

YHVH's Plan of Salvation in His Seven Feasts

An Introduction to the Biblical Feasts

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THE SEVEN BIBLICAL FEASTS ARE A CHRONOLOGICAL step-by-step template of YHVH's plan of redemption or salvation for mankind. This process begins with Passover — a picture of a believer's initial salvation, and concludes with the Eighth Day — a picture of eternal life for each bonafide and glorified member of the spiritual family of Elohim. The first step in this spiritual journey starts with one's turning their back on spiritual Egypt, which is the realm of the world, the flesh and the devil, and embarking on a life-long spiritual journey that leads one progressively to higher planes with the ultimate goal being the paradise of the New Jerusalem — literally a heaven on earth.

Sadly, the church system has failed to reveal these essential truths to believers. It has robbed the saints of their biblical, Hebraic and Torah-based heritage including an understanding of the biblical feasts and has replaced it with many lies. This has left believers without a full understanding of both their spiritual heritage and destiny. For most believers caught up in the Babylonian church system, it's merely a matter of getting saved, doing some good works along the way and going to church. Beyond that, one bides their time standing on the street corner waiting for death or the rapture bus — whichever comes first — to take them to heaven. But is this all there is to the believer's life? What is supposed to happen from the point of one's initial salvation until they "get to heaven"? Hmm?! Now there's a good head-scratcher for most!

Thankfully, YHVH hasn't abandoned his spiritual children to wander aimlessly through the wilderness of life. He has a plan for each of us. From start to finish, this plan is revealed in YHVH's seven biblical feasts. The understanding of this can literally revitalize one's spiritual life imbuing it with purpose and meaning. An otherwise one-dimensional, monochromatic and monophonic movie called life suddenly comes to life in full-3D, multi-dimensional, polyphonic surround-sound with high definition color. That's the energizing power that comes with an understanding of the biblical feasts.

Once a follower of Yeshua understands the plan of salvation in the biblical feasts, these festivals become the focal point of the year. Plans and preparations are made well in advance to celebrate them as they serve as the rendezvous points of the spiritual body, family or community of believers.

All these feasts have Yeshua at the center, and so they bring us closer to him.

YHVH's feasts act as a spiritual road map to show us where we've come on our spiritual journey, where we're at, and where we're going on to. Furthermore, they help us to understand what we need to be doing along the journey. They provide us with a sense of direction, and a hope for the future.

The feasts make a great witnessing tool. When sharing the gospel message with others, we can share the steps of the feast as an easy-to-understand template of what YHVH expects of us, and what lies ahead for us as we're en route to the New Jerusalem's heaven on earth.

In Colossians 2:16–17 about the feasts we read,

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Messiah.

In this passage, Paul tells us several things of importance about the biblical feasts. The feasts are still valid for believers in that they foretell of future events, which are yet to come. For example, while the spring feasts primarily speak of events surrounding Yeshua's first advent, the fall feasts, on the other hand, primarily prophesy of events surrounding his second coming. This passage also tells us that the feasts point to Yeshua — he is to be found at the

center of each of them. By abiding in Yeshua, we will have a fuller understanding of the feasts, which are about him, and are fulfilled in him. And finally, this passage instructs us to not let anyone judge you negatively because you celebrate them.

What follows is a brief summary of YHVH's seven annual feasts. They tell the seven-step story of YHVH's plan of salvation from beginning to end. Biblically, seven is the number of completion or perfection. The seven feasts are Passover (Heb. *Pesach*), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Heb. *Chag HaMatzot*), the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Heb. *Chag Shavuot*), the Day of Trumpets (Heb. *Yom Teruah*), the Day of Atonement (Heb. *Yom Kipur*), the Feast of Tabernacles (Heb. *Chag Sukkot*) and the Eighth Day (Heb. *Shemini Atzeret*).

As part of these feasts, there are seven annual Sabbaths or high Sabbaths, which are different than the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath. Contained within these feasts are seven actual Sabbaths, which may fall on any day of the week. Like the weekly Sabbath, they are days of rest that YHVH calls *miqra kodesh* or *holy convocations* when his people are to meet together. These Sabbaths are the first day of Unleavened Bread, the seventh or last day of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (a seven-day long festival), and the Eighth Day (which occurs immediately following the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles).

Now let's review each of these feasts individually, and discover how each is like a puzzle piece, that together form a glorious panorama of YHVH's plan of salvation taking us on a journey from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden to the paradise of the Promised Land of the New Jerusalem heaven on earth.

