, continue forward to the present hour.

The final three holidays occur in the fall of the year within a brief period in the Hebrew month of Tishri (September/October). As the first four holidays depict specific events associated with His Messiah's first coming, these final three holidays depict events associated with His second coming. Although these events are still future in terms of literal fulfillment, biblical faith may lay hold of and live in the light of their future blessings today. These final feasts form the basis for what the Bible calls the 'blessed hope' (Ti. 2:13)."¹²

¹¹ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.: MD 1999, page 26

¹² Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 1997, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, pages 15, 16

He continues,

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 as historical facts. The three fall feasts have not yet been fulfilled. They predict, with absolute certainty, events that will yet unfold. As the four spring 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.¹³

Contrary to what Mr. Rosenthal and many Christian (and even Messianic) writers say, I believe *ALL* the Moedim were fulfilled, either partially or literally or in "type" at the First Coming of Messiah Yeshua. However, this does not mean that I believe they all were *completely* and literally fulfilled in the First Coming.

In Biblical prophecy, there are often dual fulfillments: in such cases a prophet speaks under inspiration of God and a first fulfillment of the prophecy comes to pass. Then, later, often at the end of the age before the return of Messiah, comes a final, ultimate fulfillment.

An excellent example of duality is found in a prediction Joel made about the Holy Spirit: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD ... I will also gather all nations, and

¹³ IBID., page 25

bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there ..." (Joel 2:28-3:2).

God inspired the apostle Kefa (Peter) to quote from this passage to describe events on Shavuot (Weeks - the Day of Pentecost), when God founded the "Church" after Yeshuas' resurrection (Acts 2:14-21). Miraculous manifestations of God's power through the Holy Spirit (Ruach haKodesh) did indeed occur then (verses 1-13). But these were only the first fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The ultimate fulfillment will come at the time of the end and will involve, among other things, the gathering of the nations to God's judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. This did not occur on Shavuot. So we see that prophecies can be dual.

In a similar fashion, God inspired many other prophecies with dual meanings. For instance, Daniel's dream about the king of Greece was obviously about Alexander the Great. But it also foreshadows the Antichrist, who literally will "rise against the Prince of princes" (Daniel 8:25). In yet another example, Yeshua specifically reveals the dual application of some prophecies in Matthew 17:11-12. Asked about the prophecy of "Elijah," who would precede the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5), Yeshua responded: "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already . . ." The disciples understood that the "Elijah" who had come already was John the Baptist (verse 13). But Messiah's clear implication is that another "Elijah" will precede His second coming, announcing His return just as John the Baptist preceded Messiah's first coming. Many believe that Elijah will be one of the prophets who will prophesy during the first of the tribulation. *"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed*

in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Revelation 11:3-4)

Therefore, I believe that within many of the Moedim we shall *also* find dual fulfillments. For example, in the First Coming, Yeshua fulfilled the atonement aspect of Yom Kippur completely in His death on the cross! The writer of the Book of Hebrews makes that abundantly clear:

“¹¹ But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9)

“¹ For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? ³ But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵ Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; ⁶ IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. ⁷

"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.' "⁸ After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹ then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ¹³ waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ¹⁶ "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," *He then says* ¹⁷ "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." ¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin." (Hebrews 10)

Other passages in the B'rit Hadasha (New Covenant writings) also support this understanding:

"All have sinned and come short of earning God's praise. By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah

Yeshua. God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission,] the sins people had committed in the past; and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness" (Romans 3:23-26 – Jewish New Testament).

“¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.” (1 John 2)

Yeshua, then, literally fulfilled the atonement aspect of the Fall Feast of Yom Kippur with His death on the cross! He made complete and perfect atonement for us! If He didn't, we're still lost in our sins.

Yet, He will fulfill the judgment aspect of Yom Kippur in His Second Coming in power and great glory! Thus, in the one Moed of Yom Kippur complete and literal fulfillment comes with BOTH the First and the Second Comings of Messiah Yeshua!

The very fact that even *one* of the Fall Feasts (Yom Kippur) is fulfilled so literally in the First Coming should establish clearly that the Spring Feasts *alone* weren't fulfilled in the First Coming of Messiah! He fulfilled a Fall Feast, too – though even this feast too has future prophetic implications in His future Second Coming.

To summarize, in *both* His First and Second Comings, I *DO* agree that they will *all* be *completely* and totally fulfilled – literally and in type. Yet, however – the most important fact of all this is: He *fulfills* these Moedim – no matter whether in type or

literally. It is He alone that fulfills them! There is none other; for the Torah, and the Prophets, and the Writings speak of Him, who alone is the giver of life.

³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." (John 5)

It is when we look at each of these Moedim individually that we will be able to see this and appreciate Yeshua's words in Luke 24:44, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

The Lost Heritage of the Moedim in the Church

Over the last 1800 some years, the Church has most often deliberately walked away from its Hebraic roots and has replaced the Moedim with pagan-originated "holy" days, the meaning of these Moedim in the light of their Messiah Yeshua has been lost.

According to good church history, the early church was Jewish. "The first Christians were all Jews. They had come to believe the apostles' message that Jesus was the promised Saviour of God's people. 'Jesus is the Messiah (Christ)' summed up all that the Jews were called upon to accept."¹⁴

In fact, for the first 10 years of what would eventually be called the "church," it was *strictly* a Jewish faith. With the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10), physically uncircumcised Gentiles now came into the body of Messiah. Nevertheless, it still acted and operated as a Jewish sect.

¹⁴ *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, copyright 1977, Lion Publishing, Hertfordshire, England, page 96-97

In fact, in spite of the growing divergence between the church and the synagogue, the Christian communities worshipped and operated essentially as Jewish synagogues for more than a generation.¹⁵

As long as the church was regarded simply as a Jewish sect it was tolerated by the Roman authorities. For its first thirty years Christianity, like Judaism, enjoyed protection by Roman law. Partly for this reason Paul emphasized the benefits of good government. But once Judaism and Christianity began to diverge Christians lost the special privileges given to Jews.¹⁶

In time, a shift began to occur in which the Gentile population within the faith grew faster and larger than the original Jewish population within the church. This was largely due to the rapid spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles through the work of the Apostle Paul, a Jew.

Paul's missionary achievements were immense. The years AD 35-45 remain obscure, but during the next ten or twelve years his activity was astounding. Between AD 47/48 (when he set sail with Barnabas on his first missionary journey) and AD 57 (when he returned to Jerusalem for the last time) he established flourishing churches in major cities in the Roman provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia.¹⁷

When "the church became largely composed of Gentiles, it was no longer possible to shelter under the wing of Judaism."¹⁸ The church was moving away from its Jewish origins.

Soon, another dynamic which led the church away from its Jewish roots occurred. The political situation in Judaea exploded. The zealots there revolted against the Roman oppression and sought to throw off Roman dominion.

¹⁵ IBID., page 68

¹⁶ IBID., pages 70-71

¹⁷ IBID., page 64

¹⁸ IBID., page 71

Rome, ruled by Vespasian (69 – 79 AD) at this time sent troops to put down the revolt which ended with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Titus, the abolishment of the Sanhedrin and the high priesthood and direct Roman rule was installed. “Vespasian continued the Temple tax of one-half shekel, even though the Temple had been destroyed along with the priesthood. This “fiscus Judaicus” tith would go to support the temple of Jupiter instead. Of all the conquered peoples, only the Jews were forced to pay this tax.”¹⁹

For practical purposes AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem mark the end of the apostolic age. Most of the original apostles were dead, and the churches they had founded had passed into new [Gentile] hands.²⁰

The last tie between the Jewish believers in Jesus and the rest of the Jewish community was broken in the last Jewish Revolt of 132-135 AD.

The Jews of Judaea revolted upon the founding of a Roman colony (Aelia Capitolina) in Jerusalem and the dedication of a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of their temple. Their leaders were the rabbi Akiba and Simon bar Kozebah.²¹

When Rabbi Akibah proclaimed bar Kozebah to be the Messiah, Jews who believed Jesus to be the Messiah dropped their arms in the fight against Rome. They could not in good conscience be fighting for a false messiah, whom they regarded bar Kozebah to be. From that time on, the Jewish community has regarded Jewish believers in Jesus as “traitors.”

After the Jewish Revolts against Rome (AD 66-73, AD 132-135) most Christians dissociated themselves from the Jews. The Jewish Christians’ refusal to support the revolts caused them to be regarded as national enemies. From this time few Jews were converted to Christianity.²²

¹⁹ *Christianity: New Religion or Sect of Biblical Judaism?*, Robert and Remy Koch, Messenger Media Publication, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, page 130

²⁰ *Church History in Plain Language*, Bruce L. Shelly, 1982, Word Publishing, Dallas, TX., page 36

²¹ *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 2001, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY, page 93

²² *Eerdman’s Handbook to the History of Christianity*, page 50

The Synagogue too now joined hands with the Gentile Church in this policy of exclusion, and in order to prevent the attendance of Nazarenes at Jewish places of worship a curse against sectaries was inserted in a part of the daily ritual which every Jew was required to repeat. This curse, composed by Samuel the younger, early in the second century, is still retained in a modified form in Jewish liturgical usage in the *Shemoneh Esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions).²³

The political crisis in Jewish affairs engendered among the Churches of the Empire a coldness and aloofness towards the Jewish Christians, which after the second Jewish revolt in the reign of Hadrian, led to almost complete separation. The Roman Christians could not be expected to sympathize with the national aspirations of the Nazarenes [Jewish Christians]. For them, the destruction of Jerusalem and cessation of the temple service meant the end of the Law. It came to them as a happy release from the incubus of Judaism and left them free to develop a Christian philosophy of their own better suited to the Gentile temperament.²⁴

And so, the Gentile church now was free to do as it wished. From here on, the church would begin to incorporate the ideas, philosophies and practices from the nations coming into this faith, leaving the Jewish roots purposely behind. It would no longer be a Jewish faith, but a “catholic” or universal one – absorbing the religious practices of the nations into itself.

Before we go on, I would like to mention that though, from this time forward, Gentile Christianity would predominate in practice and philosophy, there were *still* Jewish believers who remained faithful to their Jewish practice long after this time, and yet believed in Jesus as their Messiah.

Iranaeus, Bishop of Lyons (175-185 AD), in *Adversus Haereses* 1:26, observes of these Jewish Christians, “They practice circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoined by the Law, and are so Judaic in their mode of life that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God.”²⁵

²³ *The History of Jewish Christianity From the First to the Twentieth Century*, Hugh Schonfield, page 34

²⁴ *IBID.*, page 39

²⁵ Iranaeus, Bishop of Lyons (175-185 AD), in *Adversus Haereses* 1:26

So, it is not as though a Jewish expression of the Christian faith was not possible, as many think today in both the Church and Judaism, it was just that this expression became subdued in the ensuing years, particularly because of anti-Semitism in the Church. This anti-Judaic attitude is reflected in the literature of early Christian writers.

A partial listing of anti-Jewish literature, much of it claimed as early “Church fathers” doctrine by the Roman Church, is cited here: *The Preaching of Peter*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Quadratus’ lost *Apology*, Aritides’ *Apology*, *The Disputation between Jason and Papiscus Concerning Christ*, Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, Mitiades’ *Against the Jews* (lost), Apollinarius’ *Against the Jews* (lost), Melitos’ *On the Passover*, *The Epistle to Diognetus*, *The Gospel of Peter*, Tertullian’s *Against the Jews*, Origen’s *Against Celsus*, *The Didache* by Ignatious Bishop of Antioch.²⁶

All of this literature betrays a woeful ignorance of Hebrew concepts of God that were revealed to the Jews over the past 2,000 years from the writers of the Divinely inspired Tanakh (OT). Most Gentiles didn’t know these things because, in their minds, they were the progenitors of a new religion based on a familiar mystical, Greek style “Christ.” In the authors’ arrogance, they believed the Jews were now severed from God and consequently the Hebrew religion was dead and buried. Their own culture, drawing from their pagan backgrounds, was superior; their understanding was the new way which, they claimed, had been proclaimed by this “Christ.” These works evidence the growing contempt and hostility of the Roman Church that had, by this time, lost the foundation carefully laid by Yeshua and his brethren the first apostles.²⁷

In the Gentile Church, now that the Jewish equation was out of the way, it was free to develop its own practice from its adherent’s pagan backgrounds, which was mostly Greek. Greek philosophy used allegorical (figurative and symbolic) methods of thinking in its interpretation of the world (“world-view”).

In other words, everything must be viewed broadly in a spiritual or moral context, not a literal one. This non-literal interpretation left the meaning of the passages up to the

²⁶ *Christianity: New Religion or Sect of Biblical Judaism?*, page 133

²⁷ *IBID.*, page 133

reader (or culture) to determine. It was subjective, not objective. That is, everything was relative to the circumstance.²⁸

This method of thinking was applied as well to the Holy Scriptures in the church; which changed the very foundations of Scripture interpretation to hold that Jews were no longer the chosen people of God, nor the recipients of His blessings, but the Church was now, because of the Jews' rejection of Jesus, the inheritors of Israel, its promises and its Kingdom. It also made it very easy to claim that the Roman Church, "by virtue of being the "True Israel" inherited the authority of God on earth from that time forward. With this awesome and exclusive power from God (the physical and spiritual throne of David), they were able to change everything to suit themselves.²⁹

So, in short, we have our history as to how the church became a Gentile-oriented one, from its original Jewish faith. We will now look at how the church incorporated pagan practices into itself; practices forbidden to the Jews by God in the Old Testament.

In the late third century came the first deliberate attempts by Christian missionaries to 'baptize' features of pagan religions, and thus overcome them by absorbing them into Christianity. Churches took over from temples, martyrs replaced the old gods in popular devotion, and the festivals of the Christian year took the place of the high-days and holy days of paganism.³⁰

By the time of Constantine, many pagan practices were already in the church. When Constantine became a Christian and made Christianity the religion of the Empire, he retained "the pagan symbols...as a necessary compromise with his pagan subjects, still very much in the majority."³¹

Constantine did not incorporate these practices in the church, no – the pagan believers coming into the church over the previous two hundred years brought them in.

²⁸ IBID., page 143

²⁹ IBID., page 145

³⁰ *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, page 88

³¹ IBID., page 131

However, what he did do was to “officialize” them. In other words, he gave them the status of law, with empirical backing

After Constantine, the Christian church continued to take over many pagan ideas and images. From sun-worship, for example, came the celebration of Christ’s birth on the twenty-fifth of December, the birthday of the Sun. Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival of 17-21 December, provided the merriment, gift-giving and candles typical of later Christmas holidays. Sun-worship hung on in Roman Christianity and Pope Leo I, in the middle of the fifth century, rebuked worshippers who turned around to bow to the sun before entering St. Peter’s basilica. Some pagan customs which were later Christianized, for example, the use of candles, incense and garlands, were at first avoided by the church because they symbolized paganism.³²

The cult of saints and martyrs grew rapidly in the fourth century, another example of the blending of the old paganism with Christianity.³³

Sunday “Sabbath-keeping” was already a practice in the Gentile church. Sunday was not observed as a public holiday, however, until the time of Constantine in the early fourth century (321 AD).

In the very early history of Christianity, the first believers were Jews and Jewish Proselytes, who on the weight of Biblical evidence (such as Acts 3:1; 5:27-42; 21:18-26; 24:5; 24:14; 28:22), kept the Jewish customs, including the observation of the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. These believers are sometimes referred to as Messianic Jews, whose main distinctive between them and the rest of the Jewish community was the belief that Jesus (“Yeshua”) was the promised Messiah. This practice may have continued at least until Herod's Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.

³² IBID., pages 131-132

³³ IBID., page 132

These Jewish believers were not the ones who changed the Sabbath or the other Biblical holy days. First and foremost, the Sabbath was the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It was very heart and core of their covenant with God (Exodus 20:8-11).

⁸ "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. ¹¹ "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy."

For the Jew of those days, the Sabbath was more than just a covenant with their God. The Sabbath lay at the very heart of the *identity of their God*. They all knew well the significance of this passage from the book of Exodus: ¹² "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³ "But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for *this* is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.'" (Exodus 31:12)

The Sabbath, then, was not merely a sign of who the Jews were, but the sign that identified who their God was - *by name*. "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; *that ye may know that I am Adonai*."

For a Jew in that time and place, changing the Sabbath was unthinkable. It would be tantamount to changing his God. Now consider the rest of that passage in Exodus.³⁴

¹⁴ "Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall

³⁴ *The New Testament Sabbath Day*, Ronald L. Dart copyright 2002 by Christian Educational Ministries, Available from <http://www.abcog.org/ntsab.htm>

be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶ 'So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.' ¹⁷

"It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased *from labor*, and was refreshed."

For a Jew in the synagogue on that day, the Sabbath was the sign that identified his God. The Sabbath was not going away. It was a *perpetual* covenant to last *forever*. It even carried the penalty of death for a presumptuous violation. For a Jew of the first century, the Sabbath could not be taken lightly.³⁵

So everyone had to observe the Sabbath, and they all had to observe it on the same day. No one was allowed to choose a Sabbath for himself. After all, it was God's Sabbath and His identifying sign, *not theirs*.³⁶

The Jews of the first century had no questions about *when* the weekly Sabbath was observed. It was perhaps the most crucial of all their laws and customs. *When Jesus walked onto the scene, the seventh day, Sabbath was an established and honored tradition in every sect of Judaism.* There were Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and more. They may have been divided on many issues, but they were not divided on the importance of the Sabbath day. The observance of the Sabbath on the day appointed by God Himself, was the *identifying sign* that they were worshiping Jehovah and *not someone else*.³⁷

In his book, *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY*, Samuele Bacchiocchi argues that the change from a Saturday Sabbath to a Sunday Sabbath occurred approximately one century after the death of Messiah and was *not* a practice of Jesus' apostles or the early church.

³⁵ IBID.

³⁶ IBID.

³⁷ IBID.

[The] ...historical data which we have briefly considered discredit any attempt to make the Jerusalem Church, prior to A.D. 135, the champion of liturgical innovations such as Sunday worship. We have found that of all the Christian Churches, this was seemingly both racially and theologically the one closest and most loyal to Jewish religious traditions.³⁸

In examining the possible origin of Sunday observance among primitive Jewish-Christians, we have just concluded that it is futile to seek among them for traces of its origin, because of their basic loyalty to Jewish religious customs such as Sabbath-keeping. We shall therefore direct our search for the origin of Sunday to Gentile Christian circles.³⁹

So, we need to look to Gentile circles for the origins of Sunday Sabbath-keeping. The first question we must ask is: “Why was a change of Sabbath observance necessary to the Gentile Christians? Wasn’t the Word of God sufficient to specify the Biblical observance of the Sabbath?”

In arriving at the motive for the change, it seems the reason for this change in Christian observance was probably due to an anti-Judaic dynamic in the Church at Rome. That, and an interplay of pagan factors resulted not only in a change of the day of rest, but also in a change of its meaning.

It was the tradition of the Catholic Church that changed the observance from the Biblical Sabbath to Sunday, the “Lord’s Day.”

As with the Sabbath, all issues regarding church practice, especially with regard to the Christian “holy” days, such as Christmas and Easter, need careful Biblical exegesis from a Hebrew perspective. The Body of Messiah must revisit her Jewish roots and leave man-made traditions of later church councils to find safer haven in God’s commandments.

It was the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), under Constantine’s oversight, which formalized the observance of Easter over Passover, not Scripture or apostolic practice. The fact is, there were still those in the church who were observing the feast at the *same time* that the Jews celebrated Passover, as did the first century church. [As mentioned earlier, the anti-Jewish sentiment caused the Gentile church to move away from its Jewish roots. Thus, for the western church (Rome) prompted the move away not only from the “Jewish” Sabbath, but also its observance of Passover toward its counterpart, the pagan Spring Feast of “Easter.”]

³⁸Bacchiocchi, Samuele, *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY*, THE PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, Rome, Italy: Copyright 1977, page 163.

³⁹*IBID.*, page 165

After the Council of Nicaea in 325, the Emperor Constantine directed that all churches were to keep the feast on the same day. His letter cites the scandal of Christian celebrating the feast on different days as a reason for this decree, but it appears that such variation was less of a concern than were the Quartodeciman and Syrian practices of continuing to use the Jewish reckoning to set the date of their celebration. The letter argued that lack of accuracy in Jewish calendrical calculation sometimes resulted in the Passover – and hence Easter – being celebrated prior to the actual spring equinox, and that this was a grave error. But the real motivation was clearly a desire to distance Christianity from Judaism: “it seemed unsuitable that we should celebrate that holy festival following the custom of the Jews.”⁴⁰

Other prolific Christian leaders took up the standard to keep their flocks from following the “Jewish” practices. John Chrysostom, an archbishop in Constantinople in 398 AD, called St. John Chrysostom by the Catholic Church, the “Golden Tongue,” through his homilies proclaimed anathema to those Christians who observed the “Jewish” feasts.

In Homily I of *Adversus Judaeos*, he says,

(5) What is this disease? The festivals of the pitiful and miserable Jews are soon to march upon us one after the other and in quick succession: the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Tabernacles, the fasts. There are many in our ranks who say they think as we do. Yet some of these are going to watch the festivals and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts. I wish to drive this perverse custom from the Church right now. My homilies against the Anomians can be put off to another time, and the postponement would cause no harm. “But now that the Jewish festivals are close by and at the very door, if I should fail to cure those who are sick with the Judaizing disease. I am afraid that, because of their ill-suited association and deep ignorance, some Christians may partake in the Jews' transgressions; once they have done so, I fear my homilies on these transgressions will be in vain. For if they hear no word from me today, they will then join the Jews in their fasts; once they have committed this sin it will be useless for me to apply the remedy.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Passover and Easter, Origin and History to Modern Times*, Copyright 1999, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, pages 92, 93

⁴¹ Chrysostom, John, *Eight Homilies Against the Jews [Adversus Judeaus]*, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol 98

In Homily II, he continues,

Against those who fast the fast of the Jews and against the Jews themselves. Delivered after the other homily has been given and five days before the Jewish fast. THE WICKED AND UNCLEAN FAST of the Jews is now at our doors. Though it is a fast, do not wonder that I have called it unclean. What is done contrary to God's purpose, be it sacrifice or fast, is the most abominable of all things. Their wicked fast will begin after five days. Ten days ago, or more than ten, I anticipated this and gave an exhortation with the hope it would make your brothers safe. Let no one find fault and say my discourse was untimely because I gave it so many days beforehand. When a fever threatens, or any other disease, physicians anticipate this and with many remedies make safe and secure the body of the man who will be seized by the fever; they hurry to snatch his body from the dangers which threaten it before the patient experiences their onset.⁴²

John Chrysostom epitomizes the attitude that caused the Church to leave the “Jewish” or more correctly, *Biblical* practices behind. Though most preachers of the Gospel of Christ have not said what he said in those words, the attitude reflected in Chrysostom toward the Moedim is carried on through its proponents throughout the centuries.

What is that attitude? That the Jews adhere to an archaic system no longer a part of God’s dealings with His people. We Christians believe in a “New” Covenant – a covenant which no longer requires one to observe the “Old” and replaced practices of the former covenant. Thus, as the New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant, the Church replaces Israel. Physical Israel is no longer the “Chosen” people of God, the “Church” is.

Physical Israel once had their practices as found in the Old Testament, we, the Church are now free to find our own practices as the new chosen people of God.

Thus, after formally and legally leaving Judaism behind, the church continued to adopt pagan feasts and observances. Celtic churches now began to celebrate All Saints’ Day, and to make long prayers to the saints.

⁴² IBID

So, by 600, what became the classical pattern of the Christian year had been established in all but a few details.⁴³

In conclusion, we see how within the Gentile Church, the pagan observances of Sunday, Christmas and Easter came to be official observance. I could cite many more examples from reliable, non-denominational sources, but will not, as this is meant to be a brief book. Nevertheless, my only intent was to explain the dynamics and the events that would take the Church away from its Jewish and apostolic origins and practices to where we are today.

The Jewish people still observe the majority of the Moedim every year as “appointed times” that are to be repeated over and over again throughout every generation. However, they fail to see within them the Messiah that they so long to have come. Christians, on the other hand, overall do not observe the Moedim, and few even have an understanding of their Messianic significance.

So, it is within the context of Messianic Judaism and the “Hebraic Roots Movement” that both groups, Christian and Jew can experience the understanding of the Moedim in their proper context; in the light of their Messiah Yeshua who came to “fulfill” all of the Torah and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17).

The feasts and laws of the Lord were a tutor (Galatians 3:24) to lead the Israelites to the Savior. The apostle Paul described the Hebrew calendar as a “mere shadow” of what was to come. He wrote, “Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17). The apostle was not condemning those Jewish Christians who wished to continue celebrating the Jewish holidays. Rather, Paul asserted that the festivals lead to Christ.

⁴³ *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, page 149

It is appropriate, therefore, for a Jewish believer to celebrate these holidays in a way that is consistent with the apostolic faith and that exalts the Person of Jesus. Non-Jewish Christians as well must recognize that the festivals of Israel find their fulfillment in Christ and His new covenant. Jesus Himself said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). Christians who follow the church calendar will find that understanding the Levitical feasts adds a new depth and dimension to their lives. The feasts of Israel point to Jesus Christ as Lord of time and history.

In Leviticus 23, God calls the feasts of Israel, “My appointed times.” It was important for the Israelites to remember that behind the intricate details of each feast stood the God who ordained them, to remember that He created time, and to remember that history bears the image of His presence. The feasts of Israel were God’s appointed times to remind His people that He was Lord of the calendar, the King of creation, and that He was to be worshipped every day. The feasts of the Lord have a great deal to teach all who have crowned Him Lord of their lives.⁴⁴

In the previous quote, Mitch and Zhava Glaser cites Paul (Shaul) writing to the Colossians. When the Apostle Shaul wrote these words of Colossians, “Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Chapter 2:16, 17), he wasn’t writing these so that 2,000 years in the future other believers who weren’t observing the Torah could use his words against those who were seeking to be Torah observant.

He was writing to Colossian believers in that city, who were taken out of their pagan backgrounds and religious systems and were grafted into what was then, a “Jewish” faith. This faith was very much “Jewish.”

Since the first Christians were Jews, they used the synagogues, both inside and outside Judea, as ready-made centres for evangelism. Although most of their fellow-Jews remained un-converted, many God-fearing Gentiles, who were attracted to Judaism but had not gone through the ritual of total integration into the Jewish community, became Christian converts. In fact,

⁴⁴ Glaser, Mitch and Zhava, *The Fall Feasts of Israel*, copyright 1987 by Moody Press: Chicago, page 11

in spite of the growing divergence between the church and the synagogue, the Christian communities worshipped and operated essentially as Jewish synagogues for more than a generation.⁴⁵

The Colossians were just such a group. They were Gentiles; formerly pagans, they are now joined to a “Jewish” faith and are beginning to follow the “Jewish” customs associated with that faith: the dietary laws, the Rosh Chodesh (New Moon), the Moedim – including the seventh-day Sabbath. No doubt they are being ridiculed by their pagan friends, co-workers, and families about living like “Jews.”

It is to these believers that Shaul writes. He tells them not to let the pagans around them judge them for their observance of the “Jewish” – actually, better yet, Biblical things. He is not writing to justify a believers *non-observance* of these things, as this passage is now interpreted to mean – rather, he is writing this passage so that these Colossian believers who *are* observing these Biblical things will not regard too strongly and be dissuaded by the opinions of their pagan counter-parts.

In order to understand what Shaul is talking about, we must place the epistle in the historical context: Shaul (probably about 61) addressed an epistle from Rome to the inhabitants of Colossæ. Colossæ was located 120 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus River Valley in ancient Phrygia, part of the Roman territory of Asia Minor, now in modern Turkey. It was at one time the chief city of South-Western Phrygia, lying on the trade-route from Sardis to Celænæ. Colossæ was in existence from the fifth century BCE to about CE 800. The people who lived there were a mixture of Phrygian natives, Greek colonists, and some dispersed Jews. Josephus tells how Antiochus the Great moved 2,000 Jewish families from Babylonia and Mesopotamia into Lydia and Phrygia.

⁴⁵ *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, page 68

Colossæ was the home of Paul's companions, Archippus and Philemon of his very dear sister, Appia, and of Onesimus and Epaphras, who probably founded the Church of Colossæ. The gospel probably arrived in Colossæ with Paul's preaching in Ephesus (cp. Acts 19:10) on the Third Mission Journey. Perhaps Epaphras, the Lycus Valley's own evangelist heard Paul at Ephesus and returned with the message.

There were many Jews living there, and a chief article of commerce, for which the place was renowned, was the collossinus, a peculiar wool, probably of a purple color. In religion the people were specially lax, even worshipping angels. Of them, Michael was the chief, and the protecting saint of the city. It is said that once he appeared to the people, saving the city in time of a flood.

Now, the believers in Colossæ were, as in most cities of the time, in the minority group. Their non-believing Greek-oriented families, friends, co-workers and employers were in the majority. Those co-workers, friends and relatives, as indeed the believers themselves in their former practice, would have been influenced by not only Greek philosophy, but also by Greek religious practices. It would have been easy to blend in the previous religious practices and philosophical thought into their new-found faith. This is what Shaul is warning these believers about in his epistle.

Consider that the cited passage (above) in Colossians (verses 16 and 17) falls between verses 8 and 20: ⁸ "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ²⁰ If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" ²²

(which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

In context, Paul is writing against “philosophy and empty deception, according to the *tradition of men*, according to the *elementary principles of the world*,” and “the *commandments and teachings of men*.” Evidently, they were also blending these things with the Biblical ordinances of their new faith. That’s the nature of the Colossian heresy that Paul was dealing with.

NEVER does God’s Word allow the blending of the commandments and statutes of God with worldly religion and philosophy (syncretism)! God’s Word always tells His people not to practice the religion of the pagan nations surrounding them! In fact, He tells Israel not even to inquire how those nations worshipped their gods!

“¹These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. ² You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. ³ You shall tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. ⁴ **You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God...**²⁹ When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,³⁰ beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do

not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' ³¹ **You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God**, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. ³² Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.”

God does not want to be worshipped in the ways of the nations, or just however we want to worship Him. He wants to be worshipped in the manner He prescribed in His Word! To blend the Biblical observances with the worldly ones is literally an abomination before God.

What does this say to the practice of bringing in pagan religious practices into the formerly Biblical faith, as we have seen? Is it acceptable to bring in elements of the Black Mass into the faith? Most Christians would say “No.” Yet, if we ask: Is it acceptable to bring in the observance of the pagan worship of the Sun (Sunday) or Saturnalias (now Christmas) into the once-Biblical faith? Is it acceptable to bring in the pagan observance of Easter or other pagan observances? Most Christians would say it is acceptable, since we don't practice the event for the same reasons the pagans did.

Yet, in reality that *is syncretism* – “the combination of different forms of belief or practice”⁴⁶ and I believe that Scripture clearly *prohibits* it.

Shaul was not criticizing Christians from judging other Christians, he was saying in context to the believers who are now observing a Biblical faith, don't let your pagan friends, family and co-workers from judging you as you observe your Moedim, dietary laws, New Moons, and other aspects of your new-found faith.

⁴⁶ *Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary* – 2007: Available at <http://m-w.com/dictionary/syncretism>

That is the context of Shaul's writings here! Now, on the judging aspect of this passage: when Paul warns the believers against other's judging them, he is *not* writing about *fellow-believers* judging them for their observance of the Biblical dietary laws or holy days, but against their *pagan* friends, relatives and co-workers judging them for observing the Biblical laws! We are *not* talking about having a bunch of churches down the street from each other judging each other on Biblical practice. We didn't have a Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Catholic Church, Pentecostal Church, etc. down the same street from each other in that day! This was not a case of believer against believer! It was a case of pagan against believer! So for believers to use this passage (as is done today) to stop other believers from "judging" them for not observing a Biblical command is pure nonsense! That was *not* the situation Paul was addressing with the Colossians at that time. The ones doing the judging were the pagans against the believers!

Consider this: in the Book of Acts we see *many* non-Jewish people in the synagogues scattered through the known world at this time (13:43; 14:1; 18:4). They were either believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or were considering Him as their God.

As they came to believe in Him, they left their old Greek or Roman gods behind and came to recognize that there was but one God. As related by the First Council (Acts 15:21) of what is now called the "church;" Gentile believers sat in the synagogue every Sabbath and who did they hear? They heard Moses (the Torah)!

Of what did Moses speak? Of *many* things: *including* the Biblical dietary laws, the Moedim (Appointed times – holy days) of Israel, and the "new moons." They would

have learned that there was but “one law” for the native (Hebrew) and the sojourner (Numbers 15:16: “There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you”). They would begin to observe the Biblical holy days, etc., adopting them as their own.

Now, in this context, *who* is judging *them* for observing a “Jewish” life-style and religious practice? Not their fellow believers! Rather, their *pagan* relatives, co-workers, and others!

It is interesting to note that the dynamic expressed by Shaul (Paul) in the First Century is still being played out in the Body of Messiah today! To this very day, when non-Jewish believers come into the Messianic synagogue and hear Moses and begin to observe the Biblical holy days, the Biblical dietary laws, and the Biblical commandments expressed in the Older Testament, they receive criticism from their friends, family and co-workers for observing these “Jewish” religious practices!

“Why are you doing these “Jewish” things? Don’t you know that when you practice these things that you are putting yourself back “under the Law?” “Don’t you know that Christ died to save us from the curse of the Law and that you no longer have to observe these things?”

Funny how much things change that they stay the same. We are *still* wrestling with the dynamic that the early Gentile believers dealt with when relating their new-found faith to their pagan friends.

For Christians to use the passage from Colossians to stop Torah Observant believers from “judging” their pagan observances is simply wrong. We are called to judge within the Body, otherwise how could Paul give up to Satan the man who was living in sin with

his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5:1)? If we cannot judge *anything* within the Body of Messiah, how can we use the Scriptures to *reprove* (2 Timothy 3:16) of sin (transgression of the Law – 1 John 3:4)? We can't!

Instead, the Scriptures are there to allow us to judge within the Body. For instance, Shaul speaks to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5) regarding the man who was living with his father's wife:

¹ It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. ² You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. ³ For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ *I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; ¹⁰ *I did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. ¹¹ But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or

an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one.¹²
For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within
*the church?*¹³ But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN
FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.”

According to this passage, it is *incumbent* upon believers to judge *within* the Body relative to sin. We need to be able to point out sin where sin is without our fellow brothers and sisters condemning us for judging them when they sin.

We must remember that the Scriptural definition of sin is: “...the transgression of the Law.” (1 John 3:4) So, in the Torah we discover what sin is not only relative to how we live, but also in what we observe.

This is also true when it comes to the observance of the Moedim, and any other commandment. The Moedim are a part of a believer’s life: Yeshua observed them, and as His disciples we need to observe them, too.

CHAPTER 2

The Moedim – (מוֹעֲדֵי) – Leviticus 23

The Feasts of the Lord

The feasts of the Lord were days of high importance for Israel.⁴⁷

They punctuated her calendar with seasons of joyous celebration, sharing in agricultural abundance, and reprieve from the daily routine. But they were also religious events. Their importance is evidenced by the fact that three passages in the Mosaic legislation describe the feasts: Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29; and Deuteronomy 16.⁴⁸

What was the significance of these annual religious festivals? Hulbert suggests that their significance was primarily eschatological and that they "were types which prophesied God's redemptive program in Israel."⁴⁹

However, as Chafer points out, for a type to be valid, it must have "continuity of truth" in both testaments.⁵⁰

In other words, the original reference to Israel's redemption in the Old Testament must correlate to her future redemption in the Newer. Thus, we must first look at the past historical significance of that redemption process, and then we can look at its forward looking typological function.

The three passages that describe the feasts differ in their emphases. Deuteronomy 16 stresses the pilgrimages to the feasts, Numbers 28-29 emphasizes the offerings, and Leviticus 23 focuses on the feasts themselves. Why are these emphases given?

⁴⁷ Van Goudoever, J., *Biblical Calendars* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), p. vii

⁴⁸ Hui, Timothy K., *The Purpose of Israel's Annual Feasts*, Copyright © 1990 Dallas Theological Seminary, page 143

⁴⁹ Hulbert, Terry C., "*The Eschatological Significance of Israel's Annual Feasts*" (ThD dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965), p. i.

