

END TIMES AS PICTURED IN THE FALL FEASTS

Week 2 – What About the Fall Feasts?

SCRIPTURE: REVELATION 4

Last week we began at the beginning – with GOD! That’s where end times must start! Where everything must begin! After all, God knows the END from the beginning (Isa. 46:10). AND, “end times” is GOD’S plan! It’s all about Him. From Whose perspective are we to be reading and studying and applying Scripture? From GOD’S!!

I would like for us to consider God’s calendar. God is above time and space. He has created man and placed us on this earth – IN time and space. After dealing with mankind for 2,000 years, no Jews, no Gentiles, just mankind, God called Abram, a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldees, modern-day Iraq, to come away from his country, from his family. . . to a land that God would show him.

And from Abram’s descendants, through Isaac, the son of promise, and Jacob, the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, God created a people that He chose – a people through whom HE, GOD, would accomplish His purposes for the WORLD – a people through whom He, God, would accomplish His purposes for the world! (Deut. 7:6-8; II Sam. 7:22-24; Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18)

God entered into a covenant relationship with the Jewish people and obligated HIMSELF – GOD – to fulfill the promises He made to them. Through the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised: land, seed, blessing.

Gen. 15:12-18 – during the cutting of the covenant, Abram was in a deep sleep. A smoking oven and a burning torch (GOD) walked through the ditch. Heb. 6:13 – in making the Abrahamic Covenant, God swore by Himself. God obligated Himself regarding the fulfillment of the covenant. God promised Abram and his descendants land (boundaries of which are noted in Gen. 15:18-20, seed (multiple descendants/THE Seed – the Messiah), and a blessing (salvation for both Jews and Gentiles through the Messiah).

And, God gave the children of Israel a calendar where the ETERNAL meets the TEMPORAL/TEMPORARY – where God meets man. God gave the children of Israel a timeline – the feasts of the Lord – His APPOINTED TIMES – that would impact the world. God’s appointed times are fixed; they are not going to change. Mal. 3:6 – I am the Lord, I change not. God gave the children of Israel the feasts to point them to the Messiah. The feasts all point to Jesus. They are Jesus feasts.

Each feast commemorates a time in Israel’s history and/or a harvest time. And, each feast has a “rest of the story” – a fulfillment. The fulfillment is always some aspect of God’s plan of salvation/redemption. The feasts of the Lord are divided into spring feasts and fall feasts. The Jewish religious calendar begins with the spring feasts.

The spring feasts speak to Jesus’ first coming and they have been fulfilled.

Spring Feasts. . . Passover, Unleavened Bd., Firstfruits, Shavuot/Pentecost

Jesus was crucified on **Passover**; Jesus' crucifixion is the fulfillment of Passover. On the first Passover the lambs were killed and their blood was applied to the doorposts and lintels of the homes obeying God's commandment. Within those homes with the blood applied, the first born was NOT killed. Following the slaying of the Passover lambs, the Jewish people were physically delivered/redeemed from Egypt and began their journey to the Promised Land.

The perfect Passover Lamb, Jesus, was crucified on the day of Passover. His blood was shed. Those who trust in Jesus' blood for the forgiveness of their sin, for salvation, are delivered/redeemed and we are on our way to the ultimate Promised Land – to spend eternity with God.

Jesus was buried on the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**; Jesus' death/His burial is the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven in Scripture represents sin; unleavened represents no sin. When we are redeemed/justified/declared righteous by God because our sins are forgiven, we move on in our life in Jesus the Messiah and we mature – and we die to self!

Jesus rose on the **Feast of Firstfruits**; Jesus' resurrection is the fulfillment of the Feast of Firstfruits. Because He rose, believers in Jesus will also be resurrected.

Fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead, the Jewish people were in Jerusalem celebrating the **Feast of Weeks/Shavuot**. The Jewish community celebrates God giving Moses the law on the Feast of Weeks. The law cannot redeem (Rom. 3:20) What happened in Jerusalem fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead? Pentecost! On the same day as the Jewish Feast of Weeks!

At **Pentecost** – the Holy Spirit descended and permanently indwelt believers who were given eternal life. The Church was birthed on Pentecost – which means 50 in the Gk. The law of God has been placed in our hearts. We are now under the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) which we can only live through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Please review the chart for the details.

The Fall Feasts speak to Jesus' Second Coming and they have yet to be fulfilled.

Fall Feasts. . . Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles

At the **Feast of Trumpets** which the Jewish community calls Rosh Hashanah (*the head of the year*), Jewish people gather for a time of repentance. The seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement is a time of testing!) The Jewish community was gathered together by a shofar blast – a blast from the ram's horn – to assemble at sundown on 9/13. Traditionally, the Jewish community believes that when the shofar is blasted at the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, three books are open in the heavenlies: book of the completely righteous; book of the completely wicked; book of the intermediates. At Rosh Hashanah, being prompted to repent, the Jewish community is looking forward to. . .

Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement when they will gather and ask for forgiveness, asking God for restoration.