The Spring Feasts

Passover (*Pesach*; Lev 23:5)

The first biblical feast in YHVH's glorious lineup in the steps of man's redemption and reconciliation to himself is Passover (Heb. *Pesach*), which occurs in the early spring of the year at the time of the rebirth of the creation after a long, dark, cold and dead winter season. It was at this time and out of this environment that the nation of Israel was birthed. Israel's womb was the spiritual darkness of the nation of Egypt where the children of Israel had been enslaved for several generations unable to extricate themselves from the iron grip of Pharaoh. YHVH heard their cries of anguish, told them to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the doors of their homes. This the Israelites did by faith and YHVH extended his grace and mercy upon them, when he passed over their homes and delivered them from the wages of their sins, which is death, while at the same time YHVH struck the Egyptians with his judgment against sin because they were not under the blood of the lamb. With the defeat of Egypt, Pharaoh was now powerless to hold the Israelites who could now leave that nation as free men and commence their journey to the Promised Land.

Passover represents the beginning point in a believer's spiritual journey. To become a part of the people of Elohim, one must spiritually come out of the world (spiritual Egypt), which is a place of bondage to sin, darkness and false religion, and is the kingdom of Satan, the prince of death. One can neither leave this kingdom of darkness by one's own strength nor free oneself from slavery to the strong tyrants and masters of this world, the flesh or the devil that keep a person bound to a lifestyle of sin, which eventually leads to eternal death. Only a greater power than these can deliver us from sin's slave masters who maintain humans in their death grip. That power is the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, which must be smeared on the doorposts and lintels (our actions and thoughts) of our houses (our lives). Only then will YHVH's judgment against sin pass over us. Yeshua the Lamb of YHVH, to which the Passover lamb prophetically points, defeated the enemy that holds men in its death grip when he lived a perfect, sin-free life, died on the cross and then resurrected from the grave (Col 2:12-15). The Israelites, by faith, trusted in the blood of the lamb and by YHVH's grace their sins were not credited to their account, but were forgiven them. This was their spiritual "get-out-jail-free card" setting the stage for their exodus from Egypt. Similarly, when we place our faith in Yeshua, we are set free from the spiritual Egypt's death grip and can begin our spiritual journey to the Promised Land of YHVH's eternal kingdom.

Days of Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzot*; Lev 23:6-8)

The Israelites exited Egypt on the first day of this seven-day long festival. Leaving the nation of Egypt was a relatively simple process, but now began the process of getting Egypt out of them."The sinful lifestyle of Egypt had become deeply ingrained in the hearts and minds of the Israelites. Putting away these sinful habits to become a righteous and holy (set-apart) people completely devoted to YHVH is a process that takes time. YHVH gave the

children of Israel forty years in the wilderness to prepare to enter the Promised Land. During this time, they had to put away the sinful lifestyle and habits learned in Egypt, learn to trust YHVH Elohim and to obey his commands. Sadly, the older generation failed to accomplish this and had to die in the wilderness failing to reach the Promised Land.

When the Israelites fled Egypt on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, their daily homemade bread didn't have time to rise, which was their main food staple. Thus, by circumstances, they were forced to eat flat or unleavened bread as they were leaving Egypt. This became a life lesson for them. In a sense, the Israelites had to leave their leavening (a biblical metaphor for sin) in Egypt. To teach the Israelites an object lesson about the necessity of leaving one's sinful lifestyle back in Egypt, YHVH instructed them to not only put all leavened bread out of their homes at this time, but to eat unleavened bread for seven days during this festival from that point forward.

What is the spiritual lesson in this for us? YHVH has given man seven-thousand years (pictured by the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) to put sin away from him and to learn to obey the word of Elohim. This difficult process is illustrated when we observe YHVH's command to remove all physical leavening from our homes for seven days. Leavening is a picture of sin and pride, since yeast causes bread to rise and puff up, and sin causes man to rise up in prideful defiance against YHVH's laws. The Scriptures tells us that, "[T]he carnal mind is enmity against Elohim; for it is not subject to the law of Elohim, nor indeed can be" (Rom 8:7).

The sin of pride and hypocrisy leads one to believe that one is in a better spiritual state than one actually is. This is the state of spiritual delusion that humans naturally find themselves in. YHVH has given men six days (6000 years) to come to realize this. The seventh day of this week-long festival is a high Sabbath day that pictures YHVH's Messianic Age (or Millennium) when humans will be living in harmony with YHVH and resting in the saving work of the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim slain from the foundation of the world. It represents victory over sin (leavening). Israel celebrated the Passover in the promised land and then marched around Jericho for six days. On the seventh day, the walls of Jericho came down. Because of context of this passage, it is very likely that Israel marched around Jericho during the seven days of Unleavened Bread and on the seventh day of that festival the walls of Jericho came down (Josh 5:10–6:16). If so, this very well could be a prophetic picture of a similar scenario of what will occur when the exiled Israelites return to the land prior to the second coming of Yeshua the Messiah. YHVH will have to supernaturally destroy those Canaanite inhabitants of the Promised Land who will be blocking Israel's entry into the land — their promised inheritance.