⁵⁰ Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:309

Deuteronomy 16

In Deuteronomy 16 the pilgrimage occupies a prominent place. That chapter mentions only the three pilgrimage-feasts, during which attendance before the Lord for all male Israelites was required. "These annual feasts would keep the people aware of the importance of the central sanctuary and of its role in maintaining their unique spiritual relationship with" the Lord. The recurring phrases, "the place which the Lord your God chooses" and "(appearing) before the Lord your God," readily identify the organizing principle of this passage. Verses 16-17 conveniently summarize this literary unit. The pilgrimages of the people to the central sanctuary would contribute to national unity.⁵¹

NUMBERS 28-29

Numbers 28-29 is a section of the Mosaic legislation whose purpose "is to define the periodical public offerings." The inclusion of the list of the feasts of the Lord is only incidental. These two chapters prescribe the kinds of offerings for various occasions--daily offerings (28:3-8), sabbatical offerings (28:9-10), and festive offerings. (28:19-29:39). The literary clue for the whole section (hence also for the segment governing the feasts of the Lord) is in Numbers 28:2. The Israelites were instructed to "observe" (shamar) to present the offerings. The word shamar means "to exercise great care over." In Deuteronomy this word is used of the people's careful observance of the Lord's commandments.

It is clear then that Numbers 28-29 contains an instructional manual for the priests on the offerings in the feasts of the Lord.⁵²

LEVITICUS 23

A cursory reading of Leviticus 23 reveals that no such convenient organizing principle may readily be found. The feasts are treated at various lengths, and various details are given for each of the feasts, as seen in this table:⁵³

<i>Feasts</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>Length</i>
Passover	23:5	1 verse
Unleavened bread	23:6-8	3 verses
Firstfruits	23:10-14	5 verses

⁵¹ Hui, Timothy K., *The Purpose of Israel's Annual Feasts*, page 145

⁵² IBID., page 145

⁵³ IBID., page 145

Weeks	23:15-22	8 verses
Trumpets	23:24-25	2 verses
Day of Atonement	23:27-32	6 verses
Booths	23:34-43	10 verses

Table 3

Keil states that the annual cycle of feasts has "its centre and starting point in the Sabbath."⁵⁴ Wenham interprets Keil as saying that "the sabbatical principle informs all the pentateuchal laws about the festivals."⁵⁵ In this view Leviticus 23:3, set between the so called "dual introductions," supplies the controlling idea(s) for this chapter. The repetition of the demonstrative pronoun 'el-leh which appears at the end of verse 2 and at the head of verse 4, indicates that verse 3 is a purposeful insertion.⁵⁶

The addition of the phrase "in their seasons" to verse 4 (but not in v. 2) makes that verse, perhaps, the introduction proper. This sabbatical principle incorporates two ideas: the Sabbath is to be a time of rest (shabbathown), and the Sabbath is to be a time for religious gathering (kadosh mikrah). If this is a valid center, then one should expect the literary clues (i.e., the details) of this chapter to expand these two concepts of rest and holy convocation.

The concept of the sabbatical rest is often associated with Creation. The Lord's rest from His creative activities is the reason behind Israel's keeping of the fourth commandment (Exod. 20:11). In the reiteration of this commandment (Deut. 5:15) a different reason is given: to commemorate Israel's redemption from the bondage of Egypt. The writer of Hebrews linked these two ideas as he spoke of the rest (shabath) in Genesis 2:2 and the rest (menuwchah) in Psalm 95:11. In other words he associated this rest with the entrance of Israel into the Promised Land, which the Israelites (the first generation of the Exodus) forfeited because of their

⁵⁴ Keil, Carl Friedrich, *Manual of Biblical Archaeology*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1887), 1:470

⁵⁵ Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 301

⁵⁶ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch F., *The Pentateuch*, 3 vols., *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* [reprint, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.], 2:438

unbelief. Rest, in this context, was the repose of the Lord from His completed work; and He shared this repose with the nation of Israel in their entrance into the Promised Land. The sabbatical rest is then a commemoration of the Lord's finished work of redemption.

Viewing the sabbath as "a periodical memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt finds further support in the fact that some of the festive Sabbaths cannot fall on the weekly Sabbath. Instead of having significance in reference to Creation, these festive Sabbaths point to the completed work of redemption, which is a form of creation.

Of the seven feasts of the Lord described in Leviticus 23, five include a specific prohibition from work (mayla'kah). They are the first and the seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 7-8), the Feast of Weeks (v. 21), the Feast of Trumpets (v. 25), the Day of Atonement (vv. 28-31), and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Booths (vv. 35-36). During the Feast of Unleavened Bread the two Sabbaths are only six days apart. The Feast of Firstfruits takes place on the day after a Sabbath. The 50th day from that day can not possibly be another Sabbath. Thus the Feast of Weeks would not be on a weekly Sabbath. Between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement the interval was 10 days; thus one of them could not fall on a weekly Sabbath. "The significance of the sabbatical rest went beyond the general commemoration of the Lord's repose from His completed work of creating the world to the specific commemoration of His completed work of redeeming the nation Israel. Two of the seven feasts include no prohibition from work. They are the Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits. The Passover, according to verse 5, is basically an evening event. The next morning begins the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So the Passover is, in effect, the beginning of or the introduction to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the description of Deuteronomy 16 the "Passover and Unleavened Bread are in effect the two constituent parts of a single major festival."

The Feast of Firstfruits took place after a religious Sabbath (Lev. 23:10-11). There is no mention of a Sabbath observance or a prohibition from work in the instructions for this feast. There are some indications that this and the Feast of Weeks should be considered as "the two constituent parts of a single major festival" like the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Firstfruits marked the beginning, and the Feast of Weeks marked the end, of the harvest season. Both included the wave offering (vv. 11, 17).

In the first case what was waved is the sheaves, but in the second case what was waved is two loaves of bread baked with yeast (leaven). It signified the completion of the harvest and the leisurely preparation of meals. At the Feast of Firstfruits no such leisure could be offered. It began

the harvest and no special time was taken for rest. A literary parallel to this phenomenon is in Genesis 1:7. At the end of the second day of Creation there was no pronouncement of approval. That did not come till the third day. It is suggested that the work performed on both days should be taken as a unit.⁵⁷

Hence, we see the emphasis upon rest in connection with most of the Moedim.

Another emphasis is upon holding a “holy convocation” (mikra Kodesh).

The second concept of the sabbatical principle relates to the calling of a holy convocation. The purpose for such gatherings was religious—“for the worship of Jehovah.” They were special occasions for fellowship and communion between a holy God and His holy people. This concept is conveyed in the details that Leviticus 23 gives for the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Weeks.⁵⁸

The concept behind the holy convocation is not so much the sacredness of the occasion but rather the "sacredness" of the people. It is a holy convocation because of the "holiness" of the people gathered together. The precision with which they kept these feasts was not what the Lord sought if they persisted in sin. Without a holy people, there could be no holy convocation.⁵⁹

So we see in the observance of the Moedim the concept of resting and a holy convocation: a time of gathering together of the holy people of God to worship the Most High God and ceasing from ones labors in order to do so. In observing the Moed, one learns the purpose of the Moed, one rehearses the Moed and its implications and then one sees the purpose of that Moed in ones' life.

In grasping the purpose of each Moed, one begins to see how Yeshua, the Messiah, fulfilled each of the Moedim in His life, death, resurrection and return in power and great

⁵⁷ Hui, Timothy K., *The Purpose of Israel's Annual Feasts*, pages 148-150

⁵⁸ IBID., page 151

⁵⁹ IBID., page 153

glory. One begins to see the redemptive purpose of God, not only in His redemption of Israel in the past, but also in His redemption in their lives!

For instance, every year when we celebrate Pesach (Passover), we are told that we must not look at it as what God did in redeeming Israel from Egypt in the past, but that we are to look at ourselves as having personally partaken of that redemption from Egypt!

In the Passover Haggadah⁶⁰, it is said that “...in every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he were leaving Egypt, as it says ‘And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, For the sake of what the Lord did for me when I went out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:8)

It is *we* who left Egypt: we who were redeemed from Pharaoh, we who were in the Wilderness, we who first experienced the Sabbath under His direction there – after centuries of work as slaves, we who ate the Unleavened Bread in haste, we who ate the manna, and we who drank the water from the Rock. It wasn’t just our ancestors who experienced this redemption, it was *us* – *we* were there *with* them!

So when we come to the New Testament, we must realize its spiritual significance even in a deeper way, through Messiah Yeshua! He is the One who brings *us* into this contact with the past redemption and causes us to possess the eternal redemption God was planning all along!

That is why we “rehearse” these Moedim every year! They hold particular significance to God’s people throughout all generations. The sad thing is: the Jewish people celebrate these Moedim without the light of the Messiah Yeshua, who fulfilled

⁶⁰ The word Haggadah comes from the Torah command - “And you shall tell (*v’Higadeta*) your children on that day...”

them and the Christian Church doesn't celebrate them at all (or rarely)! *Both* groups miss out on the value of celebrating the feasts in the light of their true meaning!

At one time, during the Apostolic age, the Church observed them in the light of Messiah. Ultimately, the observance died out and was replaced by other "holy" days that came into the faith with their own meanings. Eventually, the Church lost the meaning of what Yeshua really did in the fulfilling of these Moedim, which were shadows of the Messiah.

"The Feasts of the Lord," or the biblical holy days, teach us about the nature of God and his plan for mankind. A classic passage in regard to the holy days is found in the New Testament.

So don't let anyone pass judgment on you in connection with eating and drinking, or in regard to a Jewish festival or Rosh-Chodesh or Shabbat. These are a shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah. (Colossians 2:16-17).

While this passage is often taken to mean 'avoid legalism,' there is another truth stated. It is true that the 'festivals' are not the ultimate goals of faith, yet they do hold tremendous lessons for God's children. The festivals are not antiquated tangents to faith but, on the positive side, they are in fact legitimate shadows or models of God's truth. This is something that should be explored in a positive way, not shunned as legalism.

For example, the Sabbath has much to teach about our weekly lives. Passover is rich in the symbolism of the Messiah's death, burial and resurrection. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are not obsolete, but continue to declare the reality of Yeshua's return to this earth.

In short, all of the Feasts of the Lord were given to Israel and to 'grafted-in' believers to teach, in a practical way, more about God and his plan for the world. When analyzed with the right spirit, there are some exciting truths waiting to be rediscovered through participation in the Jewish/biblical holy days!

Some believers understand, at least in a theoretical way, that the feasts provide excellent teaching to believers. Yet, because of certain popular

theological positions, these believers question the value of continuing the celebrations today. Their contention is that these holy days are no longer relevant because Jesus *fulfilled* all their symbolism in his earthly life and ministry. While there is a fulfillment to the holy days, there is also a continuation of the practical expression of these feasts.

Yeshua himself observed the various feasts during his earthly life. The Gospel writers tell us that his custom was to worship on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). It was during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) that Yeshua offered ‘living water’ to the Jewish multitude (John 7:37-39). One of his most powerful sermons, in which he proclaimed his Messiahship, took place in the Temple at Hanukkah (John 10:22-30). The earthly life and ministry of Messiah show the continuity of the biblical holy days.

This continuity did not suddenly cease with the apostolic generation that followed. Although there are several statements in the New Testament that cause us to think carefully about a proper balance concerning the holy days, there is clear indication that the early followers of Yeshua continued the practices.

It was at *Shavuot*/Pentecost that the first believers gathered for worship to proclaim the risen Messiah (Acts 2). In his discussion about the spiritual significance of Passover, Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers (a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles) to ‘celebrate the Seder’ (1 Corinthians 5:8) with right understanding. There is abundant evidence that the disciples understood and continued to celebrate the wonderful truth of God through the holy days delineated in the Scriptures. This is an example for believers today. Much can be gained by continuing to observe the holy days in the present generation.⁶¹

As Rabbi Kasdan states, there are many good reasons why the Body of Messiah should be observing the biblical feasts of the Lord today. There are so many truths that are revealed to us in their keeping as believers today. Thus, it is important for us to begin to look at these feasts, these appointed times as delineated by Scripture.

⁶¹ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, pages viii-ix

The Seven Feasts

Though seasons and times began in the fourth day of creation, it will not be until we approach the Mosaic Law in Leviticus 23 that we will see the Moedim (appointed times) presented as a group.

The Feasts of the Lord found in Leviticus, chapter 23, were given to us by God so His people could understand the coming of the Messiah and the role that the Messiah would play in redeeming and restoring both man and the earth back to God following the fall of Man in the Garden of Eden.

The Feasts are divided into two major portions, depending upon whether they occur in the spring or the fall. During the course of the year, the rains come in Israel at two primary times - the spring and the fall. In Hosea 6:3 we read- "...His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth." The "latter and former rain" in this passage is commonly interpreted and understood to be the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The "former and latter" rain also refers to the First and Second Coming of the Messiah. The Hebrew word for the former rain, found also in Joel 2:23, is 'moreh', which means "teacher". Yeshua, our teacher, was sent by God to the earth to faithfully teach us righteousness, just as God faithfully sends us the rain. (Isaiah 55:10-11) The harvest (believers in Messiah) is the product that the rain (Yeshua) produces.

These seven holidays are called, 'the feasts of the Lord.' That expression indicates that these holidays are God's holidays – they belong to Him – in

contrast to man's holidays. They are, quite literally, 'the feasts of the Lord' (Leviticus 23:4). And only on His terms and at His invitation can men participate in them and enter into their benefits.

The Hebrew word translated 'feasts' means appointed times. The idea is that the sequence and timing of each of these feasts have been carefully orchestrated by God himself. Each is part of a comprehensive whole. Collectively, they tell a story. These feasts are also called 'holy convocations'; that is, they are intended to be times of meeting between God and man for 'holy purposes.' Since these seven feasts of the Lord are 'appointed times' for 'holy purposes,' they carry with them great sacredness and solemnity.⁶²

The Hebrew term translated as convocation in Leviticus 23:2, 4 is 'miqra', which means "a rehearsal". God gave the Festivals to be yearly "rehearsals" of the future events in the redemption. Because God gave the "rehearsals" to teach us about the major events in the redemption, if we want to understand those events, then we need to understand what God was teaching us by these rehearsals.

Marvin Rosenthal continues,

A number of important points need to be emphasized concerning these feasts.

First, these seven feasts of the Lord were given to the Hebrew nation. The Jewish people are God's covenant people.

Second, these seven feasts relate to Israel's spring and fall agricultural seasons. When the feasts were instituted, Israel was largely an agricultural nation. That agricultural characteristic of the feasts remains to this day.

Third, the timing of these seven events is based upon the Jewish lunar (moon) calendar of approximately 354-day years. Periodically (seven times every nineteen years), the modern Jewish calendar literally has a thirteenth month to make up for its shorter year. If such were not the case, the winter months on the Jewish calendar would soon occur in the summer, and summer months in the winter. It is for this reason that these holidays do not

⁶² Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, pages 13

fall on the same day on the Gregorian calendar (the calendar commonly used today) each year.

Fourth and fundamentally, these seven feasts typify the sequence, timing, and significance of the major events of the Lord's redemptive career. They commence at Calvary where Jesus voluntarily gave Himself for the sins of the world (Passover), and climax at the establishment of the messianic Kingdom at the Messiah's second coming (Tabernacles). No box has to be manufactured, no text twisted, and no truth manipulated to make these appointed feasts conform to specific events in the Messiah's life.

Fifth, because the spiritual realities to which the feasts clearly point are fulfilled in Messiah, all men everywhere have been placed in an opportune position. All of humanity has been extended an invitation to 'meet' with God and receive the blessings toward which these seven feasts unerringly point. To turn down this unprecedented and gracious invitation is the height of folly.

Sixth, the participation of Gentiles in the blessing associated with the feasts God appointed for Israel should come as no surprise. It is consistent with God's unconditional covenant to the patriarch Abraham, the central provision of which is, 'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed' (Gen. 22:18). The Messiah himself taught, 'Salvation is of the Jews' (Jn. 4:22). Israel and the Church are distinct entities with distinct promises. However, every blessing which the true Church now enjoys and every hope which she anticipates comes out of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants which God made with Israel. There is a contiguous relationship between Israel and the Church. Therefore, it should not be thought that Gentiles cannot enter into the blessings which were accomplished through the Messiah and to which the feasts point.

There is hardly a theme to which a man can give his attention that is loftier or more important than the seven feasts of the Lord. Permit it to be said once more, for its importance warrants it: These seven feasts depict the entire redemptive career of the Messiah.⁶³

Foretelling the Mission of Messiah

In other words, the feasts preface and foretell the Messiah's mission, both in His First and in His Second Comings. Each feast has specific sacrifices associated with it (see Table 5).

⁶³ IBID., pages 13 and 14

We have “types” of various sacrifices shown to us since the first sacrifice that God made to cover mankind with skins in Genesis 3:21, but God does not spell them out clearly until we receive the Torah at the mountain.

The “types” of the Patriarchal sacrifices preface and foretell the Levitical sacrifices that would someday follow; and in turn, those sacrifices would preface and foretell the ultimate sacrifice made by the perfect substitution for our sins by Messiah Yeshua.

These “prefaces and foretelling” are reflected in *all* of the Moedim, and hence at long last we now arrive at the most important reason for understanding, and may I say, observing the Moedim: that of realizing in its fullness the mission of our Messiah, both in His First and Second Comings.

A Moed

A Moed is an “appointed time” set apart by the Lord for a specific purpose. The Moedim (*moe-eh-DEEM* - "Appointed Times"), are typically called, "Jewish holidays" but in the Bible are referred to as *God's feast days*. These include: Shabbat (Seventh-Day Sabbath), Pesach (Passover), Matzah (Unleavened Bread), Yom Habikkurim (First Fruits), Shavuot (Pentecost), Rosh HaShannah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

The Moedim

Leviticus 23 lists the Moedim as follows:

Moed	Verse(s)
Seventh Day Sabbath	3
Pesach (Passover)	5
Chag haMatzah (Unleavened Bread)	6-8
Yom HaBikkurim (Day of First-fruits)	10-14

Shavuot (Weeks/Pentecost)	15-22
Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah)	23-25
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	26-32
Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles/Booths)	33-44

Table 4

All of these Moedim hold significance for us as believers in Yeshua, since they all point toward Him and His ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

Each of these Moedim had their own required sacrifices for the day as well, as found in Scripture:

Moed	Scripture
Seventh-Day Sabbath	Numbers 28:9-10
Pesach	Exodus 12:6
Un-Leavened Bread	Numbers 28:17-25
First-Fruits	Leviticus 23:12-14
Weeks	Leviticus 23:17-20; Numbers 28:26-31
Day of Trumpets	Numbers 29:1-6
Day of Atonement	Numbers 29:7-11
Tabernacles/Booths	Numbers 29:12-38

Table 5

An Abbreviated Meaning Of the Moedim

The late Dr. David M. Hargis, Chief Rabbi and President of Messianic Bureau International (MBI), on his MBI website wrote about the Moedim and their fulfillment by Yeshua. For purposes of understanding, “Ruach” means “Spirit” and it specifically refers

to the “Spirit” of God. “Ha Kodesh” as it applies to the Spirit of God, means “The Holy” as in “Ruach ha Kodesh” – the Holy Spirit. Dr. Hargis also hyphenates the words God and Lord as a sign of respect for the Names of God. “Elohim” means God.

THE HOLY FESTIVALS OF ISRAEL⁶⁴

MOEDIM HA'ELOHIM (G-D'S APPOINTED DAYS)

THE LATTER RAIN: FALL FEASTS (Usually in the months of September/October)

1. ***Yom Teruah*** (Day of Blowing/Shouting) / Also known customarily as "Rosh HaShana" (Head of the Year) **Tishri 1** (First Day of the Seventh Month)

- A. Memorial: the entrance into the Promised Land
- B. Traditional: the day Adam was created
- C. Prophetic: the Day of the L-RD; His coming and judgment
- D. Messianic: the day of resurrection and catching away of the holy ones
- E. Command: rejoice, shout, blow the shofar; do no wage work, [*sacrifice*]
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:24,25
- G. Gift of the Ruach: working of miracles
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: excellence/usefulness

[Between these two feasts it is called "The Days of Awe"]

2. ***Yom Kippur*** (Day of Covering/Atonement) **Tishri 10** / Also known as "Face to Face"

- A. Memorial: atonement for Israel's sins
- B. Traditional: the second Passover; name inscribed in Book of Life
- C. Prophetic: the day when Israel is restored
- D. Messianic: the day when Jewish people accept Yeshua
- E. Command: afflict your soul; do no work at all, [*sacrifice*]
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:27-32
- G. Gift of the Ruach: prophecy
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: goodness

⁶⁴ Hargis, David M., *THE HOLY FESTIVALS OF ISRAEL*, 1999, Available from www.messianic.com

3. ***Sukkot*** (Tabernacles, The Feast of) / Also known as "The Feast of Ingathering"; the last day (eighth day) is known as *Hoshana Raba* (Save us, Great One) **Tishri 15-23**

- A. Memorial: the time of temporary wandering
- B. Traditional: thanksgiving for prosperity
- C. Prophetic: the nations come to worship King Messiah
- D. Messianic: the birth of Messiah Yeshua
- E. Command: abide in temporary dwellings in the land, first and last day do no wage work, bring an offering of first fruits, [*sacrifice*]
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:34-36
- G. Gift of the Ruach: discerning of spirits
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: persuasion/trust

THE TRIUMPHS: WINTER CELEBRATIONS

1. ***Chanukah*** (Dedication, The Feast of) / Also known as "The Festival of Lights"

Kislev 25 - Cheshvan 4 (Usually in December)

- A. Memorial: the re-dedication of the Temple under the Maccabees
- B. Traditional: the eight day miracle of oil for the re-dedication
- C. Prophetic: dedication of the 3rd Temple to come
- D. Messianic: the conception of Messiah Yeshua
- E. Command: none, it is a patriotic celebration
- F. Scripture: John 10:22,23; Book of Maccabees
- G. Gift of the Ruach: kinds of languages
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: humility

2. ***Purim*** (Lots) / Also known as "The Feast of Esther" **Adar 14** (Usually in March)

- A. Memorial: the victory of Esther for her people
- B. Traditional: celebrating matriarchal qualities
- C. Prophetic: the preservation of the Jewish people
- D. Messianic: the ordination of Messiah Yeshua (by Yochanan)
- E. Command: none, it is a patriotic celebration
- F. Scripture: Book of Esther
- G. Gift of the Ruach: interpretation of languages
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: self-control

THE FORMER RAIN: SPRING FEASTS (Usually in the months of April-June)

1. ***Pesach*** (Passover) / Also known as "The Feast of Our Freedom"
Abib/Nisan 14 (Fourteenth Day of the First Month)

- A. Memorial: deliverance from the death angel
- B. Traditional: deliverance from slavery, coming again of Elijah
- C. Prophetic: deliverance from the wages of sin
- D. Messianic: the death of Messiah Yeshua
- E. Command: eat bitter herbs, eat no leaven, eat unleavened bread, tell your children what G-d has done in delivering them, bring an offering, [*sacrifice*]
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:4,5
- G. Gift of the Ruach: word of wisdom
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: love

2. *Chag Matzah* (Feast of Unleavened Bread) **Abib/Nisan 15-22**

- A. Memorial: deliverance from slavery in Egypt
- B. Traditional: removal of all leaven
- C. Prophetic: cleansing from sin
- D. Messianic: the burial of Messiah Yeshua
- E. Command: eat no leaven for seven days, eat unleavened bread seven days, first and last day do no wage work, [*sacrifice*]
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:6-8; Exodus 13:6-8
- G. Gift of the Ruach: word of knowledge
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: joy/calm delight

3. *Yom HaBikkurim* (Day of First Fruits) / Also known as "First Fruits of the Barley Harvest" **The first day of the week, which follows Passover**

- A. Memorial: thanksgiving for the first fruits of the land
- B. Traditional: none, this day is not kept by modern Judaism
- C. Prophetic: assurance of salvation
- D. Messianic: the resurrection of Messiah Yeshua
- E. Command: wave a barley loaf (sheaf) before the L-RD
- F. Scripture: Leviticus 23:9-14
- G. Gift of the Ruach: trust/faith
- H. Fruit of the Ruach: peace

4. *Shavuot* (Weeks, Feast of) / Also known as "First Fruits of the Wheat Harvest"

The seventh first day from First Fruits (modern Judaism counts this from the day after Nisan 15, making it always fall on Sivan 6)

- A. Memorial: Establishment of the People of YHVH
- B. Traditional: Moses announces the covenant in Torah
- C. Prophetic: Israel to be a witness of YHVH
- D. Messianic: the out-pouring of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh
- E. Command: rejoice, do no wage work, bring an offering of first fruits, [*sacrifice*]

F. Leviticus 23:15-21
 G. Gift of the Ruach: gifts of healing
 H. Fruit of the Ruach: patience

While Dr. Hargis includes the Winter Celebrations of Chanukah and Purim in his list, they are not listed among the Moedim of Scripture in Leviticus 23. Notwithstanding, even among these two observances, which are instituted by man, we see Yeshua as fulfillment.

The Fulfillment of a Non-Biblical Observance

Chanukah is a non-Biblical observance. In other words, it does not appear in the “Canon” of Scripture, since the books of the Maccabees are not considered “Scripture” either by the Jewish people or the Protestant Church. Only the Catholic Church has these books in their Canon of Scripture. Yet, even with this man-made observance, not only did Yeshua observe it in John 10:22, but He applies the typology of the feast to Himself. For instance, Chanukah is also called “the Festival of Lights.” In the Gospel of John Chapter 8, verse 12, Yeshua speaks of Himself as “the Light of the world” during the candle-lighting ceremony of Sukkot (Tabernacles).

The Gospel of John affirms this in chapter 1, where we read, “¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but

he came to testify about the Light. ⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

I believe that Yeshua was conceived on Chanukah, the Feast of Lights, and was born nine months later on Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. So, the “Light of the World” came into the world on Chanukah.

Another point of fact, on the hannukiah (Chanukah menorah – candelabra) is a candle that stands all by itself. It is known as the “Shamash” candle; the servant candle. Its only job is to light the other candles on the menorah.

Shaul (Paul) writes of Yeshua in Philippians 2:5-7, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant...” and the Lord Himself said, “...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

He was the true “Shamash” that servant candle, the light that lights the other candles – us! Matthew 5:14-16: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does {anyone} light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Also, in the Book of Esther, at Purim we see Ester’s redemption act on behalf of the people of Israel at risk to her own life – as we see in the Gospel accounts of Yeshua’s act of redemption on our behalf in the loss of His life. This is another fulfillment of a non-Torah commanded feast.

On the Feast of Sukkot, there is – as already mentioned- the lighting of the candelabra in the Temple courtyard – a man-made tradition associated with the Feast. It was at this time that Yeshua applies the “Light of the World” title to Himself. There is also the water-pouring ceremony on Hoshannah Rabbah (the Great Hoshannah), the last day of the Feast. It was at the time of this man-made tradition associated with the Feast that Yeshua said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-18).

At the end of Sukkot is the celebration of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*. Some authorities consider *Shemini Atzeret* to be a separate festival, but its connection to Sukkot comes from scripture:

Leviticus 23:36

“For seven days present offerings made to the LORD by fire, and on the *eighth day* hold a sacred *assembly* and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.”

Numbers 29:35

“On the *eighth day* hold an *assembly* and do no regular work.”

“Shemini” means eighth, while “Atzeret” means gathering or assembly. It comes from the Hebrew root “atzar” meaning “to hold back” or to “tarry”. In that connotation it is seen as an added day to spend with the Lord.

On the first day of Sukkot, as we shall see, Yeshua was born: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...” (John 1:14) Then, eight days later, on Shemini

Atzeret, was His circumcision (Hebrew: “bris”):

Luke 2:21

“On the eighth day, when it was time for his Brit-milah, he was named Yeshua, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.”

So we see Yeshua being born on the first day of the Feast and being circumcised and named on the eighth.

Simchat Torah means “Joy of the Torah.” It comes to mind that Yeshua, the Word (Torah) made flesh (as already noted) said “These things I have spoken to you so that My **joy** may be in you, and {that} your **joy** may be made full.” (John 15:11) The Word of God should be our delight and sweetness. The Living Word of God, Yeshua brings this to those who believe in Him.

Psalm 119:77

“Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.”

Psalm 119:103

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Psalm 119:174

“I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.”

These are but a few examples of how Yeshua fulfills even the traditional aspects of Jewish feasts. Thus, if Yeshua fulfills and applies even the man-made traditions associated with these three Feasts to Himself, then He can also fulfill and apply other man-made traditions associated with the other Feasts to Himself as well!

It is in this context that I assert that Yeshua fulfilled *ALL* of the Feasts in His First Coming and that He will completely and totally fulfill *ALL* the Feasts in His Second.

For the purposes of this dissertation, though, we shall not be incorporating, as does Rabbi Hargis, the Feasts of Chanukah or Purim among the Moedim, since they are not specified in Leviticus 23. Our focus shall be on the Leviticus 23 Moedim.

Now, having been given an Abbreviated Understanding of the Moedim, we shall explore each Moed individually and its Messianic significance and fulfillment.

CHAPTER 3

The Seventh-Day Shabbat – Leviticus 23:3

¹ The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD'S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--My appointed times are these: ³ 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.'"

“It might surprise some to see a discussion of the biblical holidays start with Shabbat. After all, this is such a common day. It occurs once a week. The Jewish perspective is different. It is not that Shabbat is so common, but that it is so special, that we are to observe it every seven days. With that in mind, it is perfectly logical to mention the Sabbath at the head of the list. Besides, in the chronology of Leviticus 23, Shabbat comes first.

Shabbat means “to rest,” which tells us a large part of the purpose of this important observance – restoration. From the ancient Greeks to the modern corporate executive, mankind tends to become obsessed with work and ‘getting ahead.’ There is always more to do. Yet, without proper rest and refreshment, human strength and creativity fail.”⁶⁵

A Day of Rest

As aforementioned in the previous chapter, the Seventh-Day Sabbath (or Shabbat – “rest”) was pictured long before Sinai. In Genesis 2:2, 3, the Scripture says, “By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

The Shabbat is rest from the labor of creative processes. God stopped creating on the Sabbath, so we stop also. When our mind and hands have stopped creating we have time and ability to appreciate what has been created, especially by the Creator. Only then are we experiencing something He experienced. Since He is holy, then the experience of His Shabbat is holy. As we experience His Holy Day, then we are holy also.

⁶⁵ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, copyright 1993, pages 1 - 2

The only regular day of the week the Most High ever made holy is the seventh day. Only He can decide what day is holy. No matter how hard we try we cannot make a day holy, because holiness is not dependent on our actions. Holiness is solely dependent on His determination. Many believers have thought to make certain religious days holy by the force of their celebration on that day. Such is arrogance and ignorance. There is not one place in the Bible where anything is holy, except that called holy by the mouth of the “I AM.” Therefore, no person can choose any day they wish to celebrate the Shabbat, because only the seventh day is holy. Celebration of Sabbath rest on any other day is totally void.⁶⁶

The Hebrew word for “rested” is “shabbat” which, according to Strong’s (7673)

means:

Strong's Number: 07673	tb#
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1. to cease, desist, rest
 - a. (Qal)
 1. to cease
 2. to rest, desist (from labour)
 - b. (Niphal) to cease
 - c. (Hiphil)
 1. to cause to cease, put an end to
 2. to exterminate, destroy
 3. to cause to desist from
 4. to remove
 5. to cause to fail
2. (Qal) to keep or observe the sabbath⁶⁷

Figure 1

Based on the creation account of Genesis, Shabbat lasts from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday. God defines a day in the following order: ‘there was evening, and there was morning.’ Hence, the Hebrew calendar traditionally starts a day at sunset of the previous evening.

Some Christians might call Sunday the ‘Christian Sabbath’; however, this is technically incorrect. Sunday is never called the Sabbath in the Bible. In

⁶⁶Hargis, Rabbi Dr. David M. *THE GLORY OF THE SABBATH*, Copyright © 1995-2007 Messianic Bureau International.

⁶⁷ Strong, James, *Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the Original*, (McLean, Virginia: Macdonald Publishing Company)

fact, the word ‘Sunday’ never appears in the original text of the Scriptures. It is called, ‘the first day of the week’ (Matthew 28:1 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, NIV). This is the Biblical way of reckoning days of the week. All days are counted in relationship to Shabbat (the first day, the second day, etc.), giving further evidence of the centrality of this day to the Jewish people.⁶⁸

It is important to note that the Sabbath is a *very specific day* of the week. Following the pattern laid out in Genesis Chapter 1 – the order of Creation – *all* the days of the week are numbered in the Hebrew, *except* the Shabbat.

The Hebrew Days of the Week

Genesis 1:5 says, “...So there was evening, and there was morning, one day” – in the Hebrew “yom echad.” Genesis 1:8 says of the second day, “...and there was evening, and there was morning, the second day – or “yom shay-nee.” And so on and so forth: Genesis 1:13, “...yom sha-lee-shi” (day three), Genesis 1:18, “...yom ra-vee-ii” (day four), Genesis 1:23, “...yom cha-mee-shee” (day five), Genesis 1:31, “...yom ha-shee-shee” (day six) and finally, Genesis 2:2, “...ba-yom ha-sha-vee-ee” (the seventh day) which He proclaimed, “shabbat (rest)” (verse 2 and 3).

From the pattern found in Genesis, the Hebrew day begins in the evening at sunset and ends the next evening at sunset, unlike the calendar of the world, which begins at midnight one day and ends at midnight the following day.

Another difference to note, the Jewish calendar only *names* the *seventh-day*, unlike our non-Jewish calendars, which name every day of the week after the names of the pagan gods. All the other days of the week are *numbered* in the Jewish calendar, but one – the “Shabbat.”

⁶⁸ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, page 2

When we come to the emphasis in the Biblical writings concerning the Sabbath, we must note that there was really no question at all over *which day* was the Sabbath, but rather, over what was to be done (or not done) on that day. The word simply means to “rest” following the example set for us by the Most High God, Himself, who obviously because of His omnipotence (all-powerfulness) does not need to rest.

In rabbinic thought, in its simplest observance, one must emulate the Creator, Blessed be He, Who, after He created His final and most supreme creation – Mankind - chose Himself to rest, though He did not need it.

Observed Before Sinai

The act of *resting* on this day fulfills the meaning of the Sabbath – since the name itself means “rest”! As we approach Sinai, we shall begin to see the sons of Israel observe it (Exodus 16:4-30) by the command of the Lord: “⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.⁵ "On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt;⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumbings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?" ⁸ Moses said, "*This will happen* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the LORD." ⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the

LORD, for He has heard your grumbings.' " ¹⁰ It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² "I have heard the grumbings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, `At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' " ¹³ So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the sons of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ "This is what the LORD has commanded, `Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.' " ¹⁷ The sons of Israel did so, and *some* gathered much and *some* little. ¹⁸ When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. ¹⁹ Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. ²¹ They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt. ²² Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, ²³ then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will

boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." ²⁴ So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it. ²⁵ Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, *the sabbath*, there will be none." ²⁷ It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? ²⁹ "See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day."

The prominence of the Shabbat is emphasized in Exodus 20:8-11, when it is included in the Ten Commandments given by God on the mountain to Israel, "...so God blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for himself (verse 11)."

The Sign of the Covenant - Forever

It is to be a *sign* between the Lord and His people forever, "Tell the people of Israel, 'You are to observe my Shabbats; for this is a sign between me and you through all your generations; so that you will know that I am Adonai, who sets you apart for me. Therefore you are to keep my Shabbat, because it is set apart for you. Everyone who treats it as ordinary must be put to death: for whoever does any work on it is to be cut off from his people. On six days work will get done; but the seventh day is Shabbat, for complete rest, set apart for Adonai. Whoever does any work on the day of Shabbat must be put to death. The people of Israel are to keep the Shabbat, to observe Shabbat through all their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the people of

Israel forever; for in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and rested.”

Twice in this passage God says, “...it is a *sign*.” Twice He says, “...through all your generations.” God does not repeat Himself just to hear Himself speak. He repeats Himself when He wants His people to listen to Him.