At the **Feast of Tabernacles** which the Jewish community calls either Sukkot or Sukkas, Booths are constructed at this Feast. God instructed the Jewish people to erect

these booths. God told the Jewish people that His desire was to dwell with them (Ex. 25:8). The Feast of Tabernacles is a time of rejoicing after a time of repentance and restoration.

Rev. 21:3 - Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Feast of Trumpets - Lev. 23:23-25

According to the calendar God told the children of Israel to observe a memorial of blowing of trumpets on the first day of the 7th month. The seventh month – the #7 speaks to completion! The Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and the Feast of Tabernacles all fall within the 7th month. Significant!

In Biblical times the Feast of Trumpets was known as Yom Teruah – the day of blowing or the day of sounding. The blowing of the trumpets became the distinguishing characteristic – calling the people’s attention to the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur – the most solemn day on the Jewish calendar.

However, today within Judaism, the Feast of Trumpets is known as Rosh Hashanah which means *the head of the year*. Scripture does not teach that the Feast of Trumpets is called Rosh Hashanah.

In Judaism today, on Rosh Hashanah, the shofar, the ram’s horn, is blown.

At sundown on the Feast of Trumpets the Jewish people are called to worship with the blast of the shofar. Why the shofar? Judaism today believes that on Rosh Hashanah Isaac was bound and because the ram was sacrificed in his place, the shofar, the ram’s horn, is blown. You need to know that on Rosh Hashanah in synagogues Genesis 22 is read. Genesis 22 is the account in Scripture of a father sacrificing his son, his only son whom he loved!

- God commanded Abraham to offer up his only son whom he loved as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2).
- God promised Himself as the lamb for the burnt offering (Gen. 22:8).
- The Angel of the Lord called out to Abraham to stop him from slaying Isaac – now that the Angel of the Lord knew that Abraham would not withhold his only son from HIM! Who told Abraham to offer up Isaac? GOD! Who is the HIM referred to in v. 12? GOD! Who was speaking this? The Angel of the Lord. Who is the Angel of the Lord? GOD! How does this work? (Gen. 22:9-12)
- A ram was offered in Isaac’s place that day (Gen. 22:13)
- What about the lamb promised? It’s a future promise!

In Israel’s history the shofar was blown

- to call the assembly together
- to signal the children of Israel during war
- to signal the people of impending danger
- it was also blown at the beginning of the year of Jubilee
- it was blown when a king ascended to his throne

- in Isaiah 27:13 we are told that the (shofar) great trumpet will be blown at the future restoration of Israel
- **to announce the resurrection of the dead - !!! according to Jewish tradition**
- As a call to repentance. It was a call to the dead to arise and live again – to wake them up from sin to regeneration through repentance.

Underlying all, at Rosh Hashanah the ram's horn is blown to call the people to **repentance**. As the shofar was used in the ancient world to hail a king, so, too, at this holiday, all Israel is said to appear before the King of Kings in anticipation of personal judgment.

During the feast three books are opened in the heavenly courts:

- One for the wholly righteous (the completely righteous)
- One for the wholly wicked (the completely wicked)
- One for the intermediates

The completely righteous are immediately inscribed in the book of life. The completely wicked are immediately inscribed in the book of death. The intermediates (average persons) are kept in suspense from Rosh Hashanah until the Day of Yom Kippur. If their good deeds outweigh their bad, they are inscribed in the book of life.

Jewish people understand the Book of Life to mean physical life for one more year. They observe Rosh Hashanah every year and hope that they'll be given one more year of life on earth. Judaism today is centered around good deeds – mitzvahs. What does the Bible say about good works? God says all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight (Isa. 64:6). There's no assurance of eternal life in Judaism today. When a religion is based on good deeds – how good is good enough?

I want to reiterate that at Rosh Hashanah in Judaism today the ram's horn is blown to call the people to **repentance**. It is believed that at this holiday, all Israel appears before the King of Kings in anticipation of personal judgment. Please note Eze. 20:33-37! This is a serious time of introspection. It's a time when Jewish people consider the sins of the previous year and repent before Yom Kippur. Because at Yom Kippur, according to Jewish tradition, the books are sealed – and so is one's fate.

The Feast of Trumpets is a holy day of gathering. The people are gathered together by the blast of the shofar – and they are called to repent, and called to look ahead to restoration – at Yom Kippur.

You need to know that Scripture teaches there are two gatherings of the Jewish people to the land:

- First worldwide gathering in unbelief, in preparation for purging: Eze. 20:33ff; Eze. 22:17-22.

- Second worldwide gathering in preparation for the Millennial blessings: Isa. 11:11 through to Isa. 12:6; Jer. 23:1-10; Eze. 11:14-20; Eze. 36:24-36; Amos 9:14-15; Zech. 10.

We know today that God is gathering the Jews into the Land He promised them for a specific purpose – for purging – for cleansing – for repentance – for Tribulation – for the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30:7). Then, following the 7 years of Tribulation set forth in Scripture, the Jews who are living (Scripture tells us that one third will live following those 7 years [Zech. 13:8-9]) will be restored through their faith in Jesus, their Messiah