The Feast of Weeks, Feast of First Fruits or Pentecost (*Shavuot*; Lev 23:15–21)

This is the third of the seven festivals of YHVH and occurs in the late spring of the year. The children of Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month (in March or April) on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Weeks occurs fifty days after Wavesheaf Day (the day of the waving of first fruits of the barley harvest or Heb. *Bikkurim*), which usually occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This places the Feast of Weeks or *Chag Shavuot* in May or early June. It was just prior to the Feast of Weeks that YHVH brought the Israelites to the foot of Mount Sinai to receive his Torah commandments and to enter into a covenantal relationship with YHVH that later was viewed as a spiritual marriage between the Creator and his people (Ezek 16:1–14).

Up to this point, YHVH had brought judgment against sin (in Egypt), yet had spared his people from this judgment because they had faith in him by putting the blood of a lamb on their individual houses on Passover. YHVH then led his people out of Egypt on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Up to that point, the Israelites had learned about YHVH's judgment against sin, the need for blood to be shed and placed over each person in order to be saved or redeemed from this judgment, and they finally learned about putting leavening out of their domiciles and eating unleavened bread for seven days — a spiritual picture of leaving their sin behind in Egypt under YHVH's judgment.

However, a problem remained. Now that they had left their sinful ways behind, how now were they to walk? They had a sense that the pagan gods and practices of Egypt weren't acceptable to YHVH, but what did he now want from them? How did he want his people to act, if not like the Egyptians, then how? This is what he revealed to them at Mount Sinai. He had called them to be his own treasured possession (Exod 19:5), a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exod 19:6).

At Mount Sinai, YHVH gave them his instructions in righteousness and promised to be their Elohim, and to care for them as a husband does for his wife if they would obey him. However, one thing he didn't do was to

give them his Holy Spirit. This happened some fifteen hundred years later on the same day (called Pentecost meaning “count fifty”) in Acts 2. You see, the Israelites had to learn some hard lessons. Although YHVH had saved them from the penalty of their sins, delivered them out of Egypt, had told them to put sin out of their lives, and had told them how to walk in a righteous relationship with him by keeping his commandments, they still failed to faithfully obey him. This illustrates a serious deficiency within man — he can't obey Elohim consistently on his own strength.

Humans are not able to remove sin from their own lives by their own efforts anymore than one can pull oneself up by one's own bootstraps. The failure of the children of Israel to faithfully obey YHVH's commandments demonstrated this point. Sin is too much a part of our mind, will and emotions. We need help from above to achieve this superhuman feat. We need the working and enabling power of YHVH's Holy Spirit (or *Ruach HaKodesh*) in our lives to bring sin to light and to help us to overcome it. This happens as we begin to feed upon the Word of YHVH-Yeshua the Messiah and little-by-little our lives come into conformity with that Word or with the life of Yeshua — the Word of YHVH made flesh (John 1:1,14; Rom 8:29). YHVH gave the children of Israel his Torah-words or instructions on how to live a holy and sanctified life at Mount Sinai during the Feast of Weeks. They heard YHVH's words with their ears, but their hearts were still carnal and hard. As a result of Israel's failure, YHVH promised to send his Spirit to his people, and to write his laws on their hearts (Jer 31:31,33). This promise began to be fulfilled during the apostolic era on the Feast of Pentecost as Yeshua promised to send the Comforter (the Holy Spirit, see John 14:16-18,26; 15:26; 16:7-14) to aid them to obey YHVH by living inside of their minds and hearts. This prophecy in the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) and promise of Yeshua was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost as chronicled in Acts chapter two when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Yeshua. The Holy Spirit is now freely available to all who put their faith in Yeshua and ask for it.

The Fall Feasts

The Day of Trumpets/Shofar Blowing/Shouting (*Yom Teruah*; Lev 23:23-25)

This is the fourth biblical festival of YHVH Elohim and is the fourth step in his plan of salvation. It is the first fall festival and occurs in September. Very little is said about this feast — in fact, it is mentioned in only two passages in the Torah (Lev 23:23-25 and Num 29:1-6). Other than the fact that this day is a Sabbath, an appointed time when a holy convocation is to occur, and that in times past certain animal sacrifices were to be made on this day, little more is known. The only biblical record we have of the Israelites observing this festival is among the post-exilic Jews in Ezra (3:6) and Nehemiah (8:2) where the sacrifices were offered and the Torah was read. Beyond this, what we can learn about this feast has to come from extra biblical Jewish sources, and from trying to extrapolate understanding from its context with the other fall feasts. Because of this, there is disagreement among serious Bible teachers as to the exact prophetic implications of *Yom Teruah*.

As noted, *Yom Teruah* occurs in the late summer or early fall season of the year. While the spring feasts primarily relate to the work Yeshua accomplished on the earth at his first coming, on the other hand, the fall feasts (of which *Yom Teruah* is the first) prophetically picture events that will occur during and including his second coming, as well as afterwards into eternity.