A “sign” (Hebrew: **אוֹת** “oat”) is not a normal, natural occurrence. Most often it has to do with the miraculous.

Strong's Number: 0226

(אוֹת)

1. sign, signal
 - a. a distinguishing mark
 - b. banner
 - c. remembrance
 - d. miraculous sign
 - e. omen
 - f. warning
2. token, ensign, standard, miracle, proof⁶⁹

Figure 2

We shall see several passages where this word occurs: one place is in Genesis 9:12, 13, and 17, where the rainbow is the “sign (oat) of the covenant” made between man and God. Prior to the Flood, there was no rainbow. After the Flood, God places the rainbow in the sky to remember not to destroy the earth again by water (verse 16). Another place where this word occurs is Isaiah 7:14, where a “young woman” will give birth to a son. The “sign (oat)” is not that a young woman is to give birth to a son, rather, that a virgin will give birth to a child. This is the miracle or sign of the passage!

There is yet another (of many) sign found in Scripture that I would bring up, that of the sign of the covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 17: circumcision. What made

⁶⁹ Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, © 2007, Heartlight.org, Inc

this a miracle, when the previous two we mentioned were supernatural? It is the fact that Abraham covenants with God through the removal of the foreskin. The cutting of the foreskin is not the miracle, the covenanting with the Most High God *is!*

Therefore, in like manner, the observation of the Shabbat is a miracle by covenant, not simply by practice! Israel was covenanting with God (a miracle in itself) by observing the Shabbat. So, one could rest any day of the week, but that does not make the day the Shabbat! Only resting on *the specific* day that God sets apart as the Shabbat and covenanting with Him by observing *that day* makes it a miracle!

What we need to understand from the meaning of this word is that it isn't which day a person *worships* or simply *rests on* that *makes it the Sabbath*, rather, it was resting on *the day that God separates as the Shabbat* that makes it the Sabbath!

In Jewish thought, one can (and should) worship every day of the week! But on *the* Shabbat day, one must *rest!* The association of the Sabbath with worship of God came about that since Israel was an agrarian society for most of its existence, and since farm-work was an every day affair, it would be possible to work every day of the week! Yet, since the Shabbat was the only day one was required to cease from their work, it also became, to most people, the only day upon which they could worship!

By the time of Yeshua, we see in Luke 4:16 that it was His custom to be in the synagogue on the Shabbat.

Yeshua made it his habit to worship at the weekly Shabbat service. What else would he do? He was born a Jew and lived a life consistent with much of traditional Judaism of his day. Likewise, the first Jewish disciples continued in the traditional forms of synagogue worship (Acts 13:13 and 18:4 for examples).

This does not imply that Yeshua agreed with every detail or every rabbinic attitude of Sabbath observance. Indeed, he tried to correct imbalances in

rabbinic perspective by reminding the people, ‘Shabbat was made for mankind, not mankind for Shabbat’ (Mark 2:27).

Sadly, too often the people forgot to make Shabbat a delight, relegating it to a list of rules instead. Yeshua challenged the people of his day to remain biblically balanced, to enter into the true rest of God’s spirit. This same appeal goes forth in this generation.⁷⁰

It was in the synagogue that worship took place, as well as the required assembly of the community, as well as the study of the Bible. Therefore, the only day of the week free for most of Israel (unless you were independently wealthy) to worship was the Shabbat.

There is absolutely no question as to *which* day of the week is actually the Biblical Shabbat in the Scripture. In the New Testament, one does not see Yeshua (Jesus) arguing with any group over *which day* was the Shabbat. He seems always to be in contention with what is allowed to be done (or not done) on that day.

In Matthew 12:1-12, we see the Pharisees criticizing Yeshua because His disciples were out in the fields on the Shabbat picking heads of grain and eating them. In Mark 3:1-6, He heals the man with the shriveled hand. In Luke 13:10-17, He heals the woman who was crippled because of a spirit and in chapter 14:1-6, He heals the man whose body was swollen with fluid. He heals the man at the pool of Siloam on the Shabbat in John 5:1-18.

This contention was not simply Yeshua against the Jewish leaders, however, it was also Jewish leaders against other Jewish leaders! At the time of Yeshua, there were two main schools (houses) of Pharisaical thought which began the generation before Yeshua by two opposing rabbis: Hillel and Shammai. Of the two, Hillel was generally the more

⁷⁰ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, page 8

lenient and over time, his position has won out over the house of Shammai in Judaism. Usually what happened was that when Hillel made a ruling (“takanot⁷¹”), Shammai would often state just the opposite. When Shammai made a takanot, Hillel would often state just the opposite.

At the time of Yeshua, both schools carried on the takanot of their respective rabbis orally. It would not be until the writing of the Mishnah that the words would be codified on paper. But some of the dynamic is very interesting and we can read this today in the Mishnah and the Talmud.

There is a whole tractate in the Mishnah and the two Talmuds of the order Moed, dealing in 24 chapters with the laws relating to the Sabbath and its observance.

Chapter 1 deals with the problems of “domains” and with questions concerning what may or may not be done on Friday before sunset. Chapter 2 deals with the kindling of the Sabbath lights. Chapters 3-4 are on keeping food warm or warming it up on the Sabbath. Chapter 5 concerns the injunction that one’s domestic animals rest on the Sabbath. Chapter 6 discusses what one may carry as part of one’s apparel, and includes an interesting discussion as to whether weapons are to be regarded as apparel. Chapter 7 is notable to its enumeration of the 39 principle categories of works forbidden on the Sabbath. It also discusses the sin-offering due for the inadvertent violation of the Sabbath and the minimal quantities which incur guilt. Chapter 8 continues the question of quantities, and Chapters 9-15 deal with the definitions of these various labors, and Chapter 16 discusses mainly the problems arising from conflagration. Chapters 17-18 deal with mukzeh [the prohibition of handling items (such as a pen and pencil)], chapter 19 with the problem of circumcision on the Sabbath, and Chapters 20-24 with a great variety of questions relating to the Sabbath, such as bathing, casting lots, attending to the dead, and feeding cattle.⁷²

These tractates cover what may or may not be done (i.e. work) on the Shabbat.

⁷¹ TAKANA: (Plural: Takanot). An enactment by the Rabbis in order to uphold the spirit of the Torah's laws.

⁷² *Encyclopedia Judaica*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House) Volume 14, page 1215.

What is Work (May-lach-ah)?

Both Pharisaical schools taught, as did Scripture, that one must not “work” (Hebrew: “may-lachah”) on the Shabbat. But each school had different ideas about what *was* “may-lachah” and therefore prohibited on the Shabbat. An example of this dynamic is written of between Hillel and Shammai over the eating an egg that was laid by a hen on the Shabbat.

The Scripture in Exodus 20:8-11 says that even your animals must not work on Shabbat. For the sake of space, I am going to oversimplify the dynamic here, but the gist of it is valid: The house of Shammai said it was ok to eat the egg, since that was not considered “work.” The house of Hillel said one must not eat an egg laid on Shabbat, since obviously the hen had to work to lay it. Generally, the more lenient Hillel would permit something that Shammai wouldn’t, except here.

The rules (Hebrew: “halakot” – “walkings⁷³”) regarding the Shabbat were, as stated in the Mishnah, “...are as mountains hanging by a hair, for scripture is scanty and the rules many.”⁷⁴ (Mishnah Hagigah 1.8) By the time of Yeshua, there were well over 1500 halakot regarding the feast days and Sabbath. It is no wonder why Yeshua said of the Pharisees, “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with {so much as} a finger.” (Matthew 23:4)

Yet, for all their faults, the Pharisees were simply trying to live out what the Scripture teaches by instilling various “rules” to follow. It must be asked, “Where did the

⁷³ Halakha guides not only religious practices and beliefs, but numerous aspects of day-to-day life. Halakha is often translated as “Jewish Law,” though a more accurate translation might be “the path” or “the way of walking.” The word is derived from the Hebrew root which means to go, to walk or to travel.

⁷⁴ Blackman, Philip, *Blackman Mishnayoth*, (Judaica Press: 1990), Mishnah Hagigah 1.8.

Pharisees come up with these rules?” The answer is: they deduced it from Scripture. Please follow my train of thought here:

The rabbis looked at Scripture showing that God rested on the Shabbat (Genesis 2). So, they said, He ceased from His creative “work” in the Heavens and on the earth and stopped (rested) on the Seventh-Day. They saw that the Scriptures tell God’s people in many places and ways to be like God: “Be holy as I am holy” – Leviticus 11:44, 45 (1 Peter 1:15). So, since God rested on the Seventh day, we must rest on the Seventh-Day.

The Building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle)

God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle (Mishkan) so that God could live among the people of Israel (Exodus 25:8). This Mishkan was to be built after the pattern shown Moses made in heaven (verse 9, 40; 26:30 cf., Hebrews 8:5). In other words, what we would see in the pattern of the Mishkan is a bit of “heaven coming down to earth.”

You would think that this would be the most important work of a people that ever occurred upon the face of the earth! That of God’s dwelling among men! So, chapters 25 through 34 go through all the elaborate preparations and plans necessary to cause this to come about. The tabernacle design and materials, the utensils for the priests, the garments and other clothing of the priests, the incense, the anointing oil, everything – had to be made precisely and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to come about. By chapter 35, everything is at the ready!

Now, as important as the building of the Mishkan was, just as we are about to *begin* to build this bit of heaven on earth, Chapter 35:1-2 states: “...These are the things which Adonai has ordered you to do. On six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is to

be a holy day for you, a Shabbat of complete rest in honor of Adonai. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death.”

It was like: “On your mark, get set...STOP!”

Can you imagine a runner getting ready to race? He has placed his marks on the track, where his feet will go, where his hands will go. He has tested it out to insure that they are where they should be for maximum effect. He is given the command, “On your mark!” He goes down to his position, carefully placing his hands and feet. He knows this will give him the edge to win the race.

“Get set!” He raises his body to the ready position. He is deliberately off-balance so that when he throws his body forward the momentum will raise him to the running position with maximum force.

The expected command should have been, “Go!” Yet, here we see a different, unexpected command – one in which God sets a precedent. The command was “Rest!”

In the case of the runner, there will be no lunging forward toward the goal. Instead, the runner must lower his body back to the earth and wait.

So, too, in the building of the Mishkan, God reprioritizes His people. Everything was ready to go, yet as important as the building of the Tabernacle was, the Sabbath was even more important!

So, the rabbi’s deduced that since God (in Heaven) ceased from His work on the Shabbat, from the imperative given prior to the building of the Mishkan (“heaven to earth”) to also cease from our work on the Shabbat, we can conclude that anything that results in one’s creating on the Shabbat would be forbidden. So, the rabbis deduced that

there were 40 less one, things prohibited on the Shabbat that were involved in the creation of the Mishkan. These were known as “*Av Melachot*.”⁷⁵

In the next Table, I will list the 39 prohibitions of work on the Shabbat and their Scriptural basis to show how little Scripture actually backs up the rabbinic halakot:

The Forty, Less One Prohibitions of Work on the Shabbat

Prohibited From:	Scripture (If any):
1) Carrying	Jeremiah 17:21-22
2) Burning	Exodus 35:3
3) Extinguishing	
4) Finishing	
5) Writing	
6) Erasing	
7) Cooking	
8) Washing	
9) Sewing	
10) Tearing	
11) Knotting	
12) Untying	
13) Shaping	
14) Plowing	
15) Planting	

⁷⁵ AV MELACHA: (Plural: Melachot) [lit. “father Melacha;” in this context: a basic, principle act of creation]. One of the 39 specific activities necessary for building and operating the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Each Av Melacha is a prime example of a Torah prohibition on Shabbat.

16) Reaping	
17) Harvesting	Gathering food – Exodus 16:26; Wood - Numbers 15:32-36
18) Threshing	
19) Winnowing	
20) Selecting	
21) Sifting	
22) Grinding	
23) Kneading	
24) Combing	
25) Spinning	
26) Dying	
27) Chain-stitching	
28) Warping	
29) Weaving	
30) Unraveling	
31) Building	
32) Demolishing	
33) Trapping	
34) Shearing	
35) Slaughtering	
36) Skinning	
37) Tanning	

38) Smoothing	
39) Marking	

Table 6

Now, this leads us to the dynamic that was causing so much tension between Yeshua and the Pharisees (and for that matter, the Pharisees and the Pharisees). When we look at the Gospel account of Matthew 12:1-2, we see the Pharisees accusing Yeshua's disciples of violating the Sabbath. From the previous figure on the 39 prohibitions, we will understand why they thought so.

According to their understanding, since the disciples of Yeshua were "picking heads of grain" (verse 1), they were harvesting or reaping (rules 16 and 17). Then, the Gospel account goes on to say in that verse that they were "eating them." Well, in order to "eat" grain, it must first be "winnowed" (rule 19) to remove the husk from the kernel of grain. Thus, they were also violating the rule against winnowing.

So what you see here is you have the dynamic which, by the way, has NO (or little) Scriptural basis for these rules, a violation – not of the Scripture – but rather of the tradition regarding what was prohibited on Shabbat.

Back then, as well as today, the Jewish community at large holds the Oral tradition to be on par, that is equal to [or even greater than], the written word. A person is every bit regarded to have violated the commandments regarding Shabbat if they broke the Oral tradition, as if they had broken the written word (Scripture).

Yeshua's response is most interesting in this passage. Note that He brings up what happened with David when he was fleeing Saul! He said, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those with him were hungry? He entered the House of God and ate the

Bread of the Presence! – which was prohibited, both to him and to his companions; it is permitted only to cohanim.” (Matthew 12:3-4)

We recall the incident in 1 Samuel 21:4-7. Per the Torah, *only* the priests were to eat the Bread of the Presence. No non-priest could eat from it! Leviticus 22:10 says, “No one who is not a cohen may eat anything holy, nor may a tenant or employee of a cohen eat anything holy.”

Thus, David was not allowed by Torah to eat the bread of the priests. Yet, it was allowed here and Yeshua cites this as justification for His disciples doing what they were on the Sabbath!

What was Yeshua actually saying? Before we answer that, let us go a bit farther in this passage of Matthew 12. He asks, “Or haven’t you read in the Torah that on the Shabbat the cohanim profane the Shabbat and yet are blameless?”

This strikes to the heart of the matter. We know that on Shabbat the priests are required to offer sacrifices. Numbers 28:9-10 says, “On Shabbat offer two male lambs in their first year and without defect, with one gallon of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with olive oil, and its drink offering. This is the burnt offering for every Shabbat, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.”

So, on the Sabbath, the priests work! They do what they do every day of the week! They offer sacrifices! And yet, as Yeshua notes, they are *innocent* of violating the Shabbat.

In addition, a baby boy is circumcised on the Sabbath if the eighth day of his life falls on the Shabbat in obedience to the covenant given to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 17:12 -

"And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a {servant} who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants."

Yeshua cites this when He heals a man on the Sabbath, ²² "For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on *the* Sabbath you circumcise a man. ²³ "If a man receives circumcision on *the* Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on *the* Sabbath?"

So, what's the point that Yeshua is getting to in *all* these passages? Matthew 12:6-8 hits to the heart of the Sabbath/work issue: "I tell you, there is in this place something greater than the Temple! If you knew what 'I want compassion rather than animal-sacrifice' meant, you would not condemn the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Shabbat!"

What He is saying in all these cases is this: the sustenance of life, the healing of a person (physically) and the work required to atone for the sins of the people (spiritual healing) are *greater* than the Sabbath.

As an exclamation mark to this, He enters the synagogue (verses 9-12) and heals a man with the shriveled hand. The bottom line is: it *is* permitted to do good on the Shabbat; whether for a sheep falling in the pit, or for a man with a withered hand that needs to be healed, or for picking grain on the Shabbat to sustain life.

As important as the building of the Mishkan was, the Shabbat was *greater*. As important as the Shabbat is, *compassion* is greater. Yeshua puts everything in proper order.

Compassion trumps Shabbat; but does not do away with it. What we are dealing with are singular acts of compassion at the moment that supersede, but do not replace or do away with the commandment.

Yeshua isn't saying that the Sabbath law against work is invalid or shouldn't be observed, He *IS* saying that *sometimes* we have to do something out of compassion that violates the Torah command. This shouldn't be a flagrant *disobedience* to the command but should only be done on an as-needed basis.

In Matthew 5, Yeshua affirms the perpetuity of the Torah and the Prophets, ¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Here we learn that fulfilling the Torah cannot mean canceling it out or overturning it. To argue that *fulfilling means cancellation* is faulty reasoning. Thinking so illogically can only mean one is either under some kind of deceiving enchantment or a fool, devoid of all reason. Many seem to have no ability to see Messiah's statement for what it plainly says. Our Messiah was clear: fulfilling has nothing to do with destroying or annulling, and in truth fulfilling is the opposite of annulment. Fulfilling means to complete or make whole; to bring to the full; to provide what was lacking. Messiah Yeshua came to make sure the Torah had all the necessary elements in it, especially the principal thing: His death and resurrection.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Hargis, Rabbi Dr. David M. *THE GLORY OF THE SABBATH*, Copyright © 1995-2007 Messianic Bureau International.

Yeshua was not speaking of the cancellation of the Torah commands, including the seventh-day Shabbat. Though He had difficulty with the Pharisees and Torah-teachers over the practice of the Shabbat (their Oral traditions), He had no issues with the Torah commandments of the Shabbat found within the Bible.

For too long people have been deceived into thinking that Messiah Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) broke the Sabbath in order to show us we were free from the Sabbath. The entire concept of Messiah breaking the Sabbath is a blasphemy and an affront to the Most High. It is born out of ignorance and rebellion.

Why would anyone want to be “free” from a gift of God? Actually, Messiah affirmed the Shabbat with the things that He did and only performed those deeds that were permissible on the Shabbat. His critics came against Him with their current traditions for Shabbat keeping, which were not commanded in the Torah. They were traditions of men, not commandments of God. Messiah Yeshua healed on the Shabbat because healing is a form of being freed from labor, which is central to the Shabbat. Also, Messiah Yeshua never committed sin. He never broke the Torah (*Teaching*, mistranslated as *Law*), which, by the way, was His own, the thing which He wrote Himself!⁷⁷

The Lord Yeshua is the Lord of the Shabbat, *not* the abolisher of it. He fulfills the Shabbat in His First Coming, since He is the one who correctly defines what is, or is not, to be done on that day. The Lord’s Day as specified in Scripture is found in Isaiah 58:13, “If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Shabbat a delight, Adonai’s holy day worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your own interests or speaking about them.”

Isaiah 58 has been an inspiration to many Believers, but it is interesting how the last verses have been ignored.

“If you keep your feet from breaking the Shabbat and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Shabbat a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will delight

⁷⁷ Ibid.

(oneg) yourself in the I AM, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.' The mouth of the I AM has spoken." Isaiah 58:13,14.

Notice that according to the Prophet, the *Lord's holy day* is the seventh day Shabbat. Now connect the above with: "*Delight yourself in the LoRD (YHVH) and he will give you the desires of your heart,*" Psalm 37:4.

Everyone wants to know how to get the Most High to give them the desires of their heart. *Delight in the LoRD* seems easy enough! There have been many fanciful interpretations of what it means to *delight in the LoRD*, but only one revelation of what this means is found in the Scriptures.

"*Delight*" here in Psalm 37:4 is the Hebrew word *oneg*, which is defined "to treat as a delicacy." There are very few places in the Scriptures where the word *oneg* is used. Yet, because it is a rarity, it will help us solve a mystery. There is one place, and only one, where it tells us exactly how to *delight in the LoRD*, even using the word *oneg*.

Here is the secret. The only place where we are told by God what delighting in Him is, is in Isaiah 58:13, 14. Any other interpretation for "*delight yourself in the LoRD*" is useless speculation and the imagination of men. The only way anyone can *delight in the LoRD* is to honor and obey the seventh day Sabbath. The reward for doing this is "*to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance*" of Jacob. It is sealed as a promise from "*the mouth of the LoRD.*" Also, as it says in Psalms 37:4, the only way anyone is promised to receive the "*desires of your heart*" is by delighting in the L_RD. In other words, if you make His Sabbath a delight, *oneg*, a delicacy in your life, you will receive your heart's desires.

It would seem that all people truly devoted to the Creator of the Shabbat would make haste to honor the Shabbat at all costs, what with the great payoff it carries! It would benefit anyone having a difficult time "*riding high*" in God's favor to examine closely the practice of the Sabbath. Test it by getting this part of your life in line with God's will, then see what will happen. I think you will be greatly pleased.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Ibid.

The Shabbat – a Shadow of Things to Come

Colossians 2:16-17 states, “So don’t let anyone pass judgment on you in connection with eating and drinking, or in regard to a Jewish festival or Rosh-Hodesh or Shabbat. These are a **shadow** of things that are coming, but the body is the Messiah.”

Just as the Torah itself (Hebrews 10:1), and the Mishkan (Exodus 25:9), and the Temple (Hebrews 8:5) are shadows and copies of the good things to come (that which is in Heaven) they are *not* the originals. This does *not* mean that the shadows and copies don’t have validity. They *DO* – very much so - else why should the priests offer sacrifices in the “shadow?” However, it *does* mean that they are *not* the real thing. Yeshua is the original. The heavenly tabernacle and heavenly sabbath are the reality. We are all in the shadow. As Yeshua is the “Lord of the Sabbath” while walking on this earth as God Incarnate, He fulfilled the Sabbath past and present.

The long-awaited future fulfillment of Yeshua as the Lord of the Shabbath is this: as man was created in the sixth day of creation, so man will reign and rule on this earth for 6,000 years. “A day to the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day” (2 Peter 3:8).

Back at creation, the Lord God gave us a blueprint. He created the world in six days and rested or rather "ceased" on the seventh. Yet, in his *ceasing* from his work on the seventh day, he *still created* something: the *pattern for seven day weekly cycle* ending in a day later named the Sabbath.

Exodus 20:9-11—“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of YHWH thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is

within thy gates: For in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore YHWH blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Other Scriptures point out that the Sabbath day is not a day to do your own pleasure or seek your own will, but is a day set aside for all of mankind (once it is clearly taught to all mankind in the Millennium) to focus especially on the Creator and his ways:

Isaiah 58:13— “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of YHWH, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words...”

Mark 2:27 “And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

Isaiah 66:23 [speaking of the Millennium] “And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.”

So, we see from this that the first six days are grouped as a period of time for man to pursue his own interests, but when the seventh day arrives he is to cease from that to honor God.

In establishing the seven-day week cycle, he established the cycle that humankind all over the world would follow to this very day. What was his purpose in doing this? If you study the Torah, you will find the many rehearsals (Moedim) that the Creator has given man. All of them have deep meaning and are intended to teach us truths and remind us year by year as we practice them. The weekly cycle rehearsal is no different. In it he is

teaching us about a part of his plan for mankind that lasts seven thousand years, which is only revealed later in the Bible.

Psalms 90:4—“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”

2 Peter 3:8—“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with YHWH as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

Rev 20:6—“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of the Messiah, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Thus, man is given a specific period of rule of 6,000 years in order to show how inadequate he is to deal with the problems of mankind – which originates in sin. At the completion of the 6,000th year (beginning the 7th day – or the 7,000th year), the Messiah will reign for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7). He is the completeness of the earthly government and there will be none after Him. He will reign and rule on the throne of David and is the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies.

When He rules, He will rule with a rod of iron. All nations, all people will have to bow down before Him. He will enforce His Shabbat in the intent with which it was given. Not with a sense of legalism and bondage, but with the sense of love and compassion. This is not so people will violate it without thought, but, instead, so that people will keep it and observe it in love for Him.

The Millennial Observance of the Sabbath

In the Millennial Reign of Messiah, the seventh-day Sabbath – as well as all the other Moedim - shall be observed. The sacrificial system will continue and the Levitical

priests will offer sacrifices. Ezekiel 45:17 says: "It shall be the prince's part {to provide} the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the drink offerings, at the feasts, on the new moons and on the sabbaths, at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel; he shall provide the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering and the peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel."

The future fulfillment of the Millennial Sabbath of Yeshua is pointed to in the Book of Hebrews 4: "1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh *day*: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; 5 and again in this *passage*, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST." 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest; He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 *So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.* 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience."

Yeshua is the Lord of the Shabbat. He is the fulfillment of the Shabbat. He is the reality of what the Torah points to regarding this Moed. Considering that the Shabbat was so important to Him, it should be as equally important to those who believe in Him.

Yet, sadly, this is not true in the Body of Messiah today – the Church has walked away from this Moed, as it has the others. The date on which the church changed its day of worship cannot be pinpointed. Many would like to believe that the Apostle Paul changed it, but this can be proven historically inaccurate. It can be established that the church made the changes to its stance on the Sabbath post second century.

There are clear quotations from early Christian history that show these changes:

Eusebius wrote: “All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day.”⁷⁹

Church Canon said: “**Canon 29**. Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor.”⁸⁰

Ignatius of Antioch wrote: “[T]hose who were brought up in the ancient order of things [i.e. Jews] have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s day, on which also our life has sprung up again by him and by his death”⁸¹

Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jew said:

“We too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they were enjoined [on] you— namely, on account of your transgressions and the hardness of your heart. . . . How is it, Trypho, that we would not observe those rites

⁷⁹ Eusebius's Commentary on the Psalms, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXIII, col. 1171

⁸⁰ Hefele, Charles Joseph, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. II, page 316

⁸¹ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians* 8 [A.D. 110]

which do not harm us — I speak of fleshly circumcision and Sabbaths and feasts? . . . God enjoined you to keep the Sabbath, and imposed on you other precepts for a sign, as I have already said, on account of your unrighteousness and that of your fathers . . ."⁸²

In his First Apology, Justin Martyr continues this thought: "But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead"⁸³

Tertullian, an early church historian wrote:

"Let him who contends that the Sabbath is still to be observed as a balm of salvation, and circumcision on the eighth day . . . teach us that, for the time past, righteous men kept the Sabbath or practiced circumcision, and were thus rendered 'friends of God.' For if circumcision purges a man, since God made Adam uncircumcised, why did he not circumcise him, even after his sinning, if circumcision purges? . . . Therefore, since God originated Adam uncircumcised and unobservant of the Sabbath, consequently his offspring also, Abel, offering him sacrifices, uncircumcised and unobservant of the Sabbath, was by him [God] commended [Gen. 4:1–7, Heb. 11:4]. . . . Noah also, uncircumcised—yes, and unobservant of the Sabbath—God freed from the deluge. For Enoch too, most righteous man, uncircumcised and unobservant of the Sabbath, he translated from this world, who did not first taste death in order that, being a candidate for eternal life, he might show us that we also may, without the burden of the law of Moses, please God"⁸⁴

Finally, in the *Didascalia*, an early Church writing, it says:

"The apostles further appointed: On the first day of the week let there be service, and the reading of the holy scriptures, and the oblation [sacrifice of the Mass], because on the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday] our Lord rose from the place of the dead, and on the first day of the week he arose upon the world, and on the first day of the week he ascended up to heaven, and on the first day of the week he will appear at last with the angels of heaven"⁸⁵

⁸² Martyr, Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 18, 21 [A.D. 155]

⁸³ Martyr, Justin, *First Apology* 67 [A.D. 155]

⁸⁴ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 2 [A.D. 203]

⁸⁵ *Didascalia* 2 [A.D. 225]

Origen, an Early Church Father, writes: "Hence it is not possible that the [day of] rest after the Sabbath should have come into existence from the seventh [day] of our God. On the contrary, it is our Savior who, after the pattern of his own rest, caused us to be made in the likeness of his death, and hence also of his resurrection."⁸⁶

Victorinus, in his *The Creation of the World* wrote:

"The sixth day [Friday] is called *parasceve*, that is to say, the preparation of the kingdom. . . . On this day also, on account of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we make either a station to God or a fast. On the seventh day he rested from all his works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the *parasceve* become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews . . . which Sabbath he [Christ] in his body abolished."⁸⁷

Eusebius writes in *Church History*: "They [the early saints of the Old Testament] did not care about circumcision of the body, neither do we [Christians]. They did not care about observing Sabbaths, nor do we. They did not avoid certain kinds of food, neither did they regard the other distinctions which Moses first delivered to their posterity to be observed as symbols; nor do Christians of the present day do such things."⁸⁸

Athanasius, *On Sabbath and Circumcision* writes: "The Sabbath was the end of the first creation, the Lord's day was the beginning of the second, in which he renewed and restored the old in the same way as he prescribed that they should formerly observe the Sabbath as a memorial of the end of the first things, so we honor the Lord's day as being the memorial of the new creation."⁸⁹

Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Catechetical Lectures* says: "Fall not away either into the sect of the Samaritans or into Judaism, for Jesus Christ has henceforth ransomed you.

⁸⁶ Origen, *Commentary on John 2:28* [A.D. 229]

⁸⁷ Victorinus, *The Creation of the World* [A.D. 300]

⁸⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History* 1:4:8 [A.D. 312]

⁸⁹ Athanasius, *On Sabbath and Circumcision* 3 [A.D. 345]

Stand aloof from all observance of Sabbaths and from calling any indifferent meats common or unclean."⁹⁰

Pope Gregory I, in his *Letters* stated:

"It has come to my ears that certain men of perverse spirit have sown among you some things that are wrong and opposed to the holy faith, so as to forbid any work being done on the Sabbath day. What else can I call these [men] but preachers of Antichrist, who when he comes will cause the Sabbath day as well as the Lord's day to be kept free from all work. For because he [the Antichrist] pretends to die and rise again, he wishes the Lord's day to be held in reverence; and because he compels the people to Judaize that he may bring back the outward rite of the law, and subject the perfidy of the Jews to himself, he wishes the Sabbath to be observed. For this which is said by the prophet, 'You shall bring in no burden through your gates on the Sabbath day' [Jer. 17:24] could be held to as long as it was lawful for the law to be observed according to the letter. But after that the grace of almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, has appeared, the commandments of the law which were spoken figuratively cannot be kept according to the letter. For if anyone says that this about the Sabbath is to be kept, he must needs say that carnal sacrifices are to be offered. He must say too that the commandment about the circumcision of the body is still to be retained. But let him hear the apostle Paul saying in opposition to him: 'If you be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing' [Gal. 5:2]."⁹¹

In short, God never changed the Sabbath Day, it was men who, many of whom held anti-Semitic viewpoints.

God never changed the day for the Sabbath (in Hebrew, Shabbat). The biblical Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. Many of the early church leaders who originally changed the observance of the Sabbath day to Sunday were anti-Semitic. Justin Martyr, early in the second century, in his dialog with Trypho the Jew said, "It was by reason of your sins and the sins of your fathers that, among other precepts, God imposed upon you the observance of the Sabbath as a mark." This mark, he proposed, was to single the Jewish people out for the punishment they so well deserved for their infidelities.

Instead of recognizing that Jesus Himself said that "the Sabbath was made for man," (Mark 2:27) the Sabbath was seen as part of the curse of that hated and despised race, the Jews. The post-apostolic church instituted

⁹⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4:37 [A.D. 350]

⁹¹ Pope Gregory I, *Letters* 13:1 [A.D. 597]

another day of worship (Sunday) to separate themselves from all things Jewish. Their claim was to recognize the day of resurrection but this claim opposed what God had instituted in Genesis 2:1-3 at creation and nowhere do the Scriptures show that God changed His mind.

So what does this mean to us today? Freedom is the key New Covenant word. You are free to worship God on any day of the week, however, there is a great blessing in celebrating the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13, 14.) Also the human body was designed to need a day of rest. Frankly, I do not rest when I go to church on Sunday. But I do enjoy relaxing, not working and being with God and family on the Sabbath (Saturday).

The Saturday Sabbath was observed by the first church. It will be practice in the Millennium (Ezekiel 45:17). So why should we lose the blessing now just because the day was changed by church leaders centuries ago?⁹²

⁹² Roth, Sid, *God never changed the Sabbath Day*, 2007, One in Messiah Ministries, Available at <http://www.oneinmessiahministries.org>

CHAPTER 4
Pesach (Passover) – Leviticus 23:4-8

⁴ `These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. ⁵ `In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. ⁶ `Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ `On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. ⁸ `But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.' "

Passover, The Arrival of Spring

The holy day, Pesach (Passover), announces the arrival of spring on the Jewish calendar. Its importance to the biblical plan can be seen in the timing of the festival. As one looks at the major holy days in Scripture, a striking parallel can be seen. Major days are bunched into two groups in two different times of the year. The spring holy days of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and Pentecost occur within a fifty-day time span from March to June. A long summer intervenes until the fall holy days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, usually in September and/or October. The chronology of these days perfectly fits the salvation plan of God through his Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth as you will see.

The meaning of Passover is found in Leviticus 23. The Hebrew word 'pesach' means 'to spring, jump or pass over' something; hence the English name, Passover. This is a historic reference to God's deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt as recorded in Exodus.

Because of the increasing hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God had to send ten plagues to persuade the blinded leader to let Israel go. As devastating as the first nine plagues were, it wasn't until the tenth and final plague that Pharaoh acquiesced to the God of Israel. In this judgment, God said he would send the Angel of Death over the land of Egypt to take the firstborn boy of every household.

With every judgment of God there is also a way of escape. Any household that put the blood of the sacrificial lamb on its doorpost was given a special promise: '...when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you...' (Exodus 12:13).

Passover clearly typifies redemption in a dramatic way. It is a holy day commemorating God's deliverance of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. Yet Pesach also holds a greater prophetic picture of God's plan for world redemption."⁹³

⁹³ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, page 26

The Seder

During the Seder, various things are done. In order to perform them, the participants would read and follow along with the Order of Service, called the Haggadah. A copy is used by each participant and is essential for understanding and participation. Each Haggadah retells the story of Passover to all generations. As the children of Israel observe Passover, they are to observe it as though they themselves are going through the Exodus with their ancestors.

There are many elements to the Seder: the matzah (unleavened bread), the maror (bitter herbs), the charoset (apple/fig mixture), the salt water, the shank bone of a lamb, the parsley, and the four cups of wine.

There is an obligation to drink four cups of wine (or pure grape juice) during the Seder. The Mishnah says (Pesachim 10:1) that even the poorest man in Israel has an obligation to drink. Each cup is connected to a different part of the Seder. The first is for Kiddush (Sanctification) (קידוש), the second is for 'Magid' (retelling the story of Passover) (מגיד), the third is for Birkat Hamazon (the cup after the meal) (ברכת המזון) and the fourth is for Hallel (Praise) (הלל).

The Four Cups represent the four expressions of deliverance promised by God Exodus 6:6-7: "I will bring out," "I will deliver," "I will redeem," and "I will take."

The Vilna Gaon relates the Four Cups to four worlds: this world, the Messianic age, the world at the revival of the dead, and the world to come.⁹⁴

Passover – A Permanent Ordinance

The Passover was established as a permanent observance by God before Sinai: Exodus 12: ⁴² "It is a night to be observed for the LORD for having brought them out

⁹⁴ Wikipedia, *The Passover Seder*, Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover_Seder

from the land of Egypt; this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.”

It is the oldest continuously observed feast in existence today, celebrated for some 3,500 years. It was celebrated in the Sinai wilderness one year after Israel left Egypt (Num. 9:1-14); it was celebrated as the Jewish people came into the land of Israel (Josh. 5:10-12); it was celebrated in the days of King Hezekiah (2 Chr. 30) and King Josiah (2 Ki. 23:21-23; 2 Chr. 35:1-19); it was celebrated after the return from Babylonian captivity (Ezra 6:19-20); and Passover was celebrated extensively in the days of Jesus (Jn. 11:55). Even today, more Jewish people keep Passover than any of the other Jewish holy days. It is a strong, cohesive force within the fabric of Jewish culture and community.

The observance of Passover was so important that God graciously gave an alternate date for those who were unable to observe Passover on Nisan 14. Those who had become defiled by touching a dead body or were away on a long journey could celebrate Passover thirty days later on the fourteenth of the second month (Num. 9:1-14; cf. 2 Chr. 30:2,15). None of the other divinely appointed feasts had this accommodation.⁹⁵

In Exodus 12:14, God says, “This will be a day for you to remember and celebrate as a festival to Adonai; from generation to generation you are to celebrate it by a perpetual regulation: and in verse 24 He says, “You are to observe this as a law, you and your descendants forever.”

Passover was to be an annual observance by the Israelites and in fact was one of three pilgrimage feasts that Israel was to observe by Torah command: Exodus 23:14-17; Exodus 34:18-24; Deuteronomy 16:1-17). Therefore, it was no accident that there were multitudes observing this Feast at the time that Yeshua enters into Jerusalem for the last time (Matthew 21:1-10), at the beginning of the week He was to be executed. It was a time that Jews and proselytes came to Jerusalem to observe the pilgrimage feast.

⁹⁵ Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 51

It must be remembered that Passover was not just an observance for those of Hebrew heritage, but for all those redeemed from Mitzraim (Egypt), including the “mixed multitude (12:38) that followed Israel into the Sinai. Hence, it was open for the “foreigner staying with you” provided they too were circumcised (Exodus 12:48).

In the New Testament, it is obvious that Shaul (the Apostle Paul) taught the Passover to his Corinthian believers (following this practice), since he says in 1 Corinthians 10: “⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Removal of the Leaven

Before the arrival of Passover, painstaking preparation takes place within the Jewish home to rid it of all leavened bread and related products. Houses are scrubbed, pockets are turned inside out and laundered, cooking utensils are scalded, and everyday dinnerware and flatware are replaced with the finest Passover china, silver, and crystal.⁹⁶

No doubt, the understanding that leaven represents sin was passed on from Shaul to his Corinthian readers. They understood the significance of removing the leaven from their homes as removing sin from their lives. Thus, the applicability of this feast is made not only to the Jewish people, but also to what has come to be called, the “Church.”

It is a fact, according to Church history, that the Church continued to observe the Passover at the *same time* as the Jews until Constantine forbade it at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. It was the Council of Nicaea, under Constantine’s oversight, which

⁹⁶ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 54

formalized the observance of Easter (not Scripture or apostolic practice) over Passover. Thus, the western church (Rome) prompted the move away not only from the “Jewish” Sabbath, but also its observance of Passover toward its counterpart, the pagan Spring Feast of “Easter.”]

After the Council of Nicaea in 325, the Emperor Constantine directed that all churches were to keep the feast on the same day. His letter cites the scandal of Christian celebrating the feast on different days as a reason for this decree, but it appears that such variation was less of a concern than were the Quartodeciman and Syrian practices of continuing to use the Jewish reckoning to set the date of their celebration. The letter argued that lack of accuracy in Jewish calendrical calculation sometimes resulted in the Passover – and hence Easter – being celebrated prior to the actual spring equinox, and that this was a grave error. But the real motivation was clearly a desire to distance Christianity from Judaism: “it seemed unsuitable that we should celebrate that holy festival following the custom of the Jews.”⁹⁷

Sadly, because of the Council of Nicaea and Constantine, the Church has lost the understanding of what Yeshua, the Passover Lamb has actually fulfilled for us in this Moed.

The Passover Lamb

Let us look at what transpired on this Moed. “Most of this tradition was fully developed before the first century. It is not surprising to see numerous references to Passover in the New Covenant. Passover is mentioned in the Gospel accounts (see Luke 2:41 and John 5:1, 6:4), as well as the book of Acts (see Acts 12:3-4). By far the most

⁹⁷ *Passover and Easter, Origin and History to Modern Times*, Copyright 1999, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, pages 92, 93

famous account is the last Passover celebrated by Yeshua and his Jewish disciples in an upper room (Matthew 26 and Luke 22). In these passages one sees the traditions of the first century and some spiritual lessons taught by the Messiah.

Among the traditional items mentioned are the lamb (Luke 22:8), bitter herbs (Matthew 26:23), the washings (John 13:1-15), the four cups of wine (Matthew 26 and Luke 22) and Matzah (Matthew 26:26). The lamb reminds one of the means of redemption, the blood of the sacrifice. In this case, Messiah became our Pesach (John 1:29).⁹⁸

As per Scripture, Exodus 12: 3 says - "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household...⁵ 'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.⁶ 'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight."

So, on the tenth of Nisan the priests carried the lambs for the Passover sacrifices into the Temple, as commanded by God (see Ex. 12:3). The lambs were then examined for four days and if no blemish or defect could be found, they qualified for the sacrifice and were killed on the fourteenth (Wednesday) of Nisan.

Yeshua "the Lamb of God" went up to Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan, and for four days was questioned and examined by the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, and Sadducees. However, He always left them speechless, because they could find no fault with His impeccable logic and character (Matthew 21:23-27; 22:23-46) and in the end no fault could be found in Him by the highest authority in the land (ref. Luke 23:4,14; John 18:38, 19:4,6).

⁹⁸ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, pages 28-29

Therefore, He was the perfect, complete and qualified sacrifice: "But with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:19-20).

Accepted as the perfect Lamb, He was slaughtered with all the other lambs that same day at 3:00 p.m. on the 14th of Nisan (Wednesday). Matthew 27: ⁴⁶ "About the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' that is, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?'" ⁴⁷ And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, *began* saying, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink. ⁴⁹ But the rest of *them* said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit."

I am in continual awe at the presence of mind of our Lord Yeshua, as – even as He is dying on the cross – He literally cites to those around Him how He (and they) is fulfilling the Scripture. When He cries out the words, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani" He directs them to these words in the Kethuvim (Writings) regarding what is now transpiring before them. You see, for centuries the Bible was not divided up into chapter and verse as we have it today. Instead, a passage was cited by simply reciting the first few words of that passage, by which it would be known.

For instance, back then (and even today when the weekly Torah portion is read in the synagogue), if I wanted you to turn to Genesis 1, I would say, "Bereshith." The first parsha (portion) of the Torah is Bereshith, which means, "In the beginning." If you were

a Jew, you would know that I would be instructing you to turn in your Bibles to Genesis 1:1.

Now, to the scene at the cross on the day Yeshua was crucified: the Gospel accounts depict Yeshua on the Cross, surrounded by His enemies who were “wagging their heads” saying, "You who {are going to} destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also along with the scribes and elders, were mocking {Him} and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. "HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE {Him} now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" (Matthew 27:39-43)

Yeshua’s response to them is amazing. He replies with the first few words identifying what we today call Psalm 22.

When we go to that Psalm, we see a “snapshot” taken centuries before the event happened, which begins with, “My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In verses 7 and 8 it says, “⁷ All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*, ⁸ "Commit *yourself* to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

Then it continues to describe the crucifixion scene: ¹⁴ “I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They

look, they stare at me; ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.”

It was as if Yeshua was saying, “If you really want to know what is going on here and now, turn with Me to Psalm 22. You’re the ones who surround Me, you’re the ones who are tormenting Me, you’re the ones who are crucifying Me. There you are, in this picture. Recognize the time of your visitation! I AM the One who has come to deliver you!”

Thus, we again see the fulfillment of the Word of God, confirming Yeshua’s words to His Disciples spoken after His death and resurrection, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

Yeshua was the perfect Passover Lamb and as such, even after His death, He was fulfilling the Torah. The Torah specifies that the bones of the Passover Lamb *not* be broken! Exodus 12:46: "It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.”

“Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and {that} they might be taken away.” (John 19:31)

Torah speaks against leaving a body hanging on a tree overnight. Deuteronomy 21:22 and 23 says: "If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

Leaving Yeshuas' and the two "thieves'" bodies on the cross would have defiled the Land. Especially since this was before a "high Sabbath."

The "day of preparation" was not that of the weekly Sabbath. It was the "day of preparation" of the Sabbath of "Passover" or more appropriately "Unleavened Bread" – another of the Levitical Moedim – which I shall address in a later chapter.

Proof of that comes from John 19:14, where it says specifically: "Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour."

Suffice it to say at this point that there are more "sabbaths" in the Torah than just the weekly Seventh-day Sabbath. Most of Christendom associates the Sabbath here in the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion with the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. Yet, the Gospels make it clear that this was no ordinary Sabbath, but a "high" Sabbath – not the weekly Sabbath, but another one.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8) begins with a sabbath on the first day and ends with a sabbath on the seventh day: ⁶ "Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. ⁸ 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.' "

It was *before* this Sabbath that Yeshua was crucified! And because it was a curse to the Land to leave a dead body on the tree, the bodies of all those crucified were to be taken down!

Now, when Pilate's soldiers came to Yeshua on the Cross, they discovered He was already dead and thus, did not have to break His leg bones to hasten His death as they did with the other two. One soldier, however, did thrust his spear in His side to insure that He indeed had expired, and again, in so doing, fulfilled another prophecy found in Zechariah 12:10 - "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn" and Isaiah 53:5 - "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed."

Yeshua, therefore, even in His death fulfilled the prophecies. He was the perfect unspotted Passover Lamb. Yet, there are other Messianic prophecies yet to be talked about regarding His death and resurrection.

The Day of Yeshua's Crucifixion

Today, the Church celebrates "Good Friday" in order to honor the death of Yeshua on our behalf. As we have already discussed, Yeshua certainly was not crucified on a Friday. However, since Passover could be any day of the week, it *is* possible that Yeshua could have been crucified any day of the week. So, in this light, from the Gospel narrative, we can establish that Yeshua was crucified either on a Wednesday, or a Thursday.

Why is that? Well, according to Yeshua, there was to be a solitary "sign" to Israel that He was the true Messiah. He said, "...for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS

AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days *and* three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:40)

We know that He had to be in the earth three days *AND* three nights! If He were in the earth for less than that, the “sign” would not be fulfilled, and therefore, He would not be the promised One.

Now, the Gospel accounts DO tell us when He rose again! This will enable us to count backward “three days AND three nights” to discover when He was crucified. Matthew 28 says: “¹ Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first {day} of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. ² And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. ³ And his appearance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶ "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. ⁷ "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.””

“After the Sabbath” here refers to the weekly Sabbath, since this is clarified by “as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.” The first day of the week begins, as do all Hebrew days, after sundown the previous day. Therefore, Yeshua could have risen *anytime* after sundown, Saturday night!

If we count backward, then Friday night would have been “night three” of “the three days and three nights” described by Yeshua in His “sign,” “night two” would have been Thursday night and “night one” would have been Wednesday night.

This would place Yeshua’s crucifixion as being on a Wednesday, not Friday. Then if we counted forward, Thursday would be “day one,” Friday would be “day two,” and Saturday would be “day three.” We would then have our required “three days and three nights” of the sign of Jonah without having to count portions of days as complete days.

We could easily get “three days and three nights” from a Wednesday or (by counting a portion of a day and night) at the *very latest*, a Thursday crucifixion – but it is *impossible* to get “three days AND three nights” from a “Good Friday” crucifixion.

It is my personal conviction that Yeshua was crucified on a Wednesday and buried just before sundown that day. Here’s why: The question is asked, “If Yeshua died when the Passover lambs were slaughtered *as we said earlier*, on a Wednesday, how was it that He celebrated Passover with His Disciples the *night before He was killed?*”

The Passover of the Essenes

To answer this question, we need to closely re-examine the Gospel accounts concerning His Passover Seder. We read in Luke 22,⁷ “Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover *lamb* had to be sacrificed.⁸ And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it.”⁹ They said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare it?”¹⁰ And He said to them, “When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.”

Obviously, Yeshua celebrated some sort of Passover with His Disciples. Yet, we must wonder, was it a *real* Passover, since this was the day that the Passover Lambs were killed (the day before He was killed), or was it something else?

The clue to the answer lies right here in the text. The man that the Disciples were to meet was “carrying a pitcher of water.” What’s so unusual about that? It must be noted that “carrying water” was not man’s work back then in the Middle East. Even today, in some African and Middle Eastern countries, it is still not “man’s work.” It is considered “women’s work.”

Evidence of this is brought out in other Scriptural passages: Genesis 24:11-20 – Rivkah (Rebecca) at the well and John 4:7 – Yeshua and the Samaritan woman at the well. Men did not draw water! Except *ONE* group of men – the Essenes!

The Essene sect did not have women! Therefore, the men would have to do what was regarded as “women’s work” in that community.

Pliny the Elder notes of the Essenes:

By the western shores [of the Dead Sea], but away from their harmful effects, live a solitary people, the Essenes, wonderful besides all others in the world, being without any women and renouncing all sexual desire, having no money, and with only palm trees as companions.⁹⁹

Also, the Essene sect also did not hold property in the community as “private” property. All within the community had access to use of the property of the community.

When they enter the sect, they must surrender all of their money and possessions into the common fund, to be put at the disposal of everyone; one single property for the whole group.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 5:18:73

¹⁰⁰ Josephus, Flavius, *The Jewish War*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1959. page 125

So, when Yeshua tell His Disciples, “And you shall say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’”¹² “And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there.”¹³ And they left and found *everything* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover,” (Luke 22) He is seeking access to property shared in common with those who walked in the Essene community, which Yeshua’s cousin John “The Baptizer” obviously did.

It is thought by many that the Essenes only lived in the Qumran community located by the Dead Sea where the “Dead Sea Scrolls” were found. But this is a misconception. The Essenes, besides Qumran, had communities in cities, such as Jerusalem.

Evidence that Essenes lived not only at Qumran, near the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, but also in Jerusalem comes from several sources, including the scrolls themselves (assuming the scrolls constitute an Essene library). The famous War Scroll, which describes an apocalyptic battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, refers to the sounding of trumpets when the victorious forces of light "return from battle against the enemy when they journey to the congregation (or community [hahedah]) in Jerusalem.”¹⁰¹

Now to the point that leads me to Yeshua’s Wednesday crucifixion, the Essenes considered the calendar of the Pharisees and Sadducees an abomination and so they celebrated their Passover the *day before* the Temple (and the rest of Israel) did!

D. Thomas Lancaster, educational director of First Fruits of Zion, a Messianic educational organization writes:

¹⁰¹ Pixner, Bargil, *Jerusalem’s Essene Gateway Where the Community Lived in Jesus’ Time*, Biblical Archaeological Review, May/June 1997

In the days of the Master, there were several competing calendar systems, just as it is in our own day. The Essenes kept a solar calendar. The Jubilee calendar is different yet. But the vast majority of world Jewry followed the Pharisaic reckoning (which was the *Aviv* barley reckoning as determined by the Sanhedrin).¹⁰²

The Essenes sacrificed their Passover lambs *the day before* the rest of Israel sacrificed theirs and observed their Passover the night before the rest of Israel did theirs! In the Jubilee calendar of the Essenes the Passover *always* fell on Wednesday! While Wednesday was the *day* that the Essenes observed their sabbath of Passover, we must remember, the Hebrew day *begins* at sundown the *previous* day, which is Tuesday at sundown! Therefore Yeshua ate His Passover on Tuesday night at sunset at the *same time* as the Essene community did! This means that He had to be crucified the very next day, on Wednesday, at the *same time* that the Jewish community at large slaughtered their Passover lambs so that they could celebrate their Passover later that evening.

At the Library of Congress website, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/scr2.html>, it states that fragments of the Qumran Community scrolls were displayed at the Library of Congress from May - August 1993. They were provided courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The exhibit captions and translations (below) provide background on the fragments and their relationships with the other Dead Sea Scrolls, the Qumran Community, and its Library.

One of these scrolls is called the “*Calendrical Document Scroll*.” It is noted at the Library of Congress website:

A significant feature of the community was its calendar, which was based on a solar system of 364 days, unlike the common Jewish lunar calendar, which

¹⁰² Lancaster, D. Thomas, *Lunar Calendar and the Aviv Barley What is the Correct Rendering for the Appointed Times?* Copyright First Fruits of Zion, www.ffoz.org, March 16, 2005

consisted of 354 days. The calendar played a weighty role in the schism of the community from the rest of Judaism, as the festivals and fast days of the group were ordinary work days for the mainstream community and vice versa.

According to the calendar, the new year always began on a Wednesday, the day on which God created the heavenly bodies. The year consisted of fifty-two weeks, divided into four seasons of thirteen weeks each, and the festivals consistently fell on the same days of the week. It appears that these rosters were intended to provide the members of the "New Covenant" with a time-table for abstaining from important activities on the days before the dark phases of the moon's waning and eclipse (duqah).¹⁰³

As a result, the Day of Atonement *always* fell on a Friday; Tabernacles on a Wednesday; *Passover on a Wednesday*; and the Feast of Weeks on a Sunday:

...Qumran saw its calendar as corresponding to ‘the certain law from the mouth of God (IQH xx [formerly xii], 9). Its unbroken rhythm meant furthermore that the first day of the year and of each subsequent season always fell on the same day of the week. For the Essenes this was Wednesday, since according to Genesis 1, 14-19, it was on the fourth day that the sun and the moon were created. Needless to add, the same monotonous sequence also implied that all the feasts of the year always fell on the same day of the week: Passover, the fifteenth day of the first month, was always celebrated on a Wednesday; the Feast of Weeks, the fifteenth day of the third month, always on a Sunday; the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, on a Friday; the Feast of Tabernacles, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, on a Wednesday, etc.¹⁰⁴

Finally, according to a recent article published by the Zenit News Corporation, dated April 6, 2007: the “*Pope Notes Hypothesis on Date of Passover and Says Christ Likely Followed Essene Calendar*”:

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 6, 2007 (Zenit.org). - It is likely that Jesus followed the calendar of the Essenes of Qumran, possibly explaining some contradictions within the Gospel accounts of the Passover, says Benedict XVI. The Holy Father said that according to an interpretation of the texts,

¹⁰³ Library of Congress, *Calendrical Document Scroll*, December 8, 2004, Available at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/scr2.html#calend>

¹⁰⁴ Geza Vermes, translator, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, copyright 2004, Geza Vermes, pages 78, 79

"still not accepted by all," Jesus "celebrated Passover with his disciples probably according to the calendar of Qumran, that is to say, at least one day earlier -- he celebrated without a lamb, like the Qumran community who did not recognize the Temple of Herod and was waiting for a new temple."¹⁰⁵

So, reinforced even by non-Jewish sources – none less than the Pope - it is noted that Yeshua celebrated His Passover with His Disciples at the same time that the Essene community celebrated its' Passover– which is the night *BEFORE* the rest of the Jewish community celebrated theirs! Thus, He was able to celebrate a valid Passover with His Disciples (on Tuesday night) and was *STILL* able to be offered up as a sacrifice the next day, as the Passover lambs were killed in the Temple on Wednesday!

Now, see how this makes more sense of the passage in the light of its' Hebraic roots? If we take away the Hebraic understanding of the New Testament, we lose the meaning of what God is really telling us in His Word! We in the Body of Messiah need to get back to the Hebrew roots of our faith and not be content with the “tradition” of the Church!

In all ways, through the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, Yeshua is the perfect, sinless Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29) - "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Peter says, "...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ (1 Peter 1:18, 19)."

So, we were (past tense) redeemed by the sinless, precious blood of Yeshua, the true Lamb of God.

¹⁰⁵ Zenit News Corporation, APRIL 6, 2007

The Blood of the New Covenant

On the night He was betrayed, Yeshua took the third cup, the Cup of Redemption which prefigured His death on the cross, and blessed it and said, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ **for this is My blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26)

Shaul writes in 1 Corinthians 11: ²³ "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

The third cup (again, to remind you, this is the cup of Redemption) represents the shed blood upon the cross which institutes the New Covenant.

The typology was similar to that given by Moses in the institution of the Sinaitic Covenant (which the people broke) in Exodus 24:8, where he says, "**Behold the blood of the covenant**, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

The writer of the book of Hebrews affirms this when he writes: ¹⁸ "Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the

book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." (Hebrews 9)

Though the typology matches in the institution of both covenants, it will not be until the *death* of Yeshua that the "New Covenant" is *made valid*: ¹⁵ "For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. ¹⁷ For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives." (Hebrews 9)

After Yeshua died He rose again on the third day and anointed the Holy place in the Heavens with His own blood: ²³ "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews 9)

What the writer of the Book of Hebrews is here talking about is *NOT* the Passover Feast! He is talking about *Yom Kippur*! This is clearly seen in verse 25 where it speaks of the High Priest entering "the Holy Place year by year with blood that is not his own."

It must be understood clearly: According to the Law, the Passover Lamb did *NOT* take away *ANY* sins! Yet, here at His Last Supper, Yeshua analogized the blood of the third cup of Passover to His own blood about to be shed on the cross!

It will be through that blood that the New Covenant will be established, in similar type to the blood shed by animals in the establishment of the first covenant. Yet, though the typology of the blood of the Passover Lamb is used here by Yeshua, it will not be until the Moed of Yom Kippur that we will have the *complete* fulfilling of this process of the institution of the New Covenant, which we shall see later in our section dealing with Yom Kippur.

The Future Prophetic Role of the Lamb

There is yet a future prophetic role of Passover that is still to be fulfilled by the Messiah. As mentioned earlier, at the Passover Seder, we fill our cups with wine four times. This is because God made four promises, all of which were kept immediately at the first Passover:

- 1) I will *free* you from the burdens of the Egyptians and
- 2) *deliver* you from their bondage,
- 3) I will *redeem* you with an outstretched arm...
- 4) And I will *take* you to be My people. (Exodus 6:6-7)

In remembrance of this fourfold redemption, we fill our cups four times, give blessing to God, and partake of the wine. The ceremony of the four cups is so spaced throughout the Seder that the first marks the beginning; it is the Kiddush; the second marks the end of our review of the past, offering thanks to God for help in ages gone by; the third comes after dinner, as thanksgiving for the blessings of the present; and the fourth, toward the end, is a toast to the future that lies in God's hands.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Trepp, Leo, *The Complete Book of Jewish Observance*, copyright 1980 by Leo Trepp, published by Behrman House, Inc., New York: New York, page183

As already mentioned, the first cup is the Kiddush (Sanctification), the second is the cup of Plagues, the third cup is the cup of Redemption and the fourth cup is the cup of Hallel – Praise. In it, we look toward the future when we are in God’s Kingdom and under His rule forever.

When Yeshua approached His crucifixion, at His Last Passover Seder, they came to the place where He said, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” (Matthew 26:29).

The cup that He would not drink with His Disciples was the third cup - the cup of redemption. It is this cup that Yeshua did not drink with His Disciples at the Seder, because He would soon “drink” of this cup on the cross.

On the night that He was betrayed, He prayed to the Father as Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, *let this cup* pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you *men* could not keep watch with Me for one hour?”⁴¹ “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁴² He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away *unless I drink it*, Your will be done.” (Matthew 26:39-42)

Yeshua would not “drink” the cup of Redemption in “type” here on the cross – He would “drink” it in the reality! He didn’t need to symbolically drink of the third cup at His Last Passover Seder – He would actually “drink” it with His death on the cross.

Thus, we see His fulfillment of our Redemption by His own blood, which the wine that His Disciples drank that night in the third cup represented: “Drink from it, all of

you; ²⁸ for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:27-28)

He actually accomplished our Redemption [past tense] with His own blood on the cross – fulfilling the literal meaning of the third cup.

Yet, at the Last Seder, He also hinted toward the future - “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on *until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.*”

This hint points toward the fourth cup – the cup of Hallel! When we are in the Messianic Kingdom, at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), we will drink this cup with Him!

Though the Jewish community at large does not believe in Yeshua as the Messiah, they *DO* believe in the promise of the future Messianic Kingdom and this is represented to them in the fourth cup as well!

Yet, there is a *fifth cup* at the traditional Seder that is *not* drunk by the participants at the Passover Seder today. It is the cup of Elijah. At the table, there is a place reserved with a cup that is filled, but is left untouched – reflecting a fifth pledge that God made with Israel, but is yet unfulfilled: “I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the Lord (Exodus 6:8).”

The Rabbis were not agreed as to whether we are bound to drink to a promise not yet translated into reality. In general, when they could not come to any conclusion, they would state: ‘Let us wait for Elijah, herald of the Messiah; he will decide.’ They, therefore, ruled that the fifth cup be placed on the table and filled, but that no one drink from it. It is the cup of Elijah.

The word of the Rabbis came to be embellished. Even today the right to the Land of Israel has been widely challenged. Perhaps absolute security will have to wait the coming of Messianic times. Elijah, guardian of Israel, invoked at the end of every Sabbath, at every circumcision, is equally the herald of the new age of God (Mal. 3:23-24) [Jewish Bible]. The cup of Elijah has come to demonstrate both our firm trust that this age will come and our determination to work for it. As we read the third section of the Seder, revealing the vista of the future, we open the door for Elijah. Perhaps he will come tonight.¹⁰⁷

Elijah heralds the Messiah in Malachi 3: "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:1)

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse." (Malachi 4:5, 6)

In the First Coming, this Elijah was Yochanan (John) the Baptizer: "And if you are willing to accept {it,} John himself is Elijah who was to come." (Matthew 11:14) In the Second Coming, it will be Elijah, himself!

There are many passages in the Book of Revelation which convey the future mission of the Lamb: Revelation 5:6 – 13; 6:1-16; 7:9-17; 8:1; 14:1-10 and 15:3 during the Great Tribulation period.

Therefore, all these New Testament passages are focused upon the past, present and future mission of the Lamb, the perfect, sinless, unspotted sacrifice. Thus, in the First Coming and Second Coming, there is an Elijah: the fulfillment of Passover past and

¹⁰⁷ IBID., page 183-184.

Passover future and there is the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb in Passover past and future.

Yeshua, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is the focus and fulfillment of it all!

CHAPTER 5

The Feast of Unleavened Bread – Leviticus 23:6-8

⁶ 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. ⁸ 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.' "

The Bread of Affliction

Israel's second feast is named after the bread which is required to be eaten during the holiday. The Hebrew Scriptures call this feast *Hag Hamatzot*. *Matzah* and the plural *matzot* are the Hebrew words for 'unleavened bread.' Therefore, this holiday is known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. An understanding of the practical truth taught by this important feast is absolutely vital for godly living today.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a reminder of God's miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage, for when Israel fled from Egypt in the middle of the night, there was no time for bread dough to rise. So the Lord commanded, 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life' (Dt. 16:3; cf. Ex. 12:39).

The Observance of the Feast

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is observed in the early spring (March-April). It begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and lasts for seven days. Because the Feast of Unleavened Bread (a seven-day holiday) begins the day after Passover (a one-day holiday), often the two holidays are blurred together and collectively referred to as 'the eight days of Passover.' In the days of the Second Temple (in Jesus' time), it was also common to call all eight days the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lk. 22:1, 7).¹⁰⁸

Along with Pesach, which we have already studied, "Hag ha Matzah" – the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is also a forever observance. Exodus 12:15-17, "For seven days you are to eat matzah – on the first day remove the leaven from your houses. For whoever eats hametz (leavened bread] from the first to the seventh day is to be cut off from Israel.

¹⁰⁸ Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 65

On the first and seventh days, you are to have an assembly set aside for God. On these days no work is to be done, except what each must do to prepare his food; you may do only that. You are to observe the festival of matzah, for on this very day I brought your divisions out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you are to observe this day from generation to generation by a perpetual regulation.”

As already mentioned in the Passover, it is obviously something that Shaul (Paul) taught his Corinthian believers (1 Corinthians 5): ⁶ “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

The combination of the Passover Lamb, in this passage, with the unleavened bread is not accidental. The Lamb, as earlier stated, needed to be examined for four days, from the 10th of Nisan to the 14th of Nisan for imperfections. Imperfection would represent sin.

Along with this, the bread was to be Unleavened. As we already mentioned, leaven represents sin in the Scripture. Therefore, the combination of these two elements representing the sinless-ness of Yeshua must be taken as to be a “testimony of two witnesses” which establishes a thing. God is telling us that His Son would be the perfect representation of the typology found in the Passover Lamb *and* in the Unleavened Bread.

Messiah's Sinless-ness – The Bread From Heaven

The Book of Hebrews (4:15) states about Yeshua's sinless-ness: For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin."

Yeshua was sinless, as represented by the unleavened bread. After the miracle of the fish and loaves, He says (John 6): ²⁶ ... "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." ³⁰ So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? ³¹ "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.' ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. ³⁶ "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that

He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."⁴¹ Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven."⁴² They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"⁴³ Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves."⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me."⁴⁶ "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father."⁴⁷ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."⁴⁸ "I am the bread of life."⁴⁹ "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died."⁵⁰ "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."⁵¹ "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

The literalness of Yeshua's being the bread "which comes down out of heaven" is represented within the Passover Seder itself. There are three matzot (matzahs) that are placed in a linen cloth (called a "matza tosh") containing three separate compartments. Each Matzah is placed in its own separate compartment. During the Seder, the middle Matzah is removed, it is broken in half, then one half of the Matzah is wrapped in a linen cloth and is hidden – only to be brought out later in the Seder.

Since the entire Passover service is woven with rich symbolism, it must be asked: 'Why three matzahs?' One rabbinic tradition holds that they

represent the three groups of Jewish people: the priests, the Levites, and the Israelites. Another tradition holds that they represent the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yet rabbinic tradition is at a loss to explain why the middle Matzah must be broken. Why must the Levites be broken and not the other groups? Or why must Isaac be broken and not Abraham nor Jacob? Rabbinic tradition is silent on such an important issue.

Neither explanation fits the symbolism behind this breaking ceremony. In reality, the triunity of the Godhead is being symbolized – three persons within the oneness of God, just as three matzahs are in the oneness of the linen bag. The second person of the Godhead, the Son, came to earth as the Messiah. He was broken (died), wrapped, and hidden away (buried), and brought back at the third cup of wine (resurrected on the third day).¹⁰⁹

The Matzah that is wrapped and hidden is known as the “afikomen.”

Leo Trepp reflects the traditional Jewish view in his book when he says:

At the very end of the meal, each member of the family received and eats a portion of the previously hidden Matzah, without any benediction. This Matzah is called Afikomen. Before it has been eaten, the Seder cannot continue; after it has been consumed, no additional food is permitted for the rest of the night.

The term Afikomen comes from the Greek and is mentioned in the Talmud (Pessahim 10). Its meaning is not quite clear; it may mean ‘dessert’ or ‘after-dinner songs.’ It represents the Pessah Lamb, after which no dessert was allowed; hence we may eat no food afterward.¹¹⁰

As Messianic believers, we should understand its significance as a representation of the Passover Lamb! What is amazing is the significance of the process of removing the middle Matzah from the other two matzot!

Here, reflected in this removing, which the Jewish people also cannot explain is completely understandable to the Messianic community of believers in Yeshua!

Yeshua, the Second Person of the Tri-une God, came out from the Father and the Spirit - “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the

¹⁰⁹ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 60

¹¹⁰ IBID., page 188

Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (1 John 5:7), and came to earth in the form of a man – as a bond-servant – “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

The Fulfillment by Messiah Yeshua

He lived a completely righteous and holy life – “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15) Then, He was crucified on our behalf so that God would Passover our sins – the blood of the Passover Lamb on the wood (doorposts and lintels) – “Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it” (Exodus 12) and 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy {you} when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:13) He died on the cross and not a bone was broken - “In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” (Exodus 12:46)

He was taken down from the cross and wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in the tomb. At the end of three days and three nights, He came out of the grave and lives forever as the eternal Lamb of God.

We can see the typology fulfilled perfectly in our Lord Yeshua. The Matzah (Unleavened Bread) in its present form also speaks volumes about the beating and crucifixion of Yeshua. The Matzah is both pierced and striped.

When Yeshua was brought before Pilate, He was beaten. “By His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5) He was pierced on the cross – “...they shall see him who we pierced” (Zechariah 12:10) and “they pierced my hands and my feet.” (Psalm 22:16)

The typology of the Matzah was fulfilled not only in Yeshua’s sinless life but also in His death.

As with the other feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23, the prophetic meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is found in the work of the Messiah. Passover pictures the substitutionary death of the Messiah as the Passover Lamb, the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the burial of the Messiah, and Firstfruits pictures the resurrection of the Messiah.

The Hebrew prophets foretold a day when the Messiah would be a sacrifice for sin. He would be the Lamb offered up by God as the once for all sacrifice. The prophet declared of the Messiah: ‘Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows...the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...When You make His soul an offering for sin’ (Isa. 53:4, 6, 10).

But the Hebrew prophets also spoke of Messiah’s amazing burial. Isaiah prophesied, ‘And they made [appointed] His grave with the wicked – But [was instead] with the rich [one] at His death, Because he had done no violence [wickedness], Nor was any deceit in His mouth’ (Isa. 53:9).

Normally, one who dies a criminal’s death receives a criminal’s burial. But this was not the case with the Messiah. The Messiah was executed as if He were a criminal, but God did not allow His body to be cast outside the city onto the garbage heap. The Messiah was honored in His burial because He was a pure, sinless (without leaven) sacrifice. He died not for His own transgression (He was innocent), but for ours (we are guilty). Therefore, God honored the Messiah with burial in a rich man’s tomb. The Messiah was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea (Mt. 27:57-60), a member of the Sanhedrin. This was God’s statement upon the innocence of the Messiah.

But there is further significance surrounding the burial of the Messiah in that His body did not return to dust. King David prophesied of the Messiah: ‘For

you will not leave my soul in [the grave], Nor will You allow Your Holy One [the Messiah] to see corruption [decay]' (Ps. 16:10). Obviously, King David did not prophesy this of himself. His grave has been a revered site in Jerusalem for almost 3,000 years. David's body did decay (as has the body of every other person who has died in history), but the Messiah's body did not. The sons of Adam are sinners under the divine curse: 'To dust you shall return' (Gen. 3:19). As a pure, sinless sacrifice, the Messiah was not under the curse to return to dust. Therefore, the Messiah came forth from the grave on the third day after He had carried our sins far away (Ps. 103:12; Heb. 9:26).

The Messiah fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread in that He was a pure, sinless (without leaven) sacrifice. God validated this by the Messiah's burial in a rich man's tomb. Furthermore, the body of the Messiah was not permitted to decay in the grave (like dough soured by leaven), but was brought forth because He was not a sinner under the curse of death and decay.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, pages 69-70

CHAPTER 6

First Fruits - Sfirat HaOmer – Leviticus 23:9-14

⁹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ 'He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² 'Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³ 'Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD *for a soothing aroma*, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. ¹⁴ 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

The Beginning of the Cereal Grain Harvests

Firstfruits marked the beginning of the cereal grain harvests in Israel. Barley was the first grain to ripen of those sown in the winter months. For Firstfruits, a sheaf of barley was harvested and brought to the Temple as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord for the harvest. It was representative of the barley harvest as a whole and served as a pledge or guarantee that the remainder of the harvest would be realized in the days that followed.

Firstfruits was an early spring feast, the third in the Jewish festive cycle. On the Hebrew calendar, it occurred on the 16th day of Nisan, the first biblical month (March or April), only two days after the beginning of the Passover season.

Scripture did not specify the actual calendar date of Firstfruits, but merely prescribed its time of observance to be 'on the day after the Sabbath' (Lev. 23:11). This led to various interpretations and considerable debate as to which sabbath was in view.¹¹²

During the first Century C.E., the date of the Firstfruits of the Barley Harvest was a hotly contested issue. The Pharisees maintained that the proper date would be the 16th of Aviv, also called Nisan, while the Sadducees endorsed the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath during Hag haMatzah (the Festival of Unleavened Bread). The debate was centered in the wording of Leviticus twenty-three...[verses 9-11]...On the surface it would seem to be an obvious conclusion that the Sadducees were right, for everyone knows that the day following the Sabbath is Sunday. However, the issue is complicated by the fact that during the week of Hag haMatzah

¹¹² Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, pages 75-76

there are two sabbaths. During the Jewish year there are seven sabbaths known as “Shabbaton” or “high sabbaths.” These sabbaths fall upon particular calendar days rather on days of the week. The 15th of Aviv is the first shabbaton during the Jewish year. It is the first day of Hag haMatzah and the sabbath that the Pharisees felt that Leviticus 23.11 spoke of.¹¹³

While the customs of the ancient festival are fairly straight-forward, a controversy developed as to when *Sfirat HaOmer* was to begin. The question was how to understand the starting point of the holiday as stated in the phrase ‘after the Sabbath’ (Leviticus 23:11). To which Sabbath does this refer?

The two major schools of Jewish tradition in the first century were divided on the issue. The Sadducees (the aristocratic sect associated with the Temple service) believed it referred to the seventh-day Sabbath. Hence, the wave offering would be lifted up on the next day, the first day of the week.