Specifically, *Yom Teruah* relates to events leading up to and including the great tribulation (Matt 24:21; Rev 7:14) and into the period when YHVH begins to pour out his wrath upon unrepentant man just prior to the return of Yeshua the Messiah (Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 15:1). The 30-day period leading up to this festival also seems to picture the time when Yeshua the Bridegroom is calling and preparing his bride, born-again believers, to ready themselves spiritually for his return. The call will go out for her to come out of the world, to fill her lamp with the oil of his Spirit, and to put on robes of righteousness in preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb. If our understanding is correct, it is on this day, at the seventh or last trumpet blast, that the righteous (both dead and alive) will rise to meet Yeshua in the air (Rev 11:14-18 and 12:10 with Matt 24:29-31). During the ten-day period between *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur*, YHVH will begin to pour at his final plagues of wrath upon unrepentant man. These plagues are known as the Bowl Judgments of Elohim (Rev 15-16).

The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*; Lev 23:26-32)

This fifth of the seven festivals of YHVH occurs ten days after the Day of Trumpets. Like *Yom Teruah*, little is said about the Israelites observing this day, yet unlike *Yom Teruah*, more is written about *Yom Kippur* in the Torah (Lev 23:26-32; Lev 16:1-34).

From what we can gather about this day from the Torah, from Jewish sources and from the Testimony of Yeshua, we can piece together the spiritual and prophetic significance pertaining to *Yom Kippur*, although, as with *Yom Teruah*, there is disagreement among well-intentioned Bible teachers on many of the details.

This day pictures when the end of the age (man's 6000 years upon earth to live in sin and rebellion against YHVH) will come to a completion. This period of grace will terminate. All who are saved will have been saved and removed from this earth as YHVH pours out his final judgment (known as the wrath of Elohim and which follows the great tribulation) upon the wicked and godless rebels left upon the earth. This period will culminate with the Battle of Armageddon at which time Yeshua the Messiah will return to earth as the Conquering King to defeat his enemies, marry his bride — the righteous saints — and rule the earth with a rod of iron for 1000 years. At this time Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit.

The Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (*Chag Sukkot* or *Chag Succoth*; Lev 23:33–43)

Not much is said in the Torah about this festival either, and the Bible only records it being observed a few times during the course of Israel's long history. For the modern Jews, Sukkot primarily is a historical event commemorating Israel's living in tents while wandering in the wilderness. From this, the Jewish sages have attached philosophical meanings to this day pertaining to the fragility and transitory nature of our physical life. These sages also had a strong sense that somehow it related to the Age to Come when men would be living in harmonious existence in a quasi-paradise on earth in compliance with the Torah under the rulership of the Messiah and with all the tribes of Israel having been regathered to the land of Israel from their long exile.

Beyond this, our understanding is that this feast represents the time period when the harvest of souls is completed (therefore, it is a harvest festival occurring at the beginning of the fall season when the agricultural harvest of the fruit of the earth is completed, as well) and a great feast occurs called the marriage supper of the Lamb. King Yeshua will have put down all of his enemies (the Beast, the False Prophet, the Antichrist, Satan and all else who have opposed YHVH Elohim). This festival is a time of great rejoicing and merriment and is often referred to simply as "the Feast." YHVH commanded his people to celebrate it for seven days and to rejoice before him. It is a picture of the 1000 year reign of King Yeshua on earth (called the Messianic Age or Millennium) from his headquarters in Jerusalem. This will be literally a time of paradise on earth.

The Eighth Day (*Shemini Atzeret*; Lev 23:36)

This seventh and final feast is only mentioned in the Torah in passing as it relates to the longer seven-day feast of Sukkot that directly precedes it. For this reason, it is largely overlooked, if not ignored, by both Jews and Torah-friendly believers in Yeshua. The fact remains, however, that the Torah designates it as a Sabbath and a time for a holy convocation.

Our understanding of the Scriptures leads us to believe that this seventh feast of YHVH is significant, and the paucity of information about this day belies its great importance. Ultimately, it may be the most important festival of all, since it's the goal to which all the other feasts point.

Shemini Atzeret occurs the very next day after the last day of *Sukkot*. Eight is the biblical number of new beginnings and this day pictures what occurs after the Messianic Age and after man's 7000 years on this earth. It is at this time that eternity in YHVH's kingdom occurs. This is the time of the New Heaven and the New Earth; the time when New Jerusalem coming down from heaven becomes the permanent abode of the glorified redeemed believers. We find this time period described in Revelation 21 and 22. The Scriptures don't give many details about eternity, but just enough to whet our appetites and inspire our hopes to press onward to be overcomers with Yeshua so that we may become participants in his glorious and everlasting kingdom.