The Pharisees (primarily the synagogue rabbis of the common people) saw it another way. They pointed out that given the context of the passage, Pesach is the Sabbath spoken of. Consequently, the day after the Sabbath of Passover would always fall on the 16th of Nisan, irrespective of what day of the week it was. This controversy continued to be debated, each group following its own convictions about the start of *Sfirat HaOmer*.¹¹⁴

So we see this dynamic reflected in the writings of Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian: “But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them.”¹¹⁵

That our Lord rose on the Sadducees’ observance of the Feast, gives credence to that position: “Besides the substantiation that Yeshua rose from the dead on a Sunday,

¹¹³ Good, Joseph, *Rosh HaShanah and the Messianic Kingdom to Come*, copyright 1989, 1998 by Joseph Good, pages 23, 24

¹¹⁴ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, page 41

¹¹⁵ Josephus, Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3.10.5

and He is called ‘the firstfruits of those that rise from the dead,’ it can be established from Leviticus twenty-three that the Sadducees were correct.”¹¹⁶

“As we trace this chronology, we can see the sovereign hand of God in regard to the timing of Sfirat HaOmer. It was imperative for Messiah to die exactly on Passover in order to fulfill the prophecies. So too Messiah must be risen from the dead on First Fruits.

At first glance there may appear to be a problem with this since there was controversy over the dating of the holy day by the first-century rabbis. But a closer look reveals that Yeshua of Nazareth fulfilled both of these interpretations in the particular year of his death and resurrection.

Yeshua was raised on the third day of Passover (16 Nisan), which fulfilled the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah. Amazingly, he also fulfilled the Sadducean interpretation at the same time. In the particular year of his death, Sfirat HaOmer would have started on the Sunday after Passover. Consequently, the year of Yeshua’s death and resurrection was one of the few in which both rabbinical theories could be correct at the same time! Indeed, God’s sovereign plan should be seen by all. Blessed be he who has revealed the risen Messiah Yeshua, the fulfillment of Sfirat HaOmer!¹¹⁷

The Regulations for First-Fruits

The regulations for Firstfruits were outlined by the Lord in Leviticus 23:9-14. A sheaf (Heb. Omer, meaning ‘measure’) was to be brought to the priest at the Temple who would wave it before the Lord for acceptance. There were also to be accompanying sacrifices: an unblemished male lamb of the first year, a drink offering of wine, and a meal offering of the barley flour mixed with olive oil.

The people were forbidden to use any part of the harvest in any way until after the firstfruits were offered to the Lord (Lev. 23:14). To neglect these firstfruit offerings (or any others) was considered robbery of God according to Scripture (Mal. 3:8).

¹¹⁶ Good, Joseph, *Rosh HaShanah and the Messianic Kingdom to Come*, page 24

¹¹⁷ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, pages 44-45

The ritual for the Firstfruits ceremony was detailed in Deuteronomy 26:1-10. The order of the worship ceremony, even the actual wording of the thanksgiving prayer to God, was carefully recorded in that text.¹¹⁸

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. (Common Era) by Titus, this feast could no longer be observed, since it actually required a Temple and a working priesthood to perform.

Firstfruits sacrifices and offerings are not offered today since there is no Temple. The only Firstfruits ritual which has survived to modern times has been the counting of the omer, the days from Firstfruits to Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks).¹¹⁹

Firstfruits was preeminently seen as a time marker. It marked the beginning of the grain harvest in Israel, but even more importantly, it marked the countdown to the Feast of Weeks. Beginning with Firstfruits, forty-nine days (or seven sevens) were counted, and on the fiftieth day, the Feast of Weeks was celebrated. The Lord commanded: 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath' (Lev. 23:15-16).

As a result, this period of time was, and still is, known as the *Sefirat Ha-Omer* (Heb. 'the counting of the Omer') because of the ritual of counting the days from the omer (Heb. 'sheaf, measure') to the Feast of Weeks.¹²⁰

It is important to note that it was not a day of convocation (NOT A SABBATH) to the Jews, so there is no reason for it to be a Sabbath in antitype (post-resurrection) to Christians. This is because the festival Sabbaths were not just commemorative in nature, but also prophetic, pointing to future holy events as fulfillments. To suggest a new Sunday holy day was instituted on resurrection day, is to say the festival calendar appointed by God was in error, since it omits a weekly 1st day observance.

¹¹⁸ Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 77

¹¹⁹ IBID., page 82

¹²⁰ IBID., page 77

Yeshua's Fulfillment of This Feast in His First Coming

The traditional observance of this feast points us to the resurrection of Messiah. It is a harvest festival and the barley sheaves are waved before the Lord. Think of it: the grain that had come from the earth was now lifted up high for all to see! Yeshua himself alluded to his resurrection in similar terms when he said:

“The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Yes, indeed! I tell you that unless a grain of wheat that falls to the ground dies, it stays just a grain; but if it dies, it produces a big harvest...As for me, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (John 12:23-24, 32).

Coincidentally, this parable was spoken to his Jewish disciples as they had come to celebrate the Passover, just before Sfirat HaOmer (John 12:1, 20). The resurrection of Messiah from the dead is perfectly symbolized in the wave offering of the first fruits.¹²¹

It is a fact that Yeshua fulfilled this Feast most aptly in His resurrection from the dead. The Apostle Paul writes of this in 1 Corinthians 15: “²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

Yeshua's Fulfillment of this Feast in the Second Coming

The passage in 1 Corinthians 15 then takes us to the fulfillment of Yeshua in this feast at His Second Coming: that is, the resurrection of the saints of God! Though this fulfillment merges with the resurrection and “rapture” of the Saints in the Feast of Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets), it is still fulfilled in type and literally in this Feast of First-fruits. As Messiah rose from the dead as the first-fruits from the dead, so we are promised the resurrection from our deaths. “First” implies others that follow. He is the “First” and we shall follow!

¹²¹ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, pages 43, 44

But how was the Messiah our firstfruits? Jesus rose again on the third day (literally, the third day of the Passover season, Nisan 16), on the day of the Firstfruits. But His resurrection had far greater implications. Paul explained, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee and the beginning (firstfruits) of the final harvest, or resurrection, of all mankind. The Messiah fulfilled the prophetic meaning of this holy day by rising from the dead to become the firstfruits of the resurrection, and He did it on the very day of Firstfruits.

The Bible clearly teaches that there is life after death. The human spirit does not cease to exist, nor does it float aimlessly as part of some “cosmic consciousness,” nor is it even reincarnated. All will be resurrected. Only the quality of that eternal existence remains in question. The Hebrew prophet, Daniel, prophesied: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2).

The Messiah further explained: “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (Jn. 5:28-29).

Just as there are two parts to the final harvest, the wheat and the chaff, there will be two parts to the final harvest (Mt. 3:12; 13:37-43). Some will inherit eternal life and dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Others will inherit eternal separation from God, confined forever to the Lake of Fire. They that belong to the Messiah, who have by faith trusted in Him, will be resurrected unto life at His coming (1 Cor. 15:23; cf. Isa. 25:8; 1 Th. 4:16). Jesus provided the ironclad guarantee when He rose from the dead. It will happen, of that we are sure, because “now is Christ risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”¹²²

Yeshua is the literal fulfillment of this feast in His resurrection!

As we shall see in the chapter on Yom Teruah, the resurrection is implied in the offering of Isaac by his father Abraham (Genesis 22). In verse 5, Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.” Hebrews 11 speaks of this understanding by Abraham, when it says: ¹⁷ “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had

¹²² IBID., pages 86-87

received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*; ¹⁸ *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." ¹⁹ He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

Thus, Yeshua fulfilled this Moed in His resurrection, not the pagan feast of Easter.

Having discovered the theme of Sfirat HaOmer (resurrection), believers in Messiah should appreciate the importance of the holy day. In fact, there is irony here.

The believers of the early Church, especially the Roman Church of the fourth century, began to lose touch with the Jewish understanding of the faith. However, the Church wanted to maintain a celebration of the resurrection of Messiah.

Hence, the Council of Nicea (325 C.E.) established, among other edicts, that Christians would not be allowed to commemorate Passover but would observe the resurrection on a new holiday called Easter. According to this Church, a ‘Western’ Church, Easter would be observed on the Sunday after the Spring Equinox. Consequently, today many Christians have forgotten the intimate connection between the resurrection and the Jewish holy days.

It makes one wonder if it would have been simpler and clearer to continue to celebrate the great works of God at his appointed times. It is any wonder that the Church historically has had such little awareness of its own Jewish heritage? In these latter days, it is wonderful to see so many believers, Jews and Gentiles, desiring to understand the original context of the faith. Sfirat HaOmer can be a beautiful celebration to point to the risen savior of the world, Yeshua HaMashiach!¹²³

¹²³ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, pages 45-46

CHAPTER 7

The Feast of Weeks – Shavuot/Pentecost – Leviticus 23:15-22

¹⁵ `You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. ¹⁶ `You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷ `You shall bring in from your dwelling places two *loaves* of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths *of an ephah*; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to the LORD. ¹⁸ `Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹ `You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. ²⁰ `The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹ `On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. ²² `When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.' "

The Significance of this Holy Day

The significance of this holy day, like most other biblical festivals, can be largely understood by its name. In this passage the holy day is called *Bikkurim* (First Fruits), because it is a day of bringing first fruits as an offering to God.

From the context of the last chapter, on Sfirat HaOmer, we know that this name refers to the latter fruits of the spring harvest. Previously, the early fruits (barley) were brought in and waved before the Lord. Fifty days later, the latter first fruits (wheat) were offered to the Lord.

Shavuot is designated as a time of thanksgiving for the early harvest. God's faithfulness in providing the early wheat harvest increases hopefulness for an abundant fall harvest (Sukkot). Giving thanks for present provision leads to faith for future addition. What a wonderful God we have! He provides all our needs through his riches in glory in Messiah (Philippians 4:19)!¹²⁴

The Spring Observance

Shavuot is observed in the late spring, usually late May or early June. On the modern Hebrew calendar, Shavuot falls on the sixth day of the month of

¹²⁴ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, page 52

Sivan... [it]...was never tied to an actual calendar date in the Bible. It was instead defined as a calculation of fifty days (the day after seven weeks had passed) from the Feast of Firstfruits: ‘And you shall count...fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath’ (Lev. 23:15; cf. Dt. 16:9-10).¹²⁵

Three Scripture passages outline the biblical observance for Shavuot. Temple offerings were described in Leviticus 23:15-21 and Numbers 28:26-31. The requirements for individual worshipers were outlined in Deuteronomy 16:9-12 where they were instructed to offer a freewill offering, to rejoice before the Lord, and to remember that the Lord had freed them from Egyptian bondage.

In Bible days, Shavuot was a particularly important Jewish feast. Seven divinely appointed feasts were given to Israel. Of these seven, three were decreed by the Lord as ‘solemn feasts’ (Ex. 23:14-17; Dt. 16:16; 2 Chr. 8:13; cf. Ex. 34:22-23) during which all Israelite men were obligated to present themselves at the Temple.¹²⁶

Shavuot (“Weeks”) is one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals. The Torah states that Shavuot is to be observed on the fiftieth day after the first day of Pessah...Shavuot is nowhere in Torah designated as the Feast of Revelation. It was purely a festival of nature. However, a little arithmetic, based on Scripture (Exod. 19), reveals that the fiftieth day after the Exodus was the moment when God descended to Mount Sinai.¹²⁷

Rabbis discovered that the Israelites came to Mount Sinai in the third month after Passover (Exodus 19:1). Shavuot is the day Moses received the Law to deliver to the people. Modern observance includes celebrating the Torah. Hence, the rabbinic name for Shavuot is *Zman Matan Torateynu* (the Time of the Giving of our Law).¹²⁸

The Giving of the Torah

The Feast is also celebrated in the Jewish community as the date of the giving of the Torah at Sinai in Exodus 19 and 20, in the third month after the people of Israel had left the land of Egypt (Exodus 19:1). Beginning with Pesach on the 14th day of the first month, Nisan, we enter into the second month, Iyar, then finally the third month on the 6th day of Sivan – 50 days after Passover, we experience Shavuot (Weeks).

¹²⁵ Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 90

¹²⁶ IBID, pages 90-91

¹²⁷ Trepp, Leo, *The Complete Book of Jewish Observance*, page 198

¹²⁸ Kasdan, Barney, *God's Appointed Times*, page 53

Fifty days from the Sabbath after the Passover (First Fruits), this feast was observed. It is called “Pentecost” in the Septuagint for this reason. This Feast is also called the day of First Fruits (Exodus 23:16, Numbers 28:26), and the Feast of the Harvest (Exodus 23:16).

A festival that celebrated the first fruits of the wheat harvest was celebrated with the offering of two wave loaves of leavened bread (Leviticus 23:17, 20). This offering was called a “wave offering” because the priest waved the loaves before the altar. This was the only time when an offering made of flour was Hametz; it had to be, as it gave expression to the people’s willingness to give their well-prepared bread in offerings.¹²⁹

In the traditional synagogue, the Book of Ruth, the Moabite, is read. The reading of this story may have been appointed because the events take place largely at harvest time. But there may be a deeper significance. Righteous proselytes, casting their lot with Torah and people, are a precious harvest to Israel.¹³⁰

Jews and proselytes alike come before the mountain to receive the Torah at Sinai and hence, two loaves of leavened bread are waved before the Lord on Shavuot.

There is yet another interesting wrinkle to the incorporation of the reading of the Book of Ruth on this date: it holds Messianic significance.

Talmudic rabbis attributed a messianic significance to Shavuot. In Tractate Sanhedrin 93b of the Talmud an interesting discussion is recorded concerning some of the details in the scroll of Ruth. Spiritual significance is ascribed to the six measures of barley Ruth presented to Boaz (Ruth 3:15). Some rabbis considered these six measures representative of six famous descendants of Ruth the Moabitess. These six include, David, Daniel and King Messiah! Believers in Yeshua easily recognize the great messianic significance of the latter first fruits.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Trepp, Leo, *The Complete Book of Jewish Observance*, page 198

¹³⁰ IBID., page 201

¹³¹ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, page 54

The Giving of The Spirit

This feast was also a shadow or type because fifty days after the resurrection there was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, resulting in three thousand souls being added to the Body of Messiah in one day. (Acts 2:41) This outpouring of the Holy Spirit is also known as the early rain (Antitype). There will also be a latter rain (Sukkot – Tabernacles or Booths), the greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit near the end of time (Joel 2:23, Zechariah 10:1, James 5:7) for the proclamation of the three angels messages (Rev 14).

As believers in Yeshua, we should make the connection between the giving of the Torah and this giving of the Spirit on the same day.

The Torah/Spirit Connection

I do not believe it is accidental or coincidental that the Lord placed these two major events on the same day separated by over 1500 years! Here's why: there was a problem with the covenant given at Sinai, so there was a need for a newer covenant, built upon better promises and instituted by a more excellent ministry. Hebrews 8 says, "¹ Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. ⁴ Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; ⁵ who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE

MOUNTAIN." ⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second."

The whole reason for a "New" (or better yet, "Renewed"¹³²) covenant was that the "older" one did not work! That's why it needed to be repaired, or renewed!

At question is "What was wrong with the "old" covenant? Was it that God didn't convey it correctly? Perhaps He couldn't communicate properly? Perhaps the people received it improperly? Maybe God came to understand over time that His commandments were a bit too "lofty" for the people to reach?

No! The problem was not the Torah, itself, for it is "holy," "righteous," and "good." The problem lay somewhere else: it was the people! Hebrews 8: ⁸ "For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; ⁹ NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD."

The problem lay not with the Torah, it lay with the people *not keeping* the Torah! Why couldn't the people keep the Torah? It was because the Torah given on Sinai did not give the people the power to help them keep it. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful

¹³² - "Chadash (#2319), from #2318 - "Chadash" - meaning "to be new, renew, repair" - Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8)

This is because the Law is spiritual and we are in the flesh – Romans 7: ¹⁴ “For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.” The Law is “holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12) – just as God is - and cannot be kept in the flesh.

So what does God do differently in the Renewed Covenant? God writes His Torah upon our hearts and minds as He says in Jeremiah 31: ³¹ "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

No longer are the Laws of God going to be written to something external to us! They will be written *IN* us - "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it!" So, the Laws of God do not change, but the medium it is written on does! Instead of being written on tablets of stone or parchment, His Laws are written upon our hearts and

minds. So we could do what? Ignore them? No, so that we could remember them and keep them!

Not only that, God will empower us to keep His Laws! Ezekiel 11: ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." ¹⁸ "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. ¹⁹ "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God."

In Ezekiel 36, He says He will put His own Spirit in them to cause them to walk in His statutes and ordinances: ²⁴ "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ²⁸ "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God."

It is only through the power of the Spirit that we can keep the Law, which is spiritual! When we walk in the flesh, we find ourselves failing in our obedience to God. Shaul speaks of this in Romans 7:

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want to *do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

What Shaul is saying is that if he walks in the flesh, he finds himself sinning. There is a different law (Torah) found in his body (flesh) that fights against God’s Torah. As much as he wants to be obedient to God and His commandments, he instead finds himself doing just the opposite of what he wants to do. One can see his frustration and wretchedness in the words of this passage.

Fortunately, that’s not the end of the story! There’s more. In Romans 8, he goes on to say: ¹ “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of

death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

It is through the power of the Spirit of Messiah that we find our ability to keep His Laws! We are now empowered to keep His commandments! Not as a legalistic system of works/righteousness, but out of the devotion of love for Him.

Truly, through the Spirit, we are given the ability to love God and live and walk holy lives – as did the Messiah when He walked on this earth.

Walking Like Yeshua Walked

This dissertation deals with the dual fulfillments of the Moedim by Yeshua. How does the giving of the Law on Sinai and the giving of the Spirit on Shavuot (Pentecost)

apply to His personal fulfillment? It applies because this Moed/Feast shows how the Messiah Yeshua walked during His earthly ministry.

In His personal walk on earth in the flesh, He shows us how to “walk the walk” and “talk the talk.”

In the Gospel of John, Chapter 1, we see the words:

“¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.” In verse 14 it says: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

As we shall see in the Incarnation of Yeshua in the Chapter on Sukkot (Booths), the “Word” – Yeshua, the Living Torah – became flesh and “Tabernacled” among us. However, if He were strictly the Word, the letter of the Law, we would expect Him to be legalistic, which He wasn’t. He was also empowered by the Spirit of God to live out the Torah in His walk.

Luke explains that after the Temptation in the Wilderness, “¹⁴ And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...” (Luke 4:14) It is just as important (perhaps *more* important) to know how He walked as it is to know what He walked.

“*What*” He walked out in His life was the Torah. *How* He did so was “*perfectly!*” Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin.”

Since “sin” according to Biblical definition is the “transgression of the Law” (1 John 3:4), Yeshua did not “transgress the Law.”

In short, Yeshua would not, could not, violate His own character as God Incarnate and transgress the Law. God's character is holy, righteous, and good:

Leviticus 11:45 – “For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for **I am holy.**”

Psalm 116:5 – “Gracious is the LORD, and **righteous**; Yes, our God is compassionate.”

Mark 10:18 – “And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me **good**? No one is **good** except God alone.”

Since God's character is holy, righteous and good, so is His Torah:

According to Shaul (Paul) in Romans 7:12, the Torah:

“...is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

Dr. David Stern in the *Jewish New Testament Commentary* writes:

Those who think Sha'ul sought an escape from the Jewish Law in order to make Christianity easy for pagan converts must find this verse difficult. It proves that Sha'ul neither had an un-Jewish view of the Law nor desired to abrogate it. The verse witnesses to Sha'ul's lifelong high regard for the Torah, which corresponds to his lifelong observance of it (see Ac 13:9N, 21:21N). This attitude would have been with him from his youth, since his parents were Pharisees (Ac 23:6); it would have been strengthened by his studies with Rabban Gamli'el (Ac 22:3); and there is no reason to suppose that his coming to faith in Yeshua – who did not “come to abolish the Torah” (Mt 5:17) – would have changed it. So many errors about Sha'ul's opinion of the Law could have been avoided had this verse been understood as constraining everything he writes about it. God's holy Torah for holy living does not change. Why? Because God himself does not change (Malachi 3:6) and holiness does not change. Moreover, this verse is not alone: vv. 10, 14, 16, 22 and 8:2, 4, 7-8 all show Sha'ul had a high regard for the Torah.¹³³

Our understanding of who Jesus is - is determined upon what our understanding of the Law is. Shaul states that there other Jesus' and different Gospels in 2 Corinthians 11:4:

¹³³ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 378

“For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear {this} beautifully.”

This means that we could have a distorted view of Jesus and the Gospel. It is therefore most important that we view Jesus and the Law identically, since Jesus is the “fulfillment” of the Law.

Our view of Jesus must be based upon our view of the Word (the TANAKH – “Old Testament”), since He is the Word made flesh. Thus, if we view the Law as “Legalism” – as many Christians do, then Jesus is “legalistic.”

Let me explain using a logical algorithm:

- 1 – Since the Law is “legalism.”
- 2 – And since Jesus kept the Law perfectly (Hebrews 4:15)
- 3 – Therefore, Jesus is the perfect “legalist.”

Do you see how that works? Based upon our view of the Law, we predicate who our Jesus is: If our view of the Law is that it is a legalistic system of rules and regulations, then our view of Jesus must logically be that He was a “legalist!”

On the other hand, if our view of Jesus is – as He is - “Love” – since Jesus is God Incarnate, and God is love then our logical premise concerning the Law must change as well:

- 1 – Since Jesus is God Incarnate (Philippians 2:5, 6) and God is love (1 John 4:8).
- 2 – And since Jesus is the Word (TANAKH) made Flesh (John 1:14).
- 3 – The Word (Jesus & the TANAKH) is love.

Can we prove that in Scripture? Indeed we can!

Shaul says in Romans 13, “⁸ Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law. ⁹ For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.”

Yeshua, Jesus, the Word Incarnate, walked out the written Word (Law) in perfect Love. The Jesus that we like to think of is not a legalist, but one who walked in love. We need to begin to think of the Law in this light as well, for the Law points to Him!

Scripture mentions the Promised One who will come and through the Law gives a description of Who He is. He is holy, He is righteous, He is just, He is love. If you want to identify the one spoken of in the Law, look to the One who walks perfectly the Law. The way one can determine *who* is the Promised One is to look at His walk. The One who walks out the Torah perfectly *is* that One.

The goal of the Torah is to point out the Righteous One – Romans 10:4: “For Christ is the **end** of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

The use of the word “end” in this translation of Romans 10:4 is unfortunate and misleading. It implies that the Law “ends” with the coming of Messiah. The word translated “end” is the word “*telos*.” [Strong’s 5056] That word could also be translated as: the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose – or better yet – the goal.

We need to know that we are not made righteous by our observance to the Torah, we are made righteous through the imputation of righteousness to us by the Righteous One – Messiah Yeshua. This is accomplished through faith and faith alone, not by the

Law (Romans 3): ²¹ But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

Yet, having said all this Shaul continues: ³¹ Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”

This means that though we are justified by faith and faith alone, we do not nullify (or do away) with the Law through that faith! We instead establish the Law! This means that as Spirit-filled believers in Yeshua, we should be walking as He walked: Torah observant and through the power of the Spirit!

1 John 2 says: ³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶

the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

Dr. Stern writes:

[There are]...two ways not to have the truth: (1) to claim not to have sin (1:8), and (2) to say ‘I know him’ but not obey his commands (as Ya 2:14-26 teaches). In the Tanakh the word ‘know’ can mean ‘have intimate experience’; here ‘knowing Yeshua’ means having intimate spiritual experience with Him, to the degree that one obeys his commands from the heart. Anything less is not true knowledge; there is a difference between giving mental assent to Yeshua’s Messiahship and knowing him. Elsewhere Yochanan reports that Yeshua said, ‘If you love me, you will keep my commands,’ and ‘If you keep my commands, you will stay in my love’ (Yn 14:15, 15:10; compare Yn 14:21, 15:14). This is how we are sure we are united with him, and this answers the question raised by the ‘eternal security of the believer’ in MJ 6:4-6N.”¹³⁴

In short, true believers in Yeshua should walk as He walked! Only in the power of the Spirit will this be possible. Only in the power of the Spirit can we keep His commandments!

The reason why we cannot keep God’s commandments as we would desire to is due to the rebellion of our flesh. As Shaul would share in Romans 7, though he desires to obey God’s Torah, yet another “law” a perverse “Torah” is found within the members of his own body that causes him to violate God’s Torah:

“¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want to *do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me,

¹³⁴ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 770

that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

No Coincidence in the Tying Together of the Law and the Spirit

As Shaul notes in Romans 7, “¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual...” – we can understand why it is so difficult to keep in the strength of the flesh. So, when God tied these two observances of Shavuot/Pentecost approximately 1800 years apart, He did not do this by coincidence! He knew fully well what He wanted to show us in His Word!

So, in what does Shaul see a victory to his dilemma? He sees it in the power of the Spirit! Romans 8:

“¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who are

according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. ¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- ¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*."

The "law of sin and death" that Shaul is talking about is *not* the Torah of God! The law of sin and death in proper context is found in the members of our bodies that fight against God's Torah! It is our flesh that fights against His commandments – "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so...*" (verse 7).

Stern writes concerning this passage in Romans 8:

Torah of the Spirit...”Torah” of sin and death. What are these two? Here is the wrong answer: Yeshua gave a good Torah of the Spirit which produces life, in contrast with the bad Mosaic Law that produces only sin and death. But this interpretation not only contradicts Sha’ul’s arguments in Chapters 3 and 7, but it is implicitly anti-Semitic as well (see 3:20bN).

The right answer is that the Torah of the Spirit is the Mosaic Law properly apprehended by the power of the Holy Spirit in believers, what Sha’ul elsewhere calls “the Torah’s true meaning, which the Messiah upholds” (usually rendered, “the law of Christ,” Ga 6:2&N). The second “torah” is written in lower-case and put in quotation marks, because it is “sin’s ‘torah’” (7:21-23&N), in other words, not a God-given Torah at all but an anti-Torah. More specifically, it is the Mosaic Law improperly understood and perverted by our old, sinful nature into a legalistic system of earning God’s approval by our own works (3:20b&N).

This interpretation of v. 2. can be paraphrased and expanded (on the basis of 7:4N) as follows:

“The Torah, as understood and applied through the Spirit, thereby giving life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has set me free from the aspects of the Torah that stimulate me to sin (7:5-14), fill me with irremediable guilt (7:15-24) and condemn me to death.”¹³⁵

Therefore, if a believer finds him or herself rebelling against the Torah of God, it is *not* the Holy Spirit causing this rebellion! The Holy Spirit, who is the inspirer of the entire Word of God, would not cause a believer to fight against those words. It is the flesh of the believer, in rebellion to the Torah of God that is causing this rebellion!

2 Timothy 3:16 – “¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

¹³⁵ Ibid., pages 380-381

2 Peter 1: “²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of* one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

Thus, since the entire Word – including the Torah – is inspired by the Holy Spirit, the entire Word is spiritual. To correctly walk out the life of a believer in God, as did Yeshua, we must walk according to the Spirit of God, which also empowered Yeshua!

The Bottom Line - Love

The Word of God, as we have noted, reflects the character of God: who is good, and holy and righteous. We will close this Chapter with the bottom line, based upon another characteristic of God – which is “love.”

1 John 4:7 – “...God is love.”

If we are truly “God’s” people, then we need to behave and live in this characteristic. Again, this is something we cannot do except in the power of the Spirit.

Yeshua, Love Incarnate, showed us how to obey the Law in the spirit by which it was given: in love. Thus, as the Body of Messiah on this earth, let’s walk as He walked; keeping both the spirit and essence of the Law: love.

Yeshua said, when asked what the greatest commandment of the Law was, “²⁹ Jesus answered, "The foremost is, `HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; ³⁰ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' ³¹ "The second is this, `YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12)

Shaul sums it up in one word in Romans 13:10: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of {the} law."

As we have already mentioned, God is love (1 John 4:8) - "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." Since God is love, and since the essence of the Law is love, then as a result of our relationship with God, we keep His commandments, since loving Him means keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3): For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

1 John 4: ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected

in love. ¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. “

Yeshua said that all the Torah and the Prophets depend upon two commandments – loving God, as commanded in the Sh'ma (Deuteronomy 6:5), and loving one's neighbor as oneself (Leviticus 19:18); see MK 12:28-34&NN. Sha'ul quotes four of the five commandments in the “Second Table” of the Law, those which concern behavior toward other people; Yeshua did the same (Mt 19:16-20). Rabbi Shiyya equated Leviticus 19:18 with one of the “Second Table” commandments, the prohibition against coveting (Leviticus Rabbah 24:5); likewise Rabbi Akiva recognized Leviticus 19:18 as a great principle of Torah (Genesis Rabbah 24:7). Sha'ul's point in these verses is not to abrogate specific commands but to show that the principle of loving one's neighbor, which is the pervading theme of everything from 12:9 till here, must underlie all halakhic applications and will, when appropriated by the power of the Ruach haKodesh, lead to right behavior in daily life. This is how **love is the fullness of Torah** – not by superseding it, but through being the beginning, the end and the motivating force at work in it. (See also Ga 5:14N.)

The discussion over whether Messianic Jews should keep the Law (see Ac 21:21N) and *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*, Chapter V, entitled “Torah”) must consider these verses. On the one hand, Jewish critics say that feeling love is no guarantee of right action, so that halakhic rules for specific situations are necessary. Without them, they say, people will abuse the principle of love by ignoring precedents and even God's specific commands on the ground that love has “replaced” them, and this will ultimately lead to disobeying the command to love as well! As “Exhibit A” these critics point to the notable lack of love of Christians toward Jews at various times in the last two thousand years.

On the other hand, certain Christian theologians, especially those who follow Lutheran tradition, such as Helmut Thielicke and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, will have nothing to do with specific guidelines. They fear these could “quench the Spirit” (1 Th 5:19), reducing obedience to mere rule-following, legalistic “works of law” that cannot save (3:28; 3:20aN).

Messianic Jews live with that tension. But so do Gentile Christians, and likewise non-Messianic Jews. For even the most orthodox Jew, even one who, for the sake of argument, knows every halakhic

decision ever made, would, as a practical matter, have to reach his own conclusions as to what the Law requires of him, at least in boundary-line situations; and if, at such moments, he is not operating in love, his decisions will be wrong. Conversely, an approach which disregards legal rules and precedents guarantees a lower standard of ethical action, since each individual will have to “reinvent the wheel” as he discovers for himself accumulated wisdom and expertise.

I think the best position avoids both the wooden application of law and the unreliability of subjective love-feelings. It combines the sensitivity of Spirit-inspired love (which is more than a mere feeling; it implies loving action) with respect for ethical instruction, halakhah and other law, seeking to draw from the full complement of God-given human and supernatural resources the right and loving responses in all circumstances.

Moreover, the supposed conflict between traditional Jewish doctrine and New Testament is sometimes illusory. Consider Sifre to Deuteronomy 79b (4th century C.E.), which asks why Deuteronomy 11:13 (the verse commencing the second paragraph of the Sh'ma) includes the phrase, “to love Adonai your God”:

“It is because you might otherwise say, ‘Look, I learn Torah in order to get rich,’ or ‘...in order to be called “Rabbi,”’ or ‘...in order to earn a salary.’ But Scripture says, ‘...to love Adonai your God.’ In other words, all that you do should be done only out of love.”¹³⁶

Let us then love God and keep His commandments (establish the Law) which are written on our hearts and minds in the Newer Covenant in the power of His Spirit, as did our Lord Yeshua.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pages 429-430

CHAPTER 8

The Day of Trumpets – Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah – Leviticus 23:23-25

²³ Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ 'You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.' "

The Observance of the Feast

Very little is said in Scripture about what is to be done on this day. On Yom Teruah (pronounced "Yom Tih-ru-ah"), the shofar (Ram's horn) will be blown 100 times in the synagogue and upon hearing it, the Rabbis say that one is to remember that Yom Kippur the "Day Of Atonement" is just 9 days away, on the 10th of the month. It is time to teshuvah (repent, turn back to Adonai). These ten days are called the 'Days of Awe' in modern Judaism. Traditionally, though not Scripturally, these ten days are ones of heart searching and self examination -- the sound of the shofar warns us that we need to examine our lives and make amends with all those we have wronged in the previous year, and to ask forgiveness for any vows we may have broken. It is seen as a time to get right with one's friends and neighbors, and prepare to stand before God on a Judgment Day, the Day of Atonement. So a main theme of the Fall Holy Days is repentance. It's a time of repentance or allowing God to search the soul for any wrong doings over the previous year, to one's fellow man.

The Name – Rosh Hashanah

This holiday is widely known today by the rabbinic misnomer "Rosh Hashanah" (head of the year). The Bible never calls this holiday Rosh Hashanah but instead variously calls it Yom Teruah (Day of Shouting) and Zicharon Teruah (Remembrance

Shouting). The Rabbis renamed the holiday Rosh Hashanah (New Years) claiming that the Jewish year actually begins in Tishri.

One of the fascinating facts about the holy day, Rosh Hashanah is that it is considered the ‘New Year.’ The truth is, it comes in the seventh month of the calendar year. Did someone make a blatant miscalculation?

The biblical year starts in the spring with the month Nisan (Exodus 12:2). This has a certain logic to it. It is the beginning of the new harvest season.

However, the rabbis gave such significance to this special Shabbat (it was the first of the fall holidays) that they eventually considered it as the ‘spiritual’ New Year. Hence the name change as well. Biblically known as Yom Teruah (the Day of Sounding/Festival of Trumpets), this first day of Tishri became called ‘Rosh HaShannah,’ the Head of the Year.¹³⁷

However, this designation was not applied to this feast until at least the second century A.D., more than 1,500 years after the institution of this holiday. Following the A.D. 70 destruction of the Temple, its observance was radically altered. For the holiday, it was a matter of survival in the midst of a tragic situation. Continued observance of the Feast of Trumpets was threatened due to the absence of the Temple and its sacrificial system. As a result, synagogue liturgy was enlarged, new traditions suggested, and emphases were shifted in an attempt to preserve and adapt the observance of this holiday for a people scattered outside their homeland and stripped of their Temple.

The timing of the ancient Feast of Trumpets coincided with the beginning of Israel’s civil New Year. After the A.D. 70 destruction of the second Temple, the two observances became inseparably connected. In time, the Feast of Trumpets was largely overshadowed and assimilated by the Jewish New Year, becoming known as Rosh Hashanah (‘The Head of the Year’).

Rosh Hashanah is observed in the autumn of the year. On the Hebrew calendar, Rosh Hashanah occurs on the first day of Tishri, the seventh Hebrew month (usually mid-September to early October). Israel’s two other autumn holidays occur only days later: Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) on Tishri 10 and the Feast of Tabernacles beginning on Tishri 15.

In the Bible, the Feast of Trumpets was celebrated as a one-day holiday. For the Diaspora (Jewish communities living outside the land of Israel), many holidays were and still are celebrated for an additional day. The reason is rooted in the uncertainty of the Jewish calendar. The beginning of

¹³⁷ Kasdan, Barney, *God’s Appointed Times*, page 64

each Hebrew month was originally dependent upon the sighting of the New Moon. The precise timing of the New Moon was not always easily determined due to clouds or a lack of witnesses. Rosh Hashanah greatly compounded the problem since it fell upon the first day of the month, the actual New Moon, making it especially difficult to notify Jewish communities that the holiday had, in fact, already begun. To decrease the chance for error, Rosh Hashanah was observed for two days, a tradition which continues even in Israel today.¹³⁸

The over-arching theme of Yom Teruah is that of the blowing of the Trumpet or Ram's horn (shofar) – which carries with it a great deal of Messianic significance – as we shall soon see.

The biblical record for Rosh Hashanah observance is neither lengthy nor complicated. Israel was simply commanded to memorialize the day by blowing trumpets and to keep the day as a sabbath of rest (Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 29:1).¹³⁹

When Scripture designated Tishri 1 as a 'day of blowing' and a 'memorial of blowing,' the type of trumpet for Rosh Hashanah was not specifically identified. Almost without exception, historical observance and rabbinic tradition specified the shofar ('ram's horn'), not the silver trumpets of the priests, as the primary instrument intended by Scripture.¹⁴⁰

Fulfillment by the Messiah Yeshua in the First Coming

After His crucifixion, Yeshua appears to His Disciples in the Upper Room. He says to them, ⁴⁴ "...These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from

¹³⁸ Howard, Kevin and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, pages 103-104

¹³⁹ IBID., page 104

¹⁴⁰ IBID., page 106

the dead the third day and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ...”

It must be asked, “Where is it clearly written that the Messiah would suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem?”

That is not so clear; else everyone would have been able to see it clearly, including the Disciples! Yet, it took Yeshua opening their minds to the Scriptures for them to see it!

For instance, we can see from the TANAKH inferences of a “Suffering Servant” figure who was going to be “cut off” and bear our sins (iniquities) in Isaiah 53:

“¹ Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no *stately* form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

³ He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

And our sorrows He carried;

Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was *pierced through for our transgressions*,
He was *crushed for our iniquities*;
The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the *LORD has caused the iniquity of us all*
To fall on Him.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was *cut off out of the land of the living*
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due?*

⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased

To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would *render Himself as a guilt offering*,
He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul,

He will see *it and* be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will *bear their iniquities*.

¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,

And He will divide the booty with the strong;
Because He poured out Himself to death,
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.”

We also see in Daniel 9 that it would be the Messiah who would be “cut off” and to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness:

²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy

place. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be *cut off* and have nothing..."

We can also see a picture of the crucifixion in Psalm 22:

¹ My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

² O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;

And by night, but I have no rest.

³ Yet You are holy,

O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

⁴ In You our fathers trusted;

They trusted and You delivered them.

⁵ To You they cried out and were delivered;

In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,

A reproach of men and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me sneer at me;

They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*,

⁸ "Commit *yourself* to the LORD; let Him deliver him;

Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

⁹ Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;

You made me trust *when* upon my mother's breasts.

- ¹⁰ Upon You I was cast from birth;
You have been my God from my mother's womb.
- ¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.
- ¹² Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.
- ¹³ They open wide their mouth at me,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
- ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
- ¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;
- ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots.”

We can also see the “three days” in the grave, as Yeshua stated, associated with the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:39, 40):

“An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and {yet} no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Jonah 1:17, “And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.”

I submit to you, here the Lord Himself is referring to a “type” (in the case of Jonah) in reference to Himself.

So, to make my point: I believe that Yeshua opened the Disciples’ minds to all the Scriptures in the TANAKH that refer to Him, both in the literal sense, in terms of literal fulfillment (such as Psalm 22 and Daniel 9), as well as in the typological sense, such as referring to the three days and three nights that both Jonah and He will experience in death: one in the belly of a whale and the other in the “belly” of the earth.

Hence, it is not far a field to see the typological fulfillment found in Yeshua’s First Coming reflected in the Torah readings for the days of Yom Teruah. There are two “types” found in Jewish tradition that lead us to the fulfillment of this Feast at Yeshua’s First Coming and that is found in these two Torah readings:

On the first day, we read Bereshith (Genesis) 21. This Torah portion tells of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah. According to the Talmud, Sarah gave birth to Isaac on Rosh Hashanah.

The first typological “tie” between Isaac and Yeshua at His First Coming on this Feast is established here. We see many commonalities between the two, as depicted in the table below:

Typological Tie	Isaac	Yeshua
Isaac is the son of the promise. So is Yeshua.	Genesis 17:16	Galatians 3:16
With both the birth of Isaac and Yeshua, there was a long interval between the promise and the fulfillment.	Genesis 18:9-15	Daniel 9:24-26
The announcement of the births to Sarah and Mary both seemed incredible and impossible.	Genesis 17:17-19	Matthew 1:18-25
Isaac and Yeshua were also named before their births.	Genesis 18:9-15/Genesis 21:1-7	Luke 1:31
Both Isaac and Yeshuas' births occurred at <i>God's</i> appointed time and not before.	Genesis 21:2	Galatians 4:4
Both Isaac and Yeshuas' births were miraculous.	Genesis 18:11	Luke 1:34-35
Both sons were a joy of their fathers.	Genesis 21:3	Matthew 3:17
Both Isaac and Yeshua were obedient to their fathers even unto death.	Genesis 22:5-12	Philippians 2:5-8
A ram was substituted for Isaac. Yeshua is substitute for us.	Genesis 22:13	2 Corinthians 5:21
Abraham gives all things to Isaac. God the Father gives all things to Messiah Yeshua.	Genesis 25:5	Ephesians 1:22; Hebrews 1:2
Only begotten son.	Genesis 22:2	John 3:16

Table 7

The second typological tie is that of the ram's horn. The significance of the Ram's horn portrays not only the future coming of the Messiah with the blast of the shofar, which we shall soon address, but also its past fulfillment at the First Coming of the Messiah.

How is that possible? In the synagogue, on Yom Teruah, the assigned Torah portion (parsha) for the second day of Rosh Hashanah is the Akidah (Binding) of Isaac found in Genesis 22. How did the rabbis determine that this parsha should be read on Yom Teruah? They came to this reading because of the "remez" (hinting) of the Ram's horn mentioned after Abraham offers his son Isaac on the altar on Mount Moriah.

Remez is an interpretive method of a system of rabbinical teaching called "PaRDeS." The Hebrew word *pardes* means "garden" or "orchard" or "paradise", and, traditionally, it is in the garden of God's Word that we find ways to experience Him and His truth. The consonants of this word - PRDS - form an acrostic for the four levels of meaning rabbis could use when teaching or interpreting scripture.

The four methods are: **P** - P'shat - the simple, plain, or literal meaning of a Scripture, **R** - Remez - a "hint" or "clue" - an alluded meaning – as when Yeshua cried out on the cross, "Eli, Eli lama Sabachthani," He was hinting at Psalm 22, **D** - D'rash or Derasha - a story or interpretive meaning, often not intended by the original author, and **S** - Sod - a "hidden" or esoteric meaning, or to use knowledge outside of Scripture.

On Yom Teruah it is commanded that the "blast of the shofar" is to be done. The remez of the Akidah is as follows: On Mount Moriah, as Abraham is told not to plunge the knife into his son Isaac instead, God provides a ram to be sacrificed. What was the ram caught in the thicket by? Of course, his horns! So, it is by this common tie of the

“ram’s horn” through *remez*, or hinting, that causes the rabbis to have this Torah portion read on Yom Teruah.

Yet, as mentioned earlier, the Lord Yeshua fulfills even this Fall Feast by “type” that is, by a pattern through the reading of this parsha (portion) of Scripture. Let’s see how.

In the Table below, we shall look at the typology from this passage of Genesis and tie it to Yeshua’s fulfillment in the B’rit Hadasha (New Testament).

Type	Genesis Verse	New Testament Verse
Father	2, 7	John 3:16
Only son	2	John 3:16
Offering	2	John 3:16
Mount Moriah	2	Matthew 27:33
Donkey	3	Matthew 21:2
Two servants	3	Two disciples – Matthew 21:1
Wood laid on son	6	John 19:17
3 Days	4	Matthew 12:40
Resurrection	5	Matthew 28:6; John 6:40
God provides offering	14	1 John 4:14
Adonai is seen	14	John 8:56
Ram caught in thicket (thorns)/Yeshua’s crown of thorns.	Genesis 22:13	John 19:2

Table 8

It must be emphasized that Isaac was a *willing* offering (as was Yeshua). Also, Isaac was not, as Medieval painters portray him – a little child. When Isaac was born

Abraham was 100 years old. According to Josephus, Isaac was at least twenty-five years old when he was offered as a sacrifice. The Talmudic sages say Isaac was 37.

Now Isaac was twenty-five years old. And as he was building the altar, he asked his father what he was about to offer, since there was no animal there for an oblation...¹⁴¹

Regardless of whether Josephus or the sages were right, Isaac nonetheless was a fully grown man, old enough to prevent the elderly Abraham (who was 125 or 137 years old) from tying him up had he wanted to resist.

In like manner, Yeshua, God's only Son, was a willing offering and was between the ages of 25 and 37 – He being 33 years of age when He was crucified. Thus, we see in typology the story of a loving father, taking his only son to Mount Moriah (where, by the way, Solomon, David's son, would one day build his Temple), to be sacrificed as an offering to God. They came to the mountain with a donkey, the wood was placed upon their shoulders to be the altar of their death. Abraham had faith in God through the promise of a lineage coming from Isaac as a promise from God – hence he believed in the resurrection of Isaac from the dead!

This is indeed a wonderful typology, yet there is something even more miraculous here in the Akedah of Isaac that directly pertains to the first coming of Yeshua the Messiah!

When they were on the way up the mountain, Isaac asked Abraham, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham's response was, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

¹⁴¹ Josephus, Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 13, Concerning Isaac the Legitimate Son of Abraham.

The Scripture goes on to say, “Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind {him} a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."

Our translation does not do the last passage justice, for the name of the place in Hebrew is, “Adonai Yireh” – the Lord will provide, or better translated, “In the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen.”

The root of the word, “Yireh” (often translated Jireh), is “ra-ah” which according to Strong’s means:

Strong's Number: 07200

h) r

1. to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider
 - a. (Qal)
 1. to see
 2. to see, perceive
 3. to see, have vision
 4. to look at, see, regard, look after, see after, learn about, observe, watch, look upon, look out, find out
 5. to see, observe, consider, look at, give attention to, discern, distinguish
 6. to look at, gaze at
 - b. (Niphal)
 1. to appear, present oneself

- 2. to be seen
- 3. to be visible
- c. (Pual) to be seen
- d. (Hiphil)
 - 1. to cause to see, show
 - 2. to cause to look intently at, behold, cause to gaze at
- e. (Hophal)
 - 1. to be caused to see, be shown
 - 2. to be exhibited to
- f. (Hithpael) to look at each other, face

Figure 3

The question is: what shall be or was seen on this mountain by Abraham? The answer is: the sacrifice that His descendant, the Messiah Yeshua would make one day from this very mountain. The Lord would provide *Himself* as the very offering!

This is what Yeshua was talking about in John 8: ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Abraham had a chance to glimpse what would happen nearly 2,000 years from the time that he offered his only son as a sacrifice on this very place! Yeshua was offered here, at the very spot where Isaac was offered!

When we look at the typology of Isaac's sacrifice, we see within it the future sacrifice of Yeshua. God did indeed "provide" the offering at this very place! This is how Yeshua fulfilled Yom Teruah at His first coming!

Yet, this Feast also has future Messianic fulfillment as well!

Future Fulfillment by the Messiah Yeshua in His Second Coming

As just mentioned, the future coming of the Messiah in power and glory, the judgment of the nations and the regathering of the dispersed of Israel is also depicted in the Feast of Yom Teruah.

Like Israel's other feasts, the Feast of Trumpets carries strong prophetic overtones. However, this holy day commemorates no historical events, but portrays future events for the nation.¹⁴²

The Feast of Trumpets is Israel's dark day. It occurs at the New Moon when the primary night light of the heavens is darkened. Israel's prophets repeatedly warned of a coming **dark day of judgment** [Emphasis Mine]. They knew it as 'the **Day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine],' that terrible period of time at the end of this age when the Lord will pour out **His fiery judgment** [Emphasis Mine]. The **Day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine] will be a time when the Lord pours out His wrath not only upon Israel's enemies, but upon Israel herself to bring her to repentance and into the New Covenant.

The prophet Amos spoke of this **dark day of judgment**: 'Woe to you who desire the **Day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine]! For what good is the **day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine] to you? It will be darkness, and not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him! Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?' (Amos 5:18-20).

The Hebrew prophet Zephaniah penned the ominous warning: 'The great **day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine] is near...That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet...' (Zeph. 1:14-16).

But even as the darkening of the moon in the night heavens announced the Feast of Trumpets, so, too, the heavens will be divinely darkened in a future day as the **Day of the Lord** [Emphasis Mine] commences. Joel revealed: 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome **day of the Lord**' [Emphasis Mine] (Joel 2:31; cf. Isa. 13:9-10; 34:4, 8; Joel 3:15; Acts 2:20).¹⁴³

¹⁴² Howard, Kevin and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of Israel*, page 112

¹⁴³ IBID., pages 112-113

The Judgment of the Nations

In Jewish thought, Rosh Hashanah also called *Yom haDin*, the “Day of Judgment” or the “Day of the Lord.” This will be when God judges mankind, as sheep are judged by the shepherd. In Joel 3:2 the prophet speaks of a time when the Lord will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem and gather the nations together in the Valley of Jehoshaphat to hold them accountable for the way they've treated His people:

“I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.”

Joel's prophecy is a reference to the Sheep and Goat judgment. Since the word Jehoshaphat means "the Lord Judges" and no place by that name can be found on Earth, many believe he's making reference to the Kidron Valley which separates the Mount of Olives from the Temple, and that the name describes what He's there to do, not where He is.

This significance is also reflected in the B'rit Hadasha (New Testament writings) relative to the sheep and goat judgment found in Matthew 25:31-33: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

I believe it would be helpful to clarify something at this point: the gathering and judgment of the sheep and goats is distinct and separate from the gathering of the Saints

in the Rapture. The “Rapture” will occur just as the Messiah Yeshua returns in the sky (Revelation 19) on the Day of the Lord (at the Battle of Armageddon). The Sheep/Goat Judgment will occur *after* the battle is over and the King sits on His throne in the Valley of Jehoshaphat in judgment of the nations! They are two different gatherings!

Matthew 24:40-41 reads: “Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.”

There are some theologians who argue that the ones “taken” here in this passage are those who are the “saved” and are “raptured” at the Second Coming of the Lord. Yet, when we do a comparison with the analogy of the days of Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:38-39) we find the complete opposite:

“For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and *took them all away*. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; *one will be taken* and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; *one will be taken* and the other left.”

In the illustration from “the days of Noah,” those who are *taken away* by the flood are the ones who are drowned, and the ones who are *left* are ones who are *left* in safety in the ark.

In Luke’s Gospel, Luke records Yeshuas’ words to the disciples concerning those who would be taken and those who would be left. The disciples then asked Yeshua,

“Where Lord?” And Yeshua answered, “Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.”

According to verse 34, the disciples heard Yeshua say, “I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left.” Clearly, the disciples knew where the one would be left... *in bed!* The unknown factor in their minds was where the other one would be taken. Then, according to verse 35, “There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left.” Again, the disciples knew where the one would be left... *still grinding!* The unknown factor was where the other one would be taken.

Finally, according to verse 36, “Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.” Just as before, the disciples clearly knew where the one would be left... *in the field!* The unknown factor was where the other would be taken. Thus, the question, “Where Lord?” (in verse 39) must be in reference to those who were taken. In each case, the disciples knew where the ones would be left (i.e., in bed, still grinding, in the field). However, in each case, the unknown factor was where the other ones would be taken. So, when Messiah Yeshua answered them with a proverb about judgment, the proverb clearly relates to those who were taken (i.e., they were taken in judgment). It is thus concluded that Matthew 24:40-41 *does not* refer to the rapture, but is a preliminary phase to the judgment of the nations, which takes place after the tribulation.¹⁴⁴

In view of all this, how is Zechariah 14:16 to be interpreted? Again, the verse reads: “Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.” How can this passage be harmonized with the view that only saved people enter the millennial kingdom? The explanation is not complicated.

Simply put, there will be repentant and believing people among those nations that attacked Jerusalem. It is these individuals that will worship the King (Jesus, the Messiah) and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.¹⁴⁵

Who are the ones being judged here? The ones being judged here are those people of Earth who've survived the Great Tribulation. As we'll see, some of them have come to faith, but were too late for the rapture. And

¹⁴⁴ Rhodes, Dr. Ron, *Posttribulationism and the Sheep/Goat-Judgment of Matthew 25* — *A Summary-Critique of Robert Gundry's View*, page 24

¹⁴⁵ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. Earl Radmacher (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p. 1119. See also *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 702

don't let the word nations fool you. It's only used to explain that this is a worldwide event. The Lord holds everyone personally accountable for his or her behavior.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:34-40)

The most obvious choice of identity for "these brothers of mine" is the Jewish people, from among whom the Messiah first came. Although all believers will be subject to persecution during the Great Tribulation, Jewish believers will be singled out for special attention in a final effort to eliminate them from the planet once and for all. And no doubt the 144,000 specially commissioned Messianic believers will head the enemy's list for extermination. (Revelation 7:1-8) You see, according to the prophet Hosea the Jewish people have to petition the Messiah to return. (Hosea 5:15-6:2) If Satan can wipe them all out before they can do that, he's won. That's why there've been such repeated efforts to destroy them over the last 2000 years. Racial discrimination of any kind is wrong, but anti-Semitism is Satanic.

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25:41-46)¹⁴⁶

Some theologians put the judgment of Matthew 25 in with that of the judgment depicted in Revelation 20. A comparison of the judgment in Matthew with the one in Revelation would seem to make this view unlikely:

- *Different Time:* The judgment of the nations occurs at the second coming of Christ (Matthew 25:31); the Great White Throne occurs following the millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:11-12).

- *Different Scene:* The judgment of the nations occurs on earth (Matthew 25:31); the Great White Throne judgment occurs at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11).

- *Different Subjects:* At the judgment of the nations, three groups of people are mentioned: the sheep, the goats, and the brothers (Matthew 25:32, 40). The Great White Throne judgment involves the unsaved dead (Revelation 20:12).

- *Different Basis:* The basis of judgment at the judgment of the nations is how Christ's "brothers" were treated (Matthew 25:40); the basis of judgment at the Great White Throne is their works (Revelation 20:12).

- *Different Result:* The result of the judgment of the nations is twofold: the righteous enter into the kingdom; the unrighteous are cast into the lake of fire. The result of the Great White Throne judgment is that the wicked dead are cast into the lake of fire (the righteous are not mentioned).

- *Resurrection:* No resurrection is mentioned in connection with the judgment of the nations. A resurrection does take place in connection with the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:13).¹⁴⁷

A plain reading of the text indicates that these judgments are not one and the same. I view the judgment of Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashanah/Yom haDin) and the Day of the Lord as a *separate and distinct* judgment than that of Revelation 20; as much as Yom

¹⁴⁶ Gracethrufaith.com, Copyright © 1999-2007 Gracethrufaith Incorporated, <http://www.gracethrufaith.com/>

¹⁴⁷ Ryrie, Charles C., *Basic Theology* (Copyright 1986, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books), p. 518

Teruah is *tied to* and yet *separate and distinct* from Yom Kippur (Also, by the way called *Yom haDin*).

So, we see distinct and separate judgments on *both* Fall Holy Days: one on Rosh Hashanah and the other on Yom Kippur. The first is immediately after the Second Coming of the Lord Yeshua at the end of the Great Tribulation and in the beginning of the Millennial reign of Messiah. The other is immediately at the end of the Millennial reign of Messiah Yeshua.

The first judgment on Yom Teruah is at the throne of the King here on earth in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; the second on Yom Kippur is at the Great White Throne in the heavenlies. The first judgment is as separate and distinct – as much as it is related to the second: as Rosh Hashanah is separate and distinct from Yom Kippur, yet related (tied) to it by the 10 days in which there is time to repent.

Those ten days are called the “Yomim Noraim” (Days of Awe) and it is within those ten days that individuals have a period in which to repent before the King and Judge of the Universe.

The separation between the Second Coming of the Lord at Yom Teruah (and its judgment) is the 1,000 year (Millennial) reign of Messiah Yeshua and the Great White Throne judgment (Yom Kippur).

The Gathering of the Saints

The Lord says in the Gospel of Matthew, "Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son

of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. *And he will send his angels with a loud shofar call*, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. (Matthew 24:29-39)

Shaul (Paul) writes, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

This understanding is not limited to the Messianic believing community of the First Century, nor to the B’rit Hadasha (New Testament writings) alone. In the Siddur (Jewish prayer book), the seventh petitionary prayer is recited by Orthodox men three times daily calling for the ingathering of the Jewish people. It says: "Sound the great shofar for our freedom and raise the banner of the ingathering of our exiled people. Gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, Lord, Who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel."

It is clear that at the Second Coming of the Lord, He will return at the sound of the shofar and gather the remnant of Israel.

I mentioned earlier that on Yom Teruah 100 blasts of the shofar are made. There are three sounds of the shofar: the “tekiah,” the “shevarim,” and the “teruah.” At the end, the very last blast blown on Yom Teruah is the “tekiah gedolah,” the Great Tekiah – a single long, drawn out tone. This blast is also known as, “the last trumpet.”

Scripture often speaks of men or angels blowing trumpets, yet only twice is it recorded that God blows a trumpet. In both instances, it is the shofar.

The first occasion was at Mt. Sinai when the Lord revealed Himself from Heaven and prepared to bring the nation under the Old Covenant. The Shekinah glory of the Lord descended with a fiery tempest and the sound of the shofar: ‘Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire...And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long

and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai' (Ex. 19:18-20).

The last occasion on which the Lord will blow the shofar will be at the Messiah's return. The Lord will once again descend from Heaven with the whirlwind, the clouds of His glory fire, and the sound of the trumpet. The prophet Zechariah predicted: 'Then the Lord will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet, And go with whirlwinds from the south' (Zech. 9:14).

The ancient rabbis repeatedly quoted this verse in connection with the coming of the Messiah: 'And it is the ram's horn that the Holy One, blessed be he, is destined to blow when the son of David, our righteous one, will reveal himself, as it is said: 'And the Lord God will blow the horn' (Tanna debe Eliyahu Zutta XXII).

Resurrection of the Dead and the Regathering of Israel

Ancient Jewish tradition held that the resurrection of the dead would occur on Rosh Hashanah. Reflecting this tradition, Jewish gravestones were often engraved with a shofar.

Both of these events – God's last trump and the resurrection of the righteous – are intricately connected to the Rapture of the Church in the New Testament.¹⁴⁸

The Apostle Paul writes, “⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in 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 will be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15)

The sound of the shofar plays an integral part of this regathering in Jewish thought: not only in the “regathering” of Israel, but also in the call to battle. BOTH concepts are conveyed in the New Testament with the Second Coming of the Messiah! In the Second Coming of the Messiah, we also see the call to battle! *The Theological Wordbook* shares

¹⁴⁸ Howard, Kevin and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of Israel*, page 114

that our noun, “teruah” can have 'four distinct' meanings. All of them revolve around the sound made by either a trumpet, a shofar, a human voice or a combination of the three:

1. 'It is used for 'signal' (Leviticus 25:9)...for the blowing of the shofar on the day of atonement,'
2. 'for 'alarm' as in the 'case of attack (Joshua 6:5; Jeremiah 4:19),'
3. 'for 'the tumult of the battle'...(Amos 2:2),' and
4. 'for the exultation of praise to God... (Psalm 150:3).'¹⁴⁹

The Return of Messiah on the Day of the Lord

There are many passages in the Older Testament that portray a day of battle, a day of gloom, a day when the Lord will fight against the enemies of Israel. This day is known as the “Day of the Lord.” This is the day when the sound of the shofar calls to battle, a day of desolation to the enemies of God. The Day of the Lord is a day of battle, a day of darkness, a day of great death and destruction:

Isaiah 13: 6 – “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.”

Isaiah 13:9 – “Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.”

Isaiah 34:8 – “For the LORD has a day of vengeance, A year of recompense for the cause of Zion.”

Joel 2:1 – “Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming...”

Ezekiel 30:3 - "For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time {of doom} for the nations.”

¹⁴⁹ Harris, R. L., editor; Gleason Archer, Jr. and Bruce Waltke, associate editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 839.

Joel 2:31 – “The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.”

Amos 5:18 – “Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose {will} the day of the LORD {be} to you? It {will be} darkness and not light...”

Amos 5:20 – “{Will} not the day of the LORD {be} darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?”

Zephaniah 1:14 – “Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.”

Zephaniah 1:18 – “Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Zephaniah 2:3 – “Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the LORD'S anger.”

Malachi 4:5 - "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.”

In the Newer Testament, too, we see this portrayal of the Day of the Lord:

2 Peter 3:10 – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

1 Thessalonians 5:2 – “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”

Revelation 16: “¹³ And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; ¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. ¹⁵ ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.") ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”

2 Thessalonians 2: “¹ Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming...”

Revelation 19: “¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name

written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." ¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

So we see the return of the Lord on the Day of the Lord in the Second Coming, with great battle and destruction. At this time, the Saints of the Lord are gathered (raptured) to meet Him in the air. After this comes the judgment of the nations as we have already mentioned based upon how they treated the Jewish people.

CHAPTER 9

The Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur – Leviticus 23:26-32

²⁶ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. ²⁸ "You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. ²⁹ "If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ "As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ "You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³² "It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath."

Israel's more awesome holy day, known as Yom Kippur or 'The Day of Atonement,' is an ever-present theme woven throughout the pages of Scripture. Three and one-half millennia after its divine institution, Yom Kippur still wields a powerful influence over the culture and worship of Israel. But of even greater import, Yom Kippur provides a necessary backdrop for understanding the scope of the Messiah's payment for sin and security of God's people today.

"The Day of Atonement" is the English equivalent for Yom Kippur. For many, however, the word "atonement" is vague and sheds no light on the meaning of the holiday. Kippur is from the Hebrew word kaphar meaning "to cover."¹⁵⁰

The first use of the word "kaphar" in Scripture is found in Genesis 6:15, where Noah is commanded to build an Ark. The Ark was to be built of gopher wood that was to be covered with "kaphar" (pitch) both outside and inside. This kaphar/pitch would make the Ark waterproof and protect those inside from leaks which would sink the Ark and destroy the inhabitants.

So, we see, like pitch covering up something, so did the blood of the sacrifice animals on this day. We'll talk more about that later.

¹⁵⁰ Howard, Kevin and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 119

Yom Kippur was the holiest day of the year and signified a cleansing of sins and reconciliation with God (Judgment day). According to Jewish tradition, the people were to afflict their souls and fast. On this day only the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16).

Yom Kippur was the most important day of the year of the people of Israel. It was often called simply “The Day.” The Jews would “humble their souls” (Lev 23:27, 32), which meant fasting all day as they repented of their sins. This was not the only time they would fast but it was the only fast mandated by Scripture. As stated in Leviticus 23:29, any Jew who broke his fast would be “cut off from among his people.”

Yom Kippur was also a high Sabbath, meaning no work could be done. Leviticus 23:30 instructed that any Jew who did work would be “destroyed” and put under Israel’s death penalty.

Yom Kippur was also very solemn for the priests. On this day alone could the High Priest enter into the Holy of Holies in the Temple and stand before the very presence of God. He was required to wear holy garments made from the finest white linen. These garments would never be worn after this day. The priest had to do their duties perfectly. Any mistake or omission would mean that Israel’s sins were not covered.

The solemnity of this day was further emphasized by the increased number of sacrifices. Besides the regular daily burnt offerings with their required grain and drink offerings, there were additional burnt offerings to be made with a bull, a ram and seven lambs (for the people) and a ram (for the priesthood).

The Service of Yom Kippur

A holy day of such importance meant that much work had to be done before the day arrived. No mistakes could be made. No offering could be omitted. No word could be misspoken.

The Preparation

The high priest was at the very center of this annual festival. It was critical that he make himself ritually clean and that he not inadvertently become unclean. If he did something (anything) to make himself unclean, he would be disqualified from performing his duties on the High Holy Day.

To ensure that no such thing happened, the High Priest would leave his home one week before Yom Kippur and live in the High Priest's quarters inside the Temple gates. During that week of solitude, he was sprinkled twice with the ashes of a red heifer to circumvent the possibility that he had become unclean somehow (see Numbers 19:1-10).

As another precaution, an "alternate High Priest" was appointed in the event the anointed High Priest should die or become too ill to perform his duties or somehow become unclean. This alternate was usually the man who was "next in line" to become the High Priest, a very powerful man who acted as "Captain of the Temple (see Acts 4:1; 5:24-26).

All the duties of the High Priest were diligently practiced, such as properly sprinkling the blood between the thumb and forefinger or burning incense or lighting the menorah. There could be NO mistakes. The slightest misstep would mean monumental catastrophe and humiliation for the nation.

The Morning Service

The Jewish day began at sunset. However, the Temple service for Yom Kippur did not begin until dawn at the halfway point of the day.

The ashes on the altar were cleared away and four fires were made instead of the usual three (indicating this day was special and distinct).

On any other day, the High Priest would wash his hands and feet from the laver in preparation for the morning sacrifices. However, on this day he would totally immerse himself in a special golden bath near the Court of Priests. This was carried out behind a large linen curtain which revealed only the shadow of his movements to the public. This was done to assure that no changes were made to the required procedures.

The High Priest then put on his linen and golden garments with great care. His majestic purple robe was hemmed with tiny golden bells so that the people could hear him work as he represented them before God. Over the top of this robe, he wore a golden breastplate which was studded with twelve precious stones— a constant reminder that he was the representative of the twelve tribes of Israel.

After dressing, the High Priest washed his hands and feet to perform the regular daily service. Following these morning sacrifices, the High Priest returned to the bath chamber to change into his white linen garments for Yom Kippur. Five times during the day he made clothing changes and five times he followed the same cleansing ritual.

Each time, he washed his hands and feet, removed his garments, totally immersed his body, put on a new change of clothes and washed his hands and feet a second time.

The Afternoon Service

The afternoon Temple service was the main focus of the Yom Kippur observance. Through the sacrifices of this service, atonement was made for the sins of the priesthood and people of Israel for the preceding year.

The Confession of the High Priest

The High Priest began the afternoon service by moving to the **Court of Priests** where a young bull was waiting for him between the altar and the Temple porch. This bull was the SIN OFFERING for the High Priest and all the priesthood.

Therefore, this ceremony took place near the Temple where the priests ministered. The High Priest would press his two hands on the head of the bull as a sign of identification with the animal as his substitute and make his confession of his sin.

Three times during this confession he would pronounce the covenant name of God, which is pronounced “Yahweh.” Under Jewish oral law, this holy name of God is forbidden to be spoken on any other occasion or it would be taken in vain. Each time the name was uttered by the High Priest, the people and priests would fall on their faces in worship and repeat “Blessed by His Name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever!”

The Two Goats

The High Priest was next escorted by two other priests to the eastern side of the altar. On his right was the Deputy High Priest (the alternate). On his left was the Chief Priest of the division of priests chosen to minister that particular week.

Two goats also stood at that spot, side by side. They were identical in size, color and value. They faced the Temple and watched the High Priest as he approached. Two golden lots were placed inside a golden vessel sitting on the stone pavement nearby. One lot was inscribed with “FOR *YHWH*” and the other inscribed “FOR *AZAZEL*.” The High Priest shook the vessel and randomly took one lot in each hand. He held the lots to the foreheads of each goat and determined their outcome, declaring them both to be a sin offering to the Lord.

The goat upon which the lot “for *azazel*” fell was immediately identified by a crimson strip of wool tied to one of its horns. It was then turned around to face the people whose sin would later be placed on its head. There is some debate as to the exact meaning of “*azazel*.” Some believe it referred to Satan because in Jewish tradition *Azazel* was the name of a fallen angel. However, most scholars believe the word came from the Hebrew word *azel* which means “escape.” This line of reasoning led to calling this goat the “scapegoat” since it escaped death and was instead driven into the wilderness.

The goat determined “for YHWH” was left to face the large stone altar, the place where it would soon be offered as a sin offering.

The Sin Offering for the Priesthood

After this casting of lots, the High Priest returned to the young bull a second time and again pressed his hands on the bull’s head.

This time, he confessed the sins of the entire priesthood (earlier he had confessed his own personal sins).

The bull was then slaughtered by the High Priest and its blood collected in a golden bowl. A nearby priest was handed the bowl and given the task of stirring the blood so it would not congeal.

Burning the Incense

Next, the High Priest took a golden fire pan or censer and walked up the ramp of the altar. He carefully filled the censer with live coals from the fires burning on the altar. He took two handfuls of incense and placed them in a golden ladle. With the fire pan in his right hand and the incense in his left, he ascended to the Temple and passed through the Holy Place where the lampstand, table of showbread and altar of incense were located at the rear of the Holy Place, he paused to make his way through the veil, a thick curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. In this most holy place, the Ark of the Covenant stood and the glory of God rested on it.

Once inside the Holy of Holies, he stood in quiet solitude. The High Priest poured the incense onto the coals and waited a few moments for the fragrant cloud of smoke to fill the room. He made his way back through the curtain.

Sprinkling the Blood

The High Priest took the large golden bowl of the bull's blood and returned to the Holy of Holies.

He carefully sprinkled the blood before the Ark of the Covenant. He sprinkled it once upward and then seven times downward as though cracking a whip. All the while, he counted aloud to prevent any errors. He then exited the Holy of Holies and placed the bowl in a golden stand.

The High Priest continued outside to the Court of the Priests to slaughter the goat set aside for the Lord. He collected its blood in a smaller golden bowl or *mizrak*.

He then entered the Holy of Holies a third time and sprinkled the blood of the goat in the same manner as that of the bull.

Afterward, he sprinkled the outside of the veil with the blood of the bull. Then he repeated this procedure with the blood of the goat. Finally, he poured the two bowls together and sprinkled the horns (protruding points on each corner) of the altar in the courtyard.

The Scapegoat (*Azazel*)

Attention was then drawn to the remaining goat. The High Priest then laid his hands on its head and confessed the sins of the people. The goat was then led through the Eastern Gate and taken more than ten miles out into the wilderness. The goat was never seen again.

In the days of the Second Temple (Herod's), the scapegoat was actually killed so that it would not wander into an inhabited area. It was usually killed by being pushed backwards over a cliff by the priest.

While the goat was being taken into the wilderness, the people awaited word that the act was accomplished. The afternoon service continued. The High Priest finished sacrificing the bull and the goat on the altar and their remaining parts were taken outside the city to be burned.

Then the High Priest addressed the people. He entered the Court of the Women and read the Yom Kippur passages from Leviticus and quoted the passage from Numbers by heart to verify that all the commandments had been duly accomplished.

With the sun going down in the west, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies a final time to remove the fire pan and incense ladle. He then

bathed for the fifth time and changed into his golden garments. As the day ended, he performed the regular evening sacrifices and drew *Yom Kippur* to a close for another year.¹⁵¹

It was clearly specified in the Torah that the priests were not to go just at any time into the Holy Place behind the curtain (Leviticus 16:1-2). This came about as a result of the death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu after they tried to sacrifice before Adonai and died in Leviticus 10. Evidently, as inferred by the Scripture following, they had drunk alcohol which caused them not to discern right from wrong (Leviticus 10:8-10) and thus, they offered "strange fire" to the Lord in the Holy Place (Leviticus 10:1-2).

So God then institutes the Yom Kippur sacrifice in Leviticus 16 and 17. From now on, this will be the *only* time that the High Priest can go into the Most Holy Place, and it will also be the *only* sacrifice that will atone for the sins of all Israel as a community. *No* other sacrifice will atone for the sins of the people as a *group* or *community*.

All other sacrifices are to be offered outside of the Tent of Meeting and are considered individual sacrifices to God. The other sacrifices described in Leviticus 1-5 atoned for the sins of the *individual* person. Those sacrifices: the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering did *not* do away with the necessity of the Yom Kippur sacrifice and the Yom Kippur sacrifice did *not* do away with the necessity of the individual sacrifices. These sacrifices *were not* mutually-exclusive, each had their purpose and worked in *conjunction* with one another. In the sacrificial system each had its own particular function.

In time, long after the destruction of the Temple (about 200 CE), the sacrificial rituals and all other Oral Laws would be codified into what is known as the Mishnah, by

¹⁵¹ Reverend Spry, Jeff, Western Avenue Baptist Church, *Chapter 8, The Day of Atonement*, copyright 2007, <http://www.westernavenue.org/media/documents/Feasts-Ch08-DayAtonement.pdf>

Yehudah Ha-Nasi (יהודה הנשיא / "Judah the Prince"). One tractate, entitled *Yom ha-Kippurim* related to that which was done on the Day of Atonement.

Of the eight chapters contained in the Mishnah, only the last one deals with the laws of the fast. The first seven describe in a dramatic yet simple style the service of the high priest in the Temple in the order of its performance. This part of the Mishnah does not contain many differences of opinion, and it is distinguished by its uniformity and the continuity in its exposition of the high priest's service, with only a few interruptions regarding incidental details.¹⁵²

The Messianic Fulfillment: Yeshua's Priesthood/Sacrifice

When we studied the Moed of Passover, we saw Yeshua at the Last Supper saying to His Disciples, "for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins..." (Matthew 26:28)

Please recall that I stated in that section that according to the Law, the blood of the Passover Lamb did *not* atone for sins. It *did* not and *could* not! That was *not* the purpose of the blood of the Passover lamb. Its original purpose was to be splashed upon the doorposts and lintels of each household of the children of Israel on the night that the Lord Passed over Egypt to prevent the death of the first-born in that household:

¹ "Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. ³ "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, `On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. ⁴ `Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons *in them*; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. ⁵ `Your lamb shall be

¹⁵² *Encyclopedia Judaica*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House) Volume 16 page 844

an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ `You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. ⁷ `Moreover, **they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses** in which they eat it. ⁸ `They shall eat the flesh that *same* night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ `Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs along with its entrails. ¹⁰ `And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ `Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste--it is the LORD'S Passover. ¹² `For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments--I am the LORD. ¹³ `The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.”

(Exodus 12)

The blood of the Passover Lamb did not institute *any* covenants! Its sole purpose was to protect the inhabitants of the household (specifically the first-born) from death. *Yet*, we see the combination of the two Moedim – Passover *AND* Yom Kippur in this one statement by Yeshua! Not only that, we recall that His cousin John the Baptizer *ALSO* combined these two Moedim when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God that *takes away the sins* of the world!” (John 1:29)

The combination of the roles of the lamb of Passover, the High Priest and the rams of Yom Kippur are met in the one person: Yeshua! Not only is He the Passover Lamb whose blood, when seen on the doorposts and lintels of our hearts, causes the Lord to “pass over” us from our sins; not only is He the perfect sacrifice above all other sacrifices, because He was sinless, but He is *also* the superior cohen gadol (High Priest) who offers the yearly Yom Kippur sacrifice on behalf of the people!

“Now every cohen stands every day doing his service, offering over and over the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this one, after he had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, sat down at the right hand of God, from then on to wait until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has brought to the goal for all time those who are being set apart for God and made holy” (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Why was Yeshua’s priesthood superior to those offered by the Levitical priests? The Book of Hebrews speaks of His priesthood as being that of Malki-tzedek (King of Righteousness), to which Levi, through the loins of Abraham gave tithes (Hebrews 7). The lesser always gives to the greater. Though Yeshua could not be a priest while He lived on earth as a descendant of Judah (Hebrews 7:14; 8:4), He is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, who had no beginning and no end (Hebrews 7:3).

Another element to the superiority of His priesthood, He was sinless, the other priests were not. Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a cohen gadol unable to empathize with our weaknesses; since in every respect he was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that he did not sin” and Hebrews 7:26, which says, “This is the kind of cohen gadol that meets our need – holy, without evil, without stain,

set apart from sinners and raised higher than the heavens; one who does not have the daily necessity, like the other cohanim g'dolim, of offering up sacrifices first for their own sins and only then for those of the people; because he offered one sacrifice, once and for all, by offering up himself.” Yeshua was the sinless High Priest.

But greater than that, as we saw from the last passage, Yeshua was also the perfect sacrifice! All the other sacrifices were *from* the sinner, but were *not* the sinner!

Yochanan (John) the baptizer, when he saw his cousin Yeshua coming to be baptized (mikvahed) by him proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Yochanan, under the power of the Spirit, here is combining the elements of two of the Moedim: Passover, in which a lamb is slain and Yom Kippur, in which the bulls and goats are slain and in which the sins of a group of people are atoned.

It is important to understand that the Passover lamb did not “take away” sins for it was not a sin offering. Yet, the blood on the doorposts and lintels of the original Passover did cause the Lord to “Passover” the houses and spare the firstborn within them. There was a sparing of life (salvation) element to Passover, yet not a forgiveness of sin.

Though the Yom Kippur sacrifice did atone for the sins of the people, it did not “take away” sins. Hebrews 10:4 says, “For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”

If the Yom Kippur sacrifice atoned for the sins of the people, how could it not “take away” those same sins? To understand that, we must go back to the meaning of “kaphar” as we already described with the “pitch/kaphar” placed on the Ark of Noah. Remember,

kaphar covered the Ark, keeping it from leaking and thus saving the occupants. Kaphar merely *covered* something – it did NOT *remove* something.

We can understand the concept of the covering and protection of tar best when we relate to modern-day road maintenance. No doubt you have seen a road crew spraying a coat of tar (pitch) over the road to repair some of the cracks on the road. The tar that is being sprayed is like pitch, in that it covers the road.

Imagine though for a moment that you drew a big red mark on the road on the road before the crew came to spray the tar. When the crew comes and sprays the tar it covers the big red mark with the black tar, yet, if somehow we could gently peel back the pitch covering the mark – we would still see the mark there under the covering of the tar. The tar did not “take away” the big red mark; it merely covered (atoned) up the big red mark.

In like manner, the blood of the animals used in the sacrificial system merely covered up (atoned for) the sins (the red mark) – they didn’t take them away.

This is what happened year after year with the Yom Kippur sacrifice (and the other sacrifices). Yes, the nation’s sins would be forgiven, yet, they would not be “taken away.”

The superiority of the atonement of the blood of Yeshua is found in its taking away the sins and not simply covering them up. This is the argument presented in the Book of Hebrews: Yeshua’s “once for all” sacrifice does what no other sacrifice could ever do: it completely “takes away” the sins of the people. He offered His sacrifice of His own blood not in the Holy of Holies made with hands, but in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly Temple (Hebrews 9:11, 24).

Let me explain. On the day that Adam sinned, God promised that he would surely die (Genesis 2:17). After the man and woman sinned, they tried to cover themselves with loincloths (Genesis 3:7) to hide their nakedness. The works of their hands could not take care of the sin issue. Someone or *something* had to die that day to cover (atone) for their sin.

God then covers the man and woman with the skins of animals (Genesis 3:21). This is the first substitutionary atonement. An animal had to die in the place of the man so that man, though sinful, could live. The animal was not the man and the man was not the animal. The atonement was not perfect, since it was the man that sinned and as a result, it should be the man who dies.

Yet, it was an accepted substitution by God that would ultimately point to the perfect sacrifice that would one day be made by His Son.

The Book of Hebrews goes on, "...And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever. (9:12)" The blood of Yeshua is the perfect sacrifice, forever able to take away the sins of the people.

Thus, both the priesthood of and the sacrifice of Yeshua was superior. "He did not enter heaven to offer himself over and over again, like the cohen haGadol who enters the Holiest Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer death many times – from the founding of the universe on. But as it is, he has appeared once at the end of the ages in order to do away with sin through the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:25-26)."

That the Yom Kippur sacrifice actually points to the atoning death of the Messiah is foretold in the TANAKH:

Isaiah 53 says,

¹ Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no *stately* form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

³ He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

And our sorrows He carried;

Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities;

The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him,

And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray,

Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?

⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased
To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering,
He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul,

He will see *it and* be satisfied;
 By His knowledge the Righteous One,
 My Servant, will justify the many,
 As He will bear their iniquities.

- ¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
 And He will divide the booty with the strong;
 Because He poured out Himself to death,
 And was numbered with the transgressors;
 Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
 And interceded for the transgressors.

This interpretation was not lost on the Rabbis:

The book of ZOHAR, regarded with the utmost reverence by all pious Jews, and parts of which are certainly from the first century of Christianity, also says plainly that Messiah bears the sins of the people; and that 'If he had not removed them from Israel and taken them upon himself, no man could bear the chastisement of Israel on account of the punishment pronounced in the Law.' This is what is written: — 'Surely He hath borne our sicknesses? The TALMUD (SANHEDRIN, vol. 98, col. 2), the PSIKTA, and YALKUT SHIMONI, all have the same interpretation. 'Behold my servant shall deal very prudently—this is the King Messiah. He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high. He shall be exalted more than Abraham. . . He shall be extolled more than Moses. . . He shall be higher than the ministering angels. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.' RABBI HUNA, in the name of RABBI ACHA, says the chastisements were divided into three parts—'one to David and the fathers; one to the rebellious generation; and one to King Messiah.' Indeed, such possession had this interpretation of the Jewish mind, that it found its way into the prayers of the Synagogue, and there it remains until this day.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Stevenson, Thomas, *Christianity confirmed by Jewish and heathen testimony and the deductions from physical science*, Oxford University, 1879, page 57

In the Liturgy for the Day of Atonement was found the following remarkable passage, which is given from spoken of He beareth the iniquities of the people:

In the Liturgy for the Day of Atonement is found the following remarkable passage, which is given from David Levi's edition of the synagogue service books, and in his translation. "Before He created any things, He established His dwelling (the temple) and Yinnon. Our righteous anointed is departed from us: horror hath seized us, and we have none to justify. He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities, and of our transgressions, and is wounded because of our transgression. He beareth our sins on His shoulder, that He may first pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed by His wound at the time that the Eternal will create Him (the Messiah) as a new creature. O bring Him up from the circle of the earth, raise Him up from Seir, to assemble us the second time on Lebanon by the hand of INNON."¹⁵⁴

That the Messiah would make an end to iniquity is found in the Book of Daniel Chapter 9:

²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, *to make atonement for iniquity*, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and *to anoint the most holy place.*"

The Messiah is the only one who can do this – and this is clearly a Jewish concept! What is incredible about this prophecy in Daniel is that it actually sets the exact timetable as to when the Messiah (the Anointed One) would do this!

Louis Ruggiero in his book, *Countering Rabbinic Judaism* writes:

Throughout the centuries and up until this present moment, people who reject the Bible continuously attack its credibility. In spite of this, the Hebrew scriptures remain infallible. In John 5:39 Jesus tells us, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

Jesus' words are certainly true, because Moses and the prophets described Him in great detail. And it was with pinpoint accuracy, flawless precision,

¹⁵⁴ Chaimberlain, Walter, M.A., *THE CHRISTIAN VERITY STATED, A SUMMARY OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE ESPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR PRESENT TIMES*, WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT, 1862, page 183

and in absolute defiance to the unbeliever, that God revealed through Daniel the exact month and year that Jesus the Messiah would make His entrance into the world. This prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27 records the words of the angel Gabriel who tells the prophet:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

In 607/606 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and began taking its people captive into Babylon. In this passage, Gabriel appears to Daniel toward the end of their captivity. Daniel 9:2 states, “In the first year of his [Darius, the son of Ahasuerus] reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

According to this verse, Daniel was fully aware of the prophecy written in Jeremiah 25:11 that reads, “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

The prophet was also aware that, after the seventy-year expiration, the children of Israel would be allowed to return. Jeremiah 29:10 adds, “For thus sayeth the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”

In the beginning of Daniel 9, Daniel prayed. He confessed his own sins as well as the sins of the people that resulted in their punishment. He admitted that they had done wickedly and committed iniquity and rebellion against God. Just as importantly, he was concerned whether his people had truly repented for their sins. We can find evidence of this in verse 13 when he said, “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet

made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.”

Daniel was concerned about his people’s repentance for a reason. In Leviticus 26 the Lord told Moses that, should the children of Israel fail to repent and be reformed during their punishment, He would push the punishment to the next level and punish them seven times more for their hardness of heart. In the case of the Babylonian captivity, this could result in an additional 490 years on top of the 70 years that were about to expire. The applicable passages from Leviticus 26 follow:

“And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins....And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins....And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.”

-Leviticus 26:17-18, 20-21, 23-24

After nearly seventy years of captivity, seven times the punishment was more than Daniel could bear. So he repented on behalf of his people and reminded God of what He said in Leviticus 26:40-43, which was:

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.”

Even though Daniel pled to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness, God’s response through the angel contained both good and bad news as follows: Because of Israel’s failure to repent, their punishment would continue in accordance with Leviticus 26. In other words, for an additional seventy weeks of years, or seventy sevens, there would be nonfulfillment of any of

God's promises provided in Daniel 9:24. As a result, Israel would have to wait an additional seventy weeks of years for the fulfillment of the entire prophecy.

According to Daniel 9:25, the angel also informed Daniel when the 490 year countdown would begin. It would commence with the eventual word, or decree, to restore and build Jerusalem. Furthermore, it would be 69 weeks of years [69 x 7], or 483 years, from the time the word is given to rebuild Jerusalem to the time the Messiah would begin fulfilling the promises in Daniel 9:25. And according to Daniel 9:26, the Messiah would be cut off or killed at the end of this 69-week or 483-year period.¹⁵⁵

Even though the people's captivity into Babylon actually began in 607/606 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem was not concluded until the summer of 586 B.C. when the temple was destroyed. Then in 539 B.C., the Babylonian Empire fell to the Persian king Cyrus the Great. The Persian Empire lasted until approximately 332 B.C. [some sources claim 330 B.C.] when it was defeated by the Greek general Alexander the Great at the battle of Guagemala River. In this year, the Greek Empire took control of the Persia Empire and dominated most of the civilized world.

According to recorded history, the Persian Empire ruled over Israel for a total of 207 years, from 539 B.C. to 332. B.C. It began with Cyrus the Great and ended with Alexander the Great's victory over King Darius III. These facts are important because the Persian kings played critical roles with respect to Bible prophecy, especially regarding the seventy weeks of Daniel. It was one of these kings, Artaxerxes I, who provided the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25).¹⁵⁶

The Sixth King: Artaxerxes I, Longimanus. He ruled from 465 B.C. to 425/424 B.C. and was Xerxes' son. His empire was one of peace and tranquility. Under his rulership, there was little or no expansion. In 449 B.C. he ended the Persian wars that were started by Darius the Great. History records that his elder brother murdered him in 425/424 B.C. in a power struggle for the throne. According to the Bible, he was the king who provided the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Artaxerxes I reigned during the days of Nehemiah, as shown in the book of Nehemiah: "Moreover from the time that I [Nehemiah] was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor" (Neh. 5:14).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ruggiero, Louis, *Countering Rabbinic Judaism*, copyright 2005 by Louis Ruggiero, pages 15-18

¹⁵⁶ IBID., pages 20-21

¹⁵⁷ IBID., page 24

It is logical to conclude that since history records that Artaxerxes began his reign as king in 465 B.C., and Nehemiah 2:1 reveals that his decree to rebuild Jerusalem was made in the month of Nisan in his twentieth year as king, the order must have been given in Nisan 445 B.C.

Referring back to Daniel 9:25, Gabriel indicated that “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,” which is a total of 69 weeks of years, or 483 years. Therefore, since Artaxerxes provided the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in Nisan 445 B.C., it was at this moment in history when the countdown to the Messiah began.

As history shows, Artaxerxes’ command to restore and build Jerusalem was made in Nisan 445 B.C. and, according to Daniel 9:25, it would be 69 weeks or 483 years from the time this word was given to the advent of the Messiah. Before calculating the foretold month and year of the Messiah’s coming, it is important to realize that God measures time on the basis of a 360-day per year calendar, not a 365.25-day per year calendar. Proof of this is found quite early in the Bible and is shown in Genesis 7:11 and Genesis 8:3-4. These verses provide the precise month and day the great flood began and ended.

In Genesis 7:11, during the days of Noah, the flood began “in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month.” And according to Genesis 8:3-4, the waters subsided “in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month.” In the latter passage, important information is supplied that this precise five-month period is equivalent to a “hundred and fifty days.” Since $150/5 = 30$, God is on a thirty-day month or a $30 \times 12 = 360$ day per year calendar. The following verses provide the proof:

The Rain and Flood Began – “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Gen. 7:11).

The Rain and Flood Were Abated – “And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen. 8:3-4).

In the New Testament, we can find further evidence of a 30-day month or a 360-day per year calendar in Revelation 11:2-3, Revelation 12:6, and Revelation 13:5. Here we see that 1,260 days are equivalent to precisely 42 months; thus, a 30-day month or 360-day per year calendar. These describe the seventieth week of Daniel, which consists of two 42-month periods, a

total of 84 months, or seven years...which is the seven-year Tribulation period foretold in Daniel 9:27:

Revelation 11:2-3: “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Revelation 12:6: “And when the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

Revelation 13:5: “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

Since the Bible teaches that God is on a 360-day per year calendar as opposed to a 365.25-day per year solar calendar, the 483 years of 69 prophetic weeks in Daniel 9:25 need to be converted into solar years. Therefore, it is necessary to multiply 483 years by 360 days, which is a total of 173,880 days. Then we need to convert the 173,880 days into solar years by dividing by 365.25, the number of days in a solar year.

173,880 divided by 365.25 = 476.057 years, or 476 solar years. Since Artaxerxes' order was given in 445 B.C., 445 B.C. + 476 solar years = A.D. 32 (remember, there is no year zero, so we must add one). And it was in Nissan A.D. 32 when Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey proclaiming to be Israel's King Messiah. Less than a week later, He was crucified or cut off in fulfillment of Daniel 9:26.¹⁵⁸

So, at the exact appointed time, Yeshua the Messiah entered the city and provided the reconciliation for iniquity (atonement) as described by the prophecy of Daniel!

In fact, the proof of the efficacy of the Yom Kippur sacrifice of Yeshua comes from a most unlikely source – the Talmud.

Our Rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot [‘For the Lord’] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the westernmost light shine; and the doors of the Hekal would open by themselves, until R. Johanan b. Zakkai rebuked them, saying: Hekal, Hekal, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? ⁵ I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning thee: ⁶ Open thy

¹⁵⁸ IBID., pages 28-30

doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. ⁷ 12) Which was tied between the horns of the bullock. If that became white, it signified that the Holy One, blessed be He, had forgiven Israel's sin. Cf. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.¹⁵⁹

What happened 40 years *before* the Destruction of the Temple? Remember, the Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. Forty years earlier, Jesus was crucified! So the Yom Kippur offering *still* being offered in the Temple for those 40 remaining years of its standing was *not* accepted by God as an atonement for the sins of Israel!

One other Scriptural reference points to the Yom Kippur sacrifice as being the *only* sacrifice dealt with in the death of Jesus: after His spirit was given up on the cross, Matthew 27:51 observes: “And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.”

The *parokhet* in the Temple. Exodus 26:31-35 describes this curtain as it existed in the desert Tabernacle. It separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Only the *cohen hagadol* was allowed to pass through it into the Holy of Holies; and that he could do only once a year, on Yom Kippur, to make an atonement sacrifice for his sins and for the sins of the Jewish people. When it was ripped in two from top to bottom it symbolized the fact that God was giving everyone access to the most holy place of all in heaven, as taught explicitly in MJ [Hebrews] 9:3-9, 10:19-22.¹⁶⁰

Only *one* sacrifice, *once* a year involved the High Priest going through the veil and entering the Holy Place: that was the Yom Kippur sacrifice. *All* the other sacrifices were done *outside* of the building of the Temple on the brazen altar.

Future Fulfillment of Yom Kippur: Post-Millennium Judgment

As with most of the other Moedim, there is yet a dual fulfillment of this Moed as well – that in the Millennial reign of Yeshua – with the combination of the year of Jubilee and Yom Kippur:

¹⁵⁹ Yoma 39b, Babylonian Talmud, Soncino Press Edition

¹⁶⁰ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 84

Many people wonder why the sixty-nine weeks in Daniel 9:25 are broken down into increments of seven-week and sixty-two-week periods. In order to answer this question, it is important to realize that one of the reasons for Israel's captivity was their failure to keep the Sabbath rest of the land as commanded in Leviticus 25. This is explained in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 as follows:

“And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years.”

It is significant to note that in the case of the Sabbath rest of the land, God used cycles of seven years or weeks or years when counting time. The 70 week or 490 year prophecy that would begin with the word to restore and build Jerusalem was a continuation of seven-year cycles that included the land's rest. God never intended to terminate these cycles after Israel's return to the land and was stressing that they should continue until the Messiah's advent and the fulfillment of the promises in Daniel 9:24.

In the Torah, Leviticus 25 describes God's demands when Israel is brought into the land. Leviticus 25:1-2 begins, “And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.”

The Bible explains in Leviticus 25:3-4 that there would be six years of sowing and reaping and, on the seventh year, the land should remain inactive and rest. It reads as follows, “Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.”

Then Leviticus 25:8-10 teaches that after seven sabbaths of years, or forty-nine years, on the tenth day of the seventh month (which coincides with the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur, see Leviticus 16:29), the trumpet would sound proclaiming liberty to all the land's inhabitants. This fiftieth year, beginning on Yom Kippur, is called the year of Jubilee:

“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the

inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.”

This proclamation, which began on the fiftieth year on Yom Kippur, had a major significance. On that day, the high priest provided atonement for all Israel’s sins by the animal sacrifices that were made. We can see in Leviticus 16:30, “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

During the year of Jubilee, two things took place. First, all debts between everyone were declared null and void. Secondly, the nation became completely restored to God as the result of the sacrifices on Yom Kippur. Leviticus 25:11 states that, “A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which growth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.”

The combination of both the Day of Atonement and the Year of Jubilee foreshadows the future reign of the Messiah. This is because by Him mankind will be reconciled to the Holy God of Israel and there will be absolute liberty in the land through His everlasting peace.

Daniel 9:25-26 tells us that, at the end of the first 7 weeks or 49 years, Israel would celebrate the Jubilee. This would then provide the foundation for the next 62 weeks or 434 years. The first Jubilee after Israel’s return and every Jubilee to follow would mark Israel’s preparation for their coming Messiah.¹⁶¹

The dual fulfillment also is reflected in the future judgment of the dead at the end of the Millennial reign of Messiah Yeshua. What begins the Millennium at the Lords’ return on Yom Teruah, ends at Yom Kippur with the judgment.

Here we examine the connections between these traditional imagery and Biblical commands of this feast with its prophetic fulfillment. Recall that the Feast of Trumpets points to Yeshua's second coming at the seventh and last *shofar*. Immediately after this are the seven bowls of God's wrath. Marvin Rosenthal in his book *The Pre-Wrath*

¹⁶¹ Ruggiero, Louis, *Countering Rabbinic Judaism*, pages 18-20

Rapture of the Church points out that “in the Jewish mind, the type of bowl mentioned in Revelation 15 and 16 was symbolic of God's wrath on the Gentile nations.”¹⁶²

I believe that these bowls judgments are the prophetic fulfillment of the Days of Awe. The unbelieving people on earth have mere days to repent in order to escape judgment, yet despite this one last chance they refuse (Revelation 16:9, 11, and 21). After the seventh and last bowl, their fate is sealed, and Babylon is judged (Revelation 17 and 18). Revelation 20 then speaks of the Millennial reign of the Messiah during which Satan is bound so that evil is separated from God's people for 1000 years. After the Millennial Reign of the Messiah, Satan is released, deceives the nations, gathers them to battle God's people, and is promptly consumed by fire from heaven. He then is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur.

After this, the dead are raised. Now, it must be noted that this resurrection is not the “Rapture” spoken of by Shaul in 1 Thessalonians. This is the resurrection of the dead at the end of the Millennium.

"Next I saw a great white throne and the One sitting on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened; and another book was opened, the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from what was written in the books, according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead in it; and Death and Sheol gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to what he had done. Then Death and Sheol were hurled into the lake of fire. This is the second death -- the lake of fire. Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was hurled into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11-15, CJB)

¹⁶² Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*.

We see several other passages in the New Testament writings speaking of names being written in the “book:”

“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

“And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.” (Philippians 4:3)

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” (Revelation 3:5)

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” (Revelation 17:8)

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Revelation 21:27)

The concept of “books” being written into and read is not found in the New Testament writings only. It is also found in the TANAKH (Hebrew Scriptures).

[Moses pleads for the people] “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:32, 33).

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” (Psalm 69:28)

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” (Psalm 139:14-16)

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” (Daniel 12:1)

Jewish tradition also speaks of “books” being written with those who are righteous being written in the Book of Life. In Judaism, it is said that on Rosh haShanah we seek to be written in the book of life. On Yom Kippur, the book of life is sealed. The **Book of Life**, (*Sefer HaChaim*), is the allegorical book in which God records the names and lives of the righteous. According to the *Talmud* it is open on Rosh Hashanah; its analog for the wicked, the *Book of the Dead* is open on this date as well. For this reason extra mention is made for the *Book of Life* during Amidah (Standing Prayer) recitations between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Some say there are three books: one of the good (Book of Life), one of the wicked (Book of the Dead), and one of the in-between. 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 for ten days from the Feast of Trumpets to the Feast of the Day of Atonement. It is during that period of time that a man is given opportunity to repent before the book is closed and his destiny sealed.

In Jewish thought, Yom Kippur was the Day when God judges an individual to determine whether they were meriting another year of life and would be written in the book of life. On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in these books is sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.

Yet, the New Testament depicts this judgment as occurring, not yearly on Yom Kippur, but at the end of all time as we already noted in Revelation 20.

Yeshua said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:25-29)

There are two resurrections: One at the time of His Second Coming, at what is commonly called the "Rapture" when the righteous saints will rise at the sound of the Trump on Yom Teruah and the other at the end of His Millennial reign on Yom Kippur.

The Establishment of the New Covenant

When we studied Passover, we recall that Yeshua said, "**this is My blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28) Shaul

writes in 1 Corinthians 11: "25 In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in My blood;** do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

From these passages of Scripture, it is clear that Yeshua was instituting the "New Covenant" at the Last Supper by His soon to be shed blood on the cross.

As previously mentioned, a covenant is not instituted without the death of the testator: "15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives." (Hebrews 9)

So, as we have already seen, when Yeshua died on the cross, He not only was the Passover Lamb that actually "takes away sin," He not only acted as the perfect (sinless) High Priest, He not only paid the price for sin, *BUT* He also validated and established a "New Covenant" through His death!

Through the Levitical Priesthood and sacrifices, the blood of animals was shed and their death actually atoned for the sins of the people. But animals are incomplete sacrifices - in that they are not the actual sinners that deserve death – "For the wages of sin is death" – Romans 6:23. Therefore, the priests had to keep on offering year after year after year the same sacrifices over and over again, since the worshipper could never be cleansed once and for all from his or her sins.

“¹ For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? ³ But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (Hebrews 10)

This is the typology of Yom Kippur. Once a year, every year the High Priest would offer sacrifices on behalf of first himself and his household and then of the priests, and finally on behalf of the nation Israel. Since the sacrifice is that of an animal and not the sinner himself, it was incomplete and inadequate – hence, it could not “take away sins.”

And so comes the typology of Sukkot, which we shall see in the next chapter – in which Yeshua, the Son of God, takes a body so that He could become the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10):

“⁵ Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, **but a body you have prepared for Me**, in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.'" ⁸ After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin you have not desired, nor have you taken pleasure *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹ then He said, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

The death of animals could NOT satisfy God's requirements to take away the sins of the people! He had to send His own Son in the form of sinful man to perform (as High Priest) the ultimate sacrifice (in lieu of the ram of Yom Kippur) to take away sin and establish the "New Covenant: (Hebrews 10)"

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ¹³ waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,
AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"

He then says,

¹⁷ "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS
I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin."

Notice that God does not take away the Torah; rather, he takes away the first system of sacrifices and priesthood in order to set up the second within the framework of the one eternal Torah.

Moreover, it is not necessary to suppose that this "taking away" prohibits all animal sacrifices by the Levitical priesthood. The author's point relates

to only the sin offering: “an offering for sins is no longer needed” (vv. 15-18&N) because the second sin offering system is effectual in a way that the first never was (v. 10, 9:11-15&N). The other animal sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood could be continued without eclipsing the preeminent role of Yeshua’s once-for-all sacrifice and eternal high-priesthood. Even the sin offering ritual could theoretically be continued, but only if it were regarded as a memorial and not as effective in itself. Just as it was never more than “a shadow” (v. 1&N), so now, if it should be resumed (which would presuppose the rebuilding of the Temple at some future time; see 2 Th 2:4&N), it could not be more than a reminder of the great deliverance provided in Yeshua’s death as our final and permanently effective sin offering and his resurrection as our cohen gadol.¹⁶³

The writer of the Book of Hebrews makes the tie for us in regard to the death of Yeshua and His establishment of the “New” Covenant. He quotes here from the prophet Jeremiah here in verses 16 and 17 and explains what the nature of the “New” (or better yet, “renewed”) Covenant shall be.

The nature of the “New” Covenant is where God’s Laws are written on the hearts and minds of those who are partakers of the New Covenant: “I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM...”

In other words, instead of God’s Laws being written merely upon parchment or stone, He writes them upon the hearts and minds of His people. This is the characteristic of the “New” Covenant. Not a set of new Laws or the doing away of the “Old” Laws, but rather, the placing of the already existing Laws upon the hearts and minds of His people. So they could do what? Ignore them? NO! Obviously so they could DO them!

The writer earlier quotes the prophet in Hebrews 8, where he writes concerning the ministry of Yeshua: “⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. ⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no

¹⁶³ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 704

occasion sought for a second. ⁸ For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; ⁹ NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD."

The reason why God did not care for the fathers is that they did not continue in the covenant! They disobeyed God and therefore, He was not pleased with them! The fault with the first covenant was that the people didn't *KEEP* it!

They said they would! When Moses instituted the first covenant, he related to the people all the words of the Lord and they said, "All that the Lord has said, we will do!"

³ Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" ⁴ Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (Exodus 24)

Yet, for all their words, they disobeyed Him and so He was not pleased with them. So God through the prophet Jeremiah says that He will establish a “New” covenant unlike the covenant He made with the fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.

The weakness of the Law was in its inability to cause the people to keep it (Romans 8): “³ For what the Law could not do, **weak as it was through the flesh**, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Though the Law is “holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12) and is spiritual (Romans 7:14), it does not have the ability to empower us to keep it.

The reason for this is that our flesh fights against God’s Law and the Law cannot help us here in this fight! Shaul describes this dynamic for us in his own struggles with the Law and his flesh (Romans 7), “¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.”

The problem, according to Shaul is NOT the Law, for it is holy, righteous, just and spiritual. The problem is our flesh, which is evil and which wages war against God’s Law!

The Law is a shadow of the good things to come, but is not the actual substance of those things: “For the Law, since it has {only} a shadow of the good things to come {and} not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.” (Hebrews 10:1)

The substance is what will occur when the “New” covenant is fully established.

In Jeremiah 31, from which the writer of the book of Hebrews quotes, the prophet writes, ³¹ "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But **this is the covenant** which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,"

declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Most believers in Jesus today think that we are in the "New Covenant" period now. This is not completely true. We are and we are not yet. We are literally in a transition period from the older to the newer.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews says, ¹⁶³ "When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."

In this verse, the verb tenses are important. The Mosaic Covenant has already been made...old, but is not already aged and it has not already vanished. It is in the process of aging and on the verge of vanishing in the same sense that "This world's leaders...are in the process of passing away" (2 C 2:6). This world's leaders are still with us, and so is the Mosaic Covenant. Even Christians whose theology posits the abrogation or passage of the Mosaic Covenant in its entirety must therefore acknowledge that it has not yet vanished but still exists.¹⁶⁴

At the time of the writing of the Book of Hebrews the Temple was still standing and sacrifices were still being offered. The writer speaks of the duties of the priests and high priest in the present tense, not the past tense. Therefore, most scholars surmise that the book was written shortly before the Temple's destruction in 70 A.D.

Therefore, the Levitical sacrificial system was still in place at the time of this writing.

If the death and resurrection, and perfect offering of Yeshua in the Heavens fully established the "New" Covenant around 30 A.D., why does the writer of the book of Hebrews say, ¹⁶³ "When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear." (Hebrews 8)

¹⁶⁴ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 691

He speaks in transitory terms, “becoming,” “growing,” and “ready.” He doesn’t speak of the older covenant as “obsolete,” but rather, “becoming obsolete.” He doesn’t say “old,” he says “growing old.” He doesn’t say “disappeared,” he says “ready to disappear.” This is a big difference!

One would think that with the death, resurrection and perfect sacrifice of Yeshua in the Heavens that the “New” Covenant was a done deal and totally established and instituted. Yet, even at the time of the writing of the Book of Hebrews it wasn’t!

If roughly 40 years AFTER the death, resurrection and heavenly sacrificial offering of Yeshua the old covenant wasn’t done away with, what would it be? How will we *KNOW* when it will be done away with?

I believe we find the answer in Hebrews 8, which quotes Jeremiah 31:33-34:

¹⁰ "For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ¹¹ "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ For all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. ¹² "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

The answer is this: when we see people walking out the Law in their lives out of love for God and in the power of the Spirit, and when we don’t need someone to teach people about God and about knowing Him, we will know that we are there!

We will know we are there when pastors, rabbis and teachers are out of a job. ALL the people will KNOW God, from the least to the greatest of them! We are not there yet.

We are not there yet, my brothers and sisters; for the exact same reason Shaul had his struggles between keeping the Law of God and with his flesh fighting against keeping it. We still don't all walk by the power of the Spirit and therefore, we struggle with the flesh.

“⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8)

If we say we are believers in Yeshua, we cannot be fighting continuously against the Law of God! If we ARE, it is evidence that we are still NOT in the “New” Covenant period!

In fact, our fighting against the Law of God is proof that we are still, even as believers in Yeshua, setting our minds on the flesh and “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Grace does not mean that we wantonly violate God's commandments. Grace says that since, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...” (Romans 3:23) and that “there is none righteous, no not one”

We will know we are there when we don't sin anymore – all our sins will be forgiven. Finally, we will know we are there when God dwells among us “AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

Even in the Millennial Reign of Yeshua when the perfect Law comes forth from Zion from the perfect Law-Giver, we will still not be in the “New” Covenant in its totality!

During the Reign of Messiah Yeshua, the Bible says, “And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3) and “Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’ For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:2).

Yet, even at this time, with people still in the flesh, there will yet be rebellion to His ways. Satan may be bound for 1,000 years during the Millennium – but we do quite well sinning – even without him. At the end of 1,000 years, Satan will be released for a short time to deceive the nations once again (Revelation 20):

“¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”

“⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog

and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

So, even after 1,000 years of no Satan and of perfect peace and Law, there will still be those who will rebel against God. Thus, even in the Millennial reign of Messiah we do not see the characteristics of the New Covenant in its total fulfillment.

I believe that won't happen in totality and completely until the new heavens and new earth: “¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and **He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people**, and God Himself will be among them,⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; **the first things have passed away.**" (Revelation 21)

“...and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” and “the first things have passed away” BOTH have their complete fulfilling in this passage in Revelation 21.

Question: When will that which is “becoming obsolete,” “growing old,” and “ready to disappear” actually *become* obsolete, old and disappear? Answer? When the first things have passed away! The “first things” include not only the Law given to us on

earth which is a “shadow of the good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1), as are the Moedim - Colossians 2: ¹⁶ Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- ¹⁷ things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ,” but also the heavens and earth, which are shadows, too! The whole creation is longing for the ultimate redemption – not only for its own freedom, but also for the revealing of the sons of God in the world to come.

¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8)

It is after the Final Yom Kippur judgment when the books are opened at the Great White Throne that all things are going to be set aright:

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up

the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Thereafter, in the new earth will be a Garden, like the Garden of Eden, and in it is the Tree of Life. Its leaves will be for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it. John the Revelator sees this in Revelation 22:

“¹ Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ **There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;** ⁴ **they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.** ⁵ And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”

There, in that Garden, the redemption of the Saints and of all the creation will be complete. The New Covenant will be in its fulness.

In Judaism, the “world to come” is called, *Gan Eden* – the Garden of Eden. It was there that man first sinned and caused the necessity of the sacrificial system in the first place. It was there in the Garden that the “curse” came upon the earth (Genesis 3):

“¹⁷ Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

But at the end of all time, in the world to come, *Gan Eden*, because of what the Messiah did for us in His redemption, the redemption shall be made complete. The curse shall be no longer and the throne of God will be upon the earth. There will be no more sacrifice, no more death, no more pain, no more crying. The earth and the whole creation shall be redeemed.

Conclusions Regarding Yom Kippur

1) *Yom Kippur* was the day on which sins were atoned for and separated from God's people.

2) Yeshua was the final atoning sacrifice, and in Him our sins are separated as far as the east is from the west.

3) The seven bowl judgments are a time for the remaining inhabitants of the earth to repent, this being the fulfillment of the Days of Awe.

4) Judgment is sealed at the end of this time and evil is separated from God's people for a thousand years in fulfillment of *Yom Kippur*.

5) At the end of the Millennium, there is the final judgment. Sin and evil are permanently separated from God's people in final fulfillment of this feast.

6) The “New” Covenant will come into its complete fulfillment AFTER the Great White Throne Judgment, with the “new heavens and the new earth.” It is at this time, and only at this time that the “old” covenant will be done away with.

CHAPTER 10

The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles – Sukkot – Leviticus 23:33-44

³³ Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. ³⁵ 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. ³⁶ 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.

³⁷ 'These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD--burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, *each* day's matter on its own day-- ³⁸ besides *those of* the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

³⁹ 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰ 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ 'You shall thus celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³ so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.' " ⁴⁴ So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD.

The seventh and final feast given to Israel by the Lord is known as *Sukkot* or 'The Feast of Tabernacles.' It is the most joyful and festive of all Israel's feasts. It is also the most prominent feast, mentioned more often in Scripture than any of the other feasts. This feast also served as the historical backdrop for the important teaching of the Messiah in John, chapters 7-9.

"The Feast of Tabernacles is known by at least two names in Scripture. Most often it is referred to as *Sukkot*, or 'Tabernacles.' The English word 'tabernacle' is from the Latin *tabernaculum* meaning 'booth' or 'hut.' It acquired this name from the biblical requirement for all Israelites to dwell in tabernacles or temporary shelters during the holiday. It was to be an annual reminder of God's provision during the forty-year wilderness sojourn when Israel had lived in similar shelters.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Howard, Kevin and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page 135

In the Jewish community, as per Scripture, for seven days the people move out of their homes and live in a temporary shelter called a "Sukkah" as a reminder of their wanderings in the desert for forty years. The branches cut from palm, willow and other trees were to be waved in celebration to the Lord during the first seven days of the feast (Leviticus 23:40).

The last of the Moedim, this Moed holds much past and future Messianic significance: As already mentioned, this feast celebrates Yeshua's first coming – a past Messianic fulfillment.

John 1 says, “¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and *dwelt* among us...”

The Greek word for dwelt (**skhnow**-Skenoo) also means, to “tabernacle” – Strong's #4637:

1. to fix one's tabernacle, have one's tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent), [tabernacle](#)
2. to dwell

Figure 4

Yeshua in His First Coming came to earth as a baby to dwell among us: He literally “tabernacled” with us by taking a human body and living among us. The Apostle Shaul also notes that our earthly bodies are “tents” or “tabernacles” in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and 4 using the same word as John: “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.”

Yeshua was born, I believe, on the first day of Tabernacles in order to fulfill the Moed. In Luke 24, Yeshua said to His Disciples in the Upper Room, ^{“44} ...These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

All the Feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23 are passages in the Law of Moses that speak of Him – *including* His birth! So, if we do a little, simple arithmetic we count back nine-months, the gestation period of a human baby, and we come to what celebration? Chanukah! The conception of Yeshua!

The Chanukah/Sukkot Connection: The Temple

Though Chanukah is a non-Biblical Feast, it (as already mentioned) holds Messianic significance as well. We already talked about it: Yeshua, the “light of the

world” came into the world in the form of a man, as a bond-servant – a shammash. Nevertheless, the Chanukah/Sukkot tie is much stronger than this and establishes a non-coincidental connection that could only be accomplished by a Sovereign God.

When King Solomon built and dedicated the First Temple, he dedicated it at “the Feast.” 1 Kings 8 says: “⁶² Now the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the LORD. ⁶³ Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴ On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD, because there he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings; for the bronze altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too small to hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings. ⁶⁵ So Solomon observed *the feast* at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, for seven days and seven *more* days, *even* fourteen days. ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the king. Then they went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David His servant and to Israel His people.”

As prescribed by Scripture, the Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days, so then the dedication of the Temple on this feast lasted seven days. Since the Temple (Beit HaMikdash) literally represented the Tabernacle of God, an extension of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) built by the children of Israel in the Wilderness, it was a natural thing that Solomon should choose to dedicate the Temple he built on the Feast of Tabernacles.

It was during the dedication that Solomon said, “The Lord has said that He would dwell in a thick cloud. I have surely built Thee a lofty house, a place for Thy dwelling forever” (1 Kings 8:12, 13). The concept of a “dwelling place” for the Lord speaks directly into the theme of Sukkot, where one is to build a dwelling place.

Now Chanukah, another re-dedication of the Temple, was really a celebration of Sukkot. 2 Maccabees chapter 10 says, “¹ Now Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city: ²But the altars which the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down. ³ And having cleansed the temple they made another altar, and striking stones they took fire out of them, and offered a sacrifice after two years, and set forth incense, and lights, and shewbread. ⁴ When that was done, they fell flat down, and besought the Lord that they might come no more into such troubles; but if they sinned any more against him, that he himself would chasten them with mercy, and that they might not be delivered unto the blasphemous and barbarous nations. ⁵ Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu. ⁶ And they kept the *eight days* with gladness, *as in the feast of the tabernacles*, remembering that not long afore they had held *the feast of the tabernacles*, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.”

Due to the political situation earlier, they could not rededicate the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, since they hadn’t retaken the city and the Temple. But, after they cleansed the Temple, they observed the Feast of Chanukah as if it were the Feast of Tabernacles.

So, in the pattern of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Chanukah was created by the Maccabees. Thus, we have the Chanukah/Tabernacles tie.

The Temple of Solomon was dedicated on the Feast of Tabernacles - 1 Kings 8:65, 66: ⁶⁵ “So Solomon observed the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, for seven days and seven *more* days, *even* fourteen days. ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the king. Then they went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David His servant and to Israel His people.”

The Temple of the Maccabees was rededicated in the likeness of the Feast of Tabernacles - 2 Maccabees 10:6, 7: “And they kept eight days with joy, after the manner of the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long before they had kept the feast of the tabernacles when they were in the mountains, and in dens like wild beasts. Therefore they now carried boughs and green branches and palms, for him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.”

Before I go on, let me review what we have covered: *Both* feasts are seven days in length, plus 1 day – Leviticus 23:36; 2 Maccabees 10:6! In addition, *both* feasts have something to do with “light” as we shall soon discuss: the Feast of Tabernacles has the lighting of the candelabra in the Temple grounds and the Feast of Chanukah has the lighting of the lights of the Chanukah menorah in honor of the tradition that the Maccabees only had enough oil to light the Menorah in the Temple for one day, but God miraculously kept the Menorah lit for all seven days until a new oil was made available for the purpose.

Now, to the fulfillment of the “Temple” passages in the Person of Yeshua: when Yeshua drove out the moneychangers from the Temple area, the Jewish leaders asked for a sign. His response was, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (John 2:19-21)

Yeshua likened His body to that of the temple. Literally, as depicted in John 1, the Shekinah (glory of God) dwelt in bodily form: “¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... ⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and *dwelt among us*, and we *saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father*, full of grace and truth.”

Hebrews 1 says, “¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”

The fact that the glory of God dwelling among men is tied directly to tabernacles is reflected in Kefa's (Peter's) response on the mountain of transfiguration after he sees the glorified Lord Yeshua along with Moses and Elijah: Matthew 17 – ¹ Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'”

Why should Kefa want to immediately build a tabernacle after seeing the transfigured Lord? Simple, it was so ingrained in the Jew of the First Century that when the Shekinah of God was manifested among men that it must be housed (or tabernacled) in a dwelling, as it was in the days of the Mishkan, as it was in Solomon's Temple.

We now have established a strong connection between the Tabernacle, the Temple, and the body of Yeshua as He dwelt upon the earth. Now, since He had to come to earth in a body, this happened at His conception in the womb of Miriam (Mary).

Luke 1 – ²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "He will be

great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."³⁶ "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month."³⁷ "For nothing will be impossible with God."³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her."

Immediately upon conception, the "Word" of God was made flesh. In coming to earth in the body (tent/tabernacle) of a human on Chanukah, nine months later Yeshua literally fulfilled the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Birth of Messiah

Several Scriptures lead me to believe that the first day of Tabernacles is actually the true birthday of our Messiah.

- 1) In the text of the Gospel of Luke, we see that there were shepherds in the countryside guarding their flocks (Luke 2:8). It would be very unlikely that shepherds would be out in the fields on December 25.
- 2) We see that there was no room in the Inn, when Yosef (Joseph) and Miriam (Mary) arrived in Beit Lechem (Luke 2:6). They stayed in a "manger." In reality, since every family in Israel needed to build a sukkah for the feast and dwell in it for 1 week, this provided the living quarters for Miriam, Yosef, and Yeshua!

- 3) The service of Z'kharyah (Zachariah), Yochanan's (John's) father in the Temple was according to the Aviyah division (Luke 1:5-25), which according to 1 Chronicles 24:10 served during the 8th week of the Hebrew year. During his service, an angel visits him and he is told that he and his wife Elisheva will have a son. After he finishes his service, he goes back home and Elisheva soon conceives.
- 4) Six months later, the angel speaks to Miriam and informs her that she will become pregnant with a son. At that time, the angel tells her that her relative Elisheva is pregnant, so Miriam hurries to see her.
- 5) Three months later, Yochanan is born. His birth would be around Pesach (Passover), - which, by the way, is when the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah) was to come to hail the arrival of the Messiah.

Yeshua is born six months after that – at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles which is nine months after His conception at Chanukah! Was this simply a coincidence? I don't think so.

Another, “non-coincidence” relative to His birth at the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles – not only did they spend their time in a Sukkah in Beit Lechem – God built in the solution to the housing dilemma that would occur centuries later because of the census decreed by Augustus Caesar, since everyone had to go to their ancestral home and there was no room at the Inn. God also built in the day of circumcision for the baby Yeshua into the Feast.

The Feast is eight days long and a baby boy, according to the covenant of Abraham was required to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life: Genesis 17 - ⁹ God said

further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.¹⁰ "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.¹² "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations..."

It is no coincidence that the birth and circumcision of Yeshua were built into this feast which He Scripturally fulfilled.

Yet other Scriptures depict the fulfillment of this Feast in typology by Yeshua. As already mentioned, Yeshua calls Himself the, "...light of the world" during the candle-lighting ceremony of Sukkot (John 8:12).

Compare Isaiah 9:1(2), "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," and Malachi 4:2(3:20), "But to you who fear my name the sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings"; both are alluded to at Luke 1:78-79. Also see Isaiah 49:6 (quoted at Ac 13:47); Yn 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 5:35; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46; Ac 9:3, 13:47&N; 1 Ke 2:9; 1 Yn 1:5-7, 2:8-10. All of these texts have been understood as referring to Yeshua as the light or in connection with light.¹⁶⁶

We know He was at this feast from John 7:2-10. At the feast at the end of the first day, is a ceremony for the illumination of the Temple:

The Illumination of the Temple

"Another ceremony of the feast of Tabernacles, the illumination of the Temple, also had its source in Jewish tradition.

According to the Mishna, at the end of the first day of Tabernacles, the priests and Levites went down to the court of women. Four enormous golden candlesticks were set up in the court (fifty cubits high) with four golden bowls placed upon them and four ladders resting against each. Four

¹⁶⁶ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 181

youths of priestly descent stood at the top of the ladders holding ten-gallon pitchers filled with pure oil, which they poured into each bowl (Sukkah 5:2).

The priests and Levites used their own worn-out liturgical clothing for wicks. The light emanating from the four candelabra was so bright that the Mishna says, “There was no courtyard in Jerusalem that was not lit up with the light at the libation water-well ceremony” (Sukkah 5:3).¹⁶⁷

This brings us to another type that Yeshua fulfilled in the Feast of Tabernacles: the water libation ceremony!

The Ceremony of the Water Drawing

The Mishna describes a major ceremony of Sukkot, one of fairly late origin, which was not a part of the Biblical celebration of the feast. The ritual is called the ceremony of the water drawing, in Hebrew, Nissuch Ha-Mayim, and is rooted in the agricultural character of the feast. Rain is essential to the growing of crops, and Israel, an arid land, prized rain greatly as a blessing from God. The Israelites, depending upon God for rain, developed a ceremony in which they called upon their Creator to provide heavenly waters for their crops.

Sukkot was also the changing point of the seasons, closing the agricultural or working year. It marked the change of seasons with the approach of rain. Rain was a prominent feature in the celebration of the feast of Sukkot.

The water-drawing ceremony was a joyous occasion, replete with grand activity and high drama. It began with an especially assigned Levitical priest descending to the pool of Siloam. He was accompanied by a throng of faithful worshippers and a band of liturgical flutists whose lilting music enhanced the wonder of the ceremony. When the Levitical priest arrived at the pool of Siloam, he filled a special golden pitcher with water. The crowd then returned to the Temple through the Water Gate, which obtained its name from the ceremony. As the priest arrived, the trumpets – ram’s horns similar to the ones used on Rosh Hashanah – were sounded. The Mishna specified that there should first be a prolonged blast of the Temple trumpet.

The priest entered the Temple area and went directly to the southern side of the great altar. There, he placed two magnificent silver basins on the southwest corner of the altar. These two bowls were slightly different from one another. The wide-mouthed bowl on the eastern side was used to receive the wine of the drink offering. The western basin was somewhat narrower, and into it was poured the water from the pool of Siloam. As

¹⁶⁷ Glaser, Mitch and Zhava, *The Fall Feasts of Israel*, page 182

soon as the priest poured the water into the basin, the people surrounding the altar would shout, ‘Raise thy hand. Raise thy hand!’...

The liturgical flutists kept playing while the water was poured into the basin, except on the Sabbath and on the first day of the feast when flute playing was not allowed (Sukkah 5:1). The flutists were joined by a choir of Israelites chanting the words of Psalm 118, “O Lord, do save, we beseech Thee; O Lord, we beseech Thee, do send prosperity!” (Psalm 118:25). As these words were repeated, the worshippers shook palm branches towards the altar until all the water was poured. (It is remarkable that when the multitude from Jerusalem came out to meet Jesus, they cut down branches from trees and tossed them in His path. The multitude then chanted the next verse of the psalm, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!” [Matthew 21:9]. This may have been an allusion to this ceremony of the feast of Tabernacles, although there is a tradition of shaking palm branches at Passover as well.)¹⁶⁸

So, in the synagogue services today, as it was in the Temple then, the call to God for rain is repeated over and over again, since the crops of the next year are dependant upon the winter rains.

It is significant that on the last day of this feast that Yeshua alludes to the theme of water and rain, when He said, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water’” (John 8:37-38).

On the last day of the festival, *Hoshana Rabbah*, literally, “on the last day, the great, of the festival.” Greek *megale* (“great”) corresponds to Hebrew *rabbah*. The seventh, last day of Sukkot was its climax. Throughout the seven days of the festival a special cohen had carried water in a golden pitcher from the Pool of Shiloach (Siloam) to be poured into a basin at the foot of the altar by the cohen haGadol. It symbolized prayer for rain, which begins the next day, on *Sh’mini Atzeret*; and it also pointed toward th outpouring of the Ruach haKodesh on the people of Israel. The rabbis associated the custom with Isaiah 12:3, “With joy shall you draw water from the wells of salvation.” (In a suggestive reflection of how the holiday used to be celebrated, today’s Moroccan Jews pour water on each other at Sukkot.) On the seventh day the water pouring was accompanied by *cohanim* blowing gold trumpets, *L’vi’im* singing sacred

¹⁶⁸ Glaser, Mitch and Zhava, *The Fall Feasts of Israel*, page 174-176

songs, and ordinary people waving their lulavs and chanting the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), which includes in its closing verses:

“Adonai, please save us! [Hebrew Hoshia’na or Hoshana]
 Adonai, please prosper us!
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of Adonai!
 We have blessed you out of the house of Adonai.
 God is Adonai, and he has given us light.” (Psalm 118:25-27)

The words, “Please save us!” led to the day’s being called Hoshana Rabbah, the Great Hosanna. This prayer had Messianic overtones, as is seen from its use when Yeshua made his triumphal entry into Yerushalayim a few days before his execution (Mt 21:9, MK 11:9-10). It was also a prayer for salvation from sin, for Hoshana Rabbah was understood to be the absolutely final chance to have one’s sins for the year forgiven. On Rosh-Hashanah one asks to “be inscribed in the Book of Life” (see Rv 20:12bN), and on Yom Kippur one hopes to have that inscription “sealed”; yet in Jewish tradition there remained opportunity for forgiveness up to Hoshana Rabbah.

“A connection between the possession of the Ruach ha-Kodesh and ecstasy, or religious joy, is found in the ceremony of water drawing, Simchat Beit-HaSho’evah [“the feast of water-drawing”], on the festival of Sukkot. The Mishnah said that he who had never seen this ceremony, which was accompanied by dancing, singing, and music (Sukkot 5:4), had never seen true joy (Sukkot 5:1). Yet this was also considered a ceremony in which the participants, as it were, drew inspiration from the Holy Spirit itself, which can only be possessed by those whose hearts are full of religious joy (Jerusalem Talmud, Sukkot 5:1, 55a).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica* 14:365)

From this passage we also learn that Yeshua and his talmidim, like other Jews, observed at least portions of the Oral Torah and did not utterly reject it as “traditions of men” (See MK 7:5-13&N) – since the water-drawing ceremony is specified not in the Tanakh but in the Mishna.

It was in the midst of this water pouring, trumpet blasting, palm waving, psalm chanting and ecstatic joy on the part of people seeking forgiveness – and in the presence of all 24 divisions of the priesthood (see LK 1:5N) – that Yeshua cried out in the Temple courts, “If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! Whoever trusts in me, as the Tanakh says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!” (Compare Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, 58:11; also the woman at the well, above, 4:6-15; and the ultimate fulfillment at Rv 22:17. In effect Yeshua was declaring, “I am the answer to your prayers.” His dramatic cry, supported by the full panoply of Temple ritual, was not misunderstood, as vv. 40-43 make

abundantly clear. His subsequent proclamation, "I am the light of the world," also based on the passage of Psalm 118 quoted above, provoked an even more agitated reaction (8:12&N, 58-59&N).¹⁶⁹

It is no accident that Yeshua uses this allusion in reference to Himself at this Feast, since He is the Messiah and this Feast holds such powerful Messianic significance; not only in His first coming, but also in the Second Coming during the Messianic reign.

The future prophetic significance of this allusion can be seen in the writing of the prophet Zechariah, chapter 12, when one day all the nations of the earth are going to come against Jerusalem - ¹ "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. *Thus* declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him, ² "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. ³ "It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it. ⁴ "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ "Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.' ⁶ "In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. ⁷ "The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. ⁸ "In that day the LORD will

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pages 178-179

defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. ⁹ "And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. ¹¹ "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo."

It is significant that this will be on the plain of Megiddo – where the Battle of Armageddon will occur!

Zechariah 14 says, ¹ "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle."

When the nations come against Jerusalem, as we see in Revelation 19, the Lord Himself will fight on behalf of Israel there in that Valley! ¹¹ "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word

of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." ¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army."

At the end of the Battle, the Lord reigns and rules from Jerusalem in the Temple. It is there, as stated in Zechariah 14 that those who are left of the nations will have to come to worship the King, on the pilgrimage feast of Sukkot!

"¹⁶ Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ¹⁷ And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ¹⁹ This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ²⁰ In

that day there will *be inscribed* on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the LORD'S house will be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.”

In Zechariah chapters 12 through 14, we recognize that when Messiah Yeshua returns to reign and rule in Jerusalem, survivors from all the nations that came against Jerusalem will have to send emissaries to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the King each year on Sukkot, or they will get no rain. See how these themes all merge together?

Literally, the nations who have celebrated Jesus’ birthday at Christmas, a pagan holiday, will be celebrating His birthday on the correct day! Sukkot! It’s like Yeshua saying, “Well, you celebrated My birthday on the *wrong* day for the last 2,000 years, I will make sure that you celebrate it on the correct day for the next 1,000 years!”

Tabernacles is also the final feast of the year. It is a celebration of ingathering at the end of the harvest (Exodus 23:16) and is a time of rejoicing and fellowship. It symbolizes the gathering or harvest of God's people, at the second coming of Yeshua, which begins the millennium.

The “rapture” as it is known in the Church, is the great gathering up of the people of Israel at the Last Days.

In our prayer-books (“Siddurs”) there is a blessing, *"Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the banner to gather our exiles, and speedily gather us together from the four corners of the earth to our land."*

The Jewish people have prayed this for centuries. Yet, this prayer is completely understood in the context of the writings in the B'rit Hadasha (New Testament)!

Yeshua says in Matthew 24, “² And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.⁶ "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.⁸ "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.⁹ "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.¹⁰ "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.¹¹ "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.¹² "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.¹³ "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.¹⁴ "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),¹⁶ then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.¹⁷ "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.¹⁸ "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.¹⁹ "But woe to those who are pregnant and

to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. ²¹ "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²² "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. ²⁴ "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ "Behold, I have told you in advance. ²⁶ "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. ²⁷ "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. ³¹ "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

What Yeshua is saying here, is that He will return at the end of the tribulation and at the sound of the shofar, will gather His people from one end of the sky to the other.

The day of His return is also known as the "Day of the Lord" – a day often spoken of by the Older Testament prophets of God.

Shaul writes of this day in 2 Thessalonians 2, “¹ Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that *the day of the Lord* has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

CHAPTER 11

Conclusion

We have now gone through all the Moedim of Adonai in the light of our Messiah Yeshua and we can see how they all portray Him. The question arises, are the Moedim for today in the Body of Messiah?

In answer to that question, we must discern whether the Moedim are strictly for the “Jews” (as some would argue), or are for those who are in the “Church” also. If strictly for the “Jews,” then they would not apply to those who are non-Jewish.

Regarding these feasts, God speaks to “Israel” to keep these Moedim: Leviticus 23:1-2 - “The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them...” It is to “Israel” that God gives these Moedim.

That raises the question, “Who is ‘Israel?’”

Shaul in Ephesians 2 speaks regarding those Gentile believers who by faith in Yeshua are joined to Israel: ¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," *which is performed in the flesh by human hands--* ¹² *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel,* and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into one* and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances,* so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus establishing peace,* ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to

God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then *you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens* with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

The Gentile believers of Ephesus were at one time “*separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel,*” but are now through faith in the Messiah “*fellow citizens* with the saints, and are of God's household...” In short, they are now a part of Israel.

It is interesting Shaul's choice of words in this passage, the word translated “commonwealth” is the Greek word “politeia” which gives us English words like “polity” and “politics.” Dr. Stern writes:

Arndt and Gingrich's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* offers offers as possible meanings “citizenship; commonwealth, state; way of life, conduct.” But Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* points out that in the Septuagint, “politeia”

“does not mean civil rights, constitution, or state, [but] rather the pious order of life which, ordained by the Law of Moses, is inherited from the fathers. [With one exception it] is a religious and moral concept rather than a political concept; it denotes the ‘walk’ determined by the Mosaic Law.” (Volume 6, p. 526)¹⁷⁰

If this applies to the Gentile believers in Ephesus at Shaul's time, then it goes for Gentile believers throughout all time and world-wide: ALL believers in Yeshua are a part

¹⁷⁰ Stern, Dr. David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, page 582

of true Israel. Not to replace physical Israel; but as a part of the nation and are partakers of the covenant of promise.

Therefore, we ask again, “Do the Moedim apply to Christians in the Church?” The obvious answer from this passage in Ephesians is: Emphatically “Yes!”

Therefore, it behooves the Christians in the Church to begin to observe them.

Tim Hegg, a Messianic teacher writes:

One of the questions that inevitably arises when people began to see the beauty of the Biblical Festivals is whether or not they are for believers today. The theological categories in which many modern-day believers have been schooled insist that the Festivals were “merely shadows” of the person and work of Messiah Yeshua, and that with His coming they are no longer needed. Some would go further and even say that to celebrate the Biblical Moedim is to detract from the central position which Yeshua should hold in our theology and worship. But what do the Scriptures say about the place of the Moedim in the life of God’s people?

First, we should remember that the word used for the Festivals is the Hebrew מועד, “appointed time,” and that this is the same word that is found in the opening narrative in Genesis 1. Here, the sun and moon are given especially for “...signs and seasons.” The word translated “seasons” [NASB] is מועדי , *mo’dim* the exact same word used to describe “My appointed times” in Leviticus 23 and elsewhere in the Torah. Why is this important? It is important because it shows *that the Festivals which God reveals in the Torah are connected with creation first*. That is to say, God designed the universe itself (the sun and moon and the whole planetary structure) in order to point to and regulate the Festivals, the “Moedim.” Thus, the Moedim are first and foremost a part of the creative order, not merely a part of the covenant made with Israel at Sinai.

Secondly, the Word of God explicitly states that the Moedim are to remain throughout all the generations of Israel (Sabbath: Exodus 31:16; Pesach/Hag haMatzot: Exodus 12:14, 17, 42; Shavuot: Leviticus 23:21; Rosh HaShannah/Yom haKippurim: Leviticus 23:21; Sukkot: Leviticus 23:41). Therefore, whether for an Israelite or for one attached to Israel through faith, there is to be one Torah for all (Numbers 15:16, 29; Leviticus 16:29). The implications for this are clear: *if Israel is commanded to do and keep the Moedim of the Lord throughout her generations, then all who have attached themselves to Israel through faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His Messiah Yeshua are equally privileged to keep the Lord’s appointed times*.

“But,” some may detract, “it is impossible to keep the Festivals as they are prescribed in the Torah.” In part this is true. Each festival requires sacrifices and involvement with the priesthood and the Temple, all of which are presently impossible. But if we are able to do and observe part of the prescribed activities for any given Moed, and if the Moedim are rich in blessings and instruction, would it not seem wise to do all we can in connection with the appointed time, and leave what we cannot do in the hands of HaShem? Consider this illustration: suppose as a father I asked my son to mow the lawn while I was at work. When he went to the shed to get the lawn mower, he found there was only enough gasoline to mow half the lawn. Consider two scenarios: my son could either do nothing to fulfill the job I had given him, or he could mow as much of the lawn as the limited amount of gasoline would permit. Which scenario do you suppose would gladden my heart as a father? The answer is obvious: to do all within our ability to obey and please our Abba bespeaks a true heart of faith. And so it is with the Moedim: while we cannot fulfill the instructions completely (because the Temple and priesthood are absent), we can do and guard many of the instructions for each of the Moedim, and in so doing we are blessed and God is honored.

Thirdly, *the Scriptures are clear that the victory of God in the end-times is manifest by His people, both Israel and the nations, worshipping Him together.* Consider the prophecy of Isaiah, quoted by Yeshua as He cleared the Temple mount of unrighteous practices: “For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.” (Isaiah 56:7, cf. Matthew 23:13). The context of Isaiah 56 is clearly one of the ingathering of the nations to worship the Lord, and this worship is characterized by the careful guarding of the Sabbath, the first of the Moedim (Leviticus 23:1-3). What is more, the reign of Messiah, characterized as it is by the global worship of the One true God, is marked by all of the nations coming to celebrate the Festival of Sukkot (Zechariah 14:16-19). The prophets therefore envision the end-times and the reign of Messiah as being characterized by the observance of Sabbath, the first of the Moedim and Sukkot, the last Moed in the yearly cycle. Thus, the Sabbath (In Isaiah) and Sukkot (in Zechariah) function as “bookends” to encompass all of the Moedim in the prophetic viewpoint. Indeed, that the Temple should be the “house of prayer for all the peoples” surely includes the prayers and Psalms incorporated into each of the Moedim.

The fact that the millennial reign of Yeshua includes the celebration of the Moedim is significant because it shows that the Lord’s appointed times have a farther reaching significance than the revelation of Yeshua’s death and resurrection. If they were merely shadows of His first coming, then they would serve no purpose in the millennial reign. But far from their meaning being exhausted in the first advent of our Messiah, the festivals also point to His kingly reign, and to the time when “He will be One and His Name One”

(Zechariah 14:9). It would seem to be a matter of wisdom then, if we will be celebrating the Moedim during the millennial reign of Messiah Yeshua, that we should strive to understand the meaning of these appointed times by celebrating them now.

Fourthly, *as followers of Yeshua, we both walk according to His instructions and His example.* Peter testifies that we should, “follow in the steps of Messiah” (1 Peter 2:21), a phrase which denotes living the way He did. This means (in Peter’s immediate context) being willing to suffer the way Yeshua did – for righteousness sake. But it also highlights the primary objective of any disciple: to be like his teacher. As followers of Yeshua, we should therefore ask a very simple question: did Yeshua, our Teacher, keep and guard the appointed times of the Lord? The answer is clearly, “yes.” Therefore, as His disciples, so should we.

That this simple logic is accepted as a matter of fact by His disciples is clear, for we regularly find them celebrating the Moedim in the record of the Gospels. Furthermore, this same teacher/disciple relationship was evident in the life of Paul even though he was an apostle “born prematurely” (1 Corinthians 15:8 – the Greek word *εκτρομῶματι* means “born early” not “born late” as is often suggested by English translations. Would this mean that as the Apostle to the Gentiles he saw himself born in a era which preceded the future ingathering of the nations?). We find Paul celebrating the Moedim and read in Luke’s account about how Paul made a special effort to be in Jerusalem for Pesach (cf. Acts 20:16). It’s not surprising, then, that he commands the Corinthians to celebrate Pesach (1 Corinthians 5:8) with hearts free of leaven. If Yeshua’s disciples, including Paul, all celebrated the Moedim as their Teacher did, should not all of us who claim to be His disciples do the same?

Finally, God’s loving instructions, given to us in the Torah (remember that the primary meaning of Torah is “teaching,” not “law”), are given to us in order to teach us what honors Him, and what is best for us. *As we celebrate the cycle of the Moedim, we discover more and more what it is like to live life according to God’s schedule rather than to our own.* Consider this comparison: the Moedim are to time what money is to tithes and offerings. Even as we grown in faith and understanding by honoring God with our money, so we learn of His redemptive plan and his sovereign rule through the Moedim. We learn that all time (like all of our possessions) belongs to Him. In honoring Him by pausing on the days of His Moedim and focusing upon the lessons He intends to teach us, we learn to mold and fashion life’s plans with Him always at the center. May God grant that our lives, both in the details as well as in the whole, reflect His awesome glory and might.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Hegg, Tim, *Are the Festivals (Moedim) for Today?*, copyright 2001, www.torahresource.com

Kevin Howard writes in the book, *The Feasts of the Lord*,

Many people erroneously equate the keeping of the holy days with righteousness before God. Some slip into synagogue for Yom Kippur, others slip into church for Christmas and Easter. They would like to believe that they are righteous in God's eyes for doing their religious 'duty.'

God rebuked Israel for keeping the *external requirements* of the Law while disregarding a *heart relationship* with Him: 'The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them' (Isa. 1:13-14; cf. Amos 5:21).

But why would God hate the feast days when it was He who had instituted them? Obviously, He did not hate the feast days themselves but the hypocritical manner in which they were kept. The people had misunderstood and distorted God's law. They had abandoned a personal relationship with God. Instead, they sought after self-righteousness through keeping the requirements of the Law.

The outward *requirements* of the Law were meaningless without an inward *relationship* with the living God. It was for this reason that God commanded Israel: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart*, with all your *soul*, and with all your *strength*. And these words which I command you today, shall be in your heart' (Dt. 6:4-6). So supreme in importance are these words that they begin the *Shema*, the most holy prayer within Judaism. They are also written on the doorposts of all observant Jews and in the *tefillin* (Scripture boxes or phylacteries) worn on the forehead and forearm during prayer.

The Messiah also underscored this truth: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment (Mt. 22:37-38). First and foremost, God desires a heart relationship.

Many in Isaiah's day believed they were righteous before God because they were religious – they followed the *mitzvot* (commandments), they prayed, they kept the holy days. Today, the overwhelming majority of mankind, whether Jewish or Gentile, find themselves in an identical situation. They mistakenly believe that keeping a list of religious rites or holidays will gain them acceptance in God's sight.

"The Bible likens the feast days to shadows which prophetically point to the person and work of history's most stellar individual – the Messiah of Israel (Col. 2:16-17). Together these feasts outline the work of the Messiah from

Calvary to the Messianic Kingdom. He alone is the source and substance, whereas the holy days are merely the shadows cast by His indelible mark on history.

This can be illustrated by a husband who returns home after a long trip. His heart may beat faster in anticipation, seeing the outline of his wife's shadow as she comes to the front door, but he does not embrace her shadow. There would be no satisfaction in that. Instead, he steps through the doorway and embraces her in person, rather than her shadow.¹⁷²

In keeping the feasts, we do not derive our righteousness; yet in keeping them, we DO reach out to embrace the One who fulfilled them. The shadow does not satisfy, only the reality does. Yeshua IS the reality!

If we observe the feasts out of a sense of religious duty, we have missed the whole point in their keeping. They were meant to be a time of fellowship, a time of communion, between God and His people. They were expressions of our love for Him and our desire to personally have a relationship with Him. In them, we can express our desire to join with Him on His holy days, similarly to our joining with our loved ones on their special days: such as birthdays, etc.

The whole point is to join together in a community of believers to express our love to and to revere our Lord!

Are the Moedim for the Body of Messiah today? Emphatically, YES!

The very fact that many of the Moedim are only *partially* fulfilled in the First Coming of Yeshua, as we have discussed: the Sabbath – to be fulfilled in the Millennial Reign of Messiah Yeshua, Passover – the final cup has yet to be drunk, Yom Teruah – the Battle of the Day of the Lord has yet to be fought; the Saints have yet to be “caught up” to meet the Lord in the air, Yom Kippur – the final opening of the “Books” and the Final “Great White Throne” Judgment to be accomplished, Sukkot – the pilgrimage of

¹⁷² Howard, Ken and Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Feasts of the Lord*, page45-46

the Gentile nations to Jerusalem to worship the King on this Feast – proves that Yeshua simply didn't fulfill these Feasts and they are “done away with” (we “no longer have to keep them.”)

The words of Yeshua to His Disciples, “¹⁷ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5) appear not to give the impression of the doing away of the Torah, but rather support the validity of the Torah in those who believed in Him.

The Moedim (an essential part of the Torah) literally support Yeshua's claims to be who He would claim to be. As Yeshua speaks to the Torah Teachers and Pharisees, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me...” (John 5:39).

It is the TANAKH (Hebrew Scriptures) that speak of Yeshua and His missions (First and Second Comings) on this earth. In fact, it would behoove the Church of Messiah Yeshua to keep these feasts to understand the earthly missions of Yeshua even better! Furthermore, observing these Feasts will help the believer in Yeshua understand where all this fits in with their lives.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVALS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO HIS LIFE

God designed the agricultural and weather seasons in Israel to parallel the life of every believer in Christ who seeks to love Him and serve Him with all his heart. With this in mind, let us examine how this is true.

Every time a person receives the Lord Jesus as his own Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover. He is to flee Egypt, the world's evil system and ways, trust in the Lord, the Lamb of God, and allow Christ to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before God and experience Unleavened Bread. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Lord. Once we do this, we can be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit and have the power of God (the anointing) in our lives. Spiritually, we have experienced the spring harvest of Israel in our lives. When we accept Jesus into our hearts and lives, He begins to teach us the Bible and show us how much He loves us, and we begin to grow in the knowledge of Him.

At that time, God will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life. Spiritually, we will begin to experience the dry summer season of Israel. Many things in our lives will not go the way we expect them to or how we trust God for them to go. In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon God, He will take us from Passover to Pentecost. There He will reveal His ways and his Word, the Bible, in a deeper and more progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, God will not only reveal His Word, the Bible, to us in a greater way, but He also will refine our faith like fine flour, just as was done to the wheat during the days of counting the omer between Passover and Pentecost. Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust in Jesus while on our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life as God refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, then our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life. Instead God will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual promised land.

It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals -- especially the Feast of Tabernacles, and enter into our spiritual promised land that God will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way, as we live and serve Him, and we will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! But we will experience not only joy, but also dancing, praise, victory, peace, and the power of God in our lives. Spiritually, we will be experiencing the fall harvest of Israel. The

rain in the bible speaks of two things: the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and an in-depth understanding of Jesus and his Word, the Bible, in our lives. Both the anointing of the Holy Spirit and great knowledge of spiritual truths will be present in our lives in order that we may accomplish the purpose God has for every one of our lives. Therefore, we have the anointing of God upon our lives so we may help to do our part to build up the Body of Christ to full maturity and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth until we come to that day when we will rule and reign with the Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords on earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium, and for all eternity.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Chumney, Eddie, *The Seven Festivals Of The Messiah*, copyright 1994, Eddie Chumney, Treasure House Publishing - <http://www.mayimhayim.org/Festivals/Feast10.htm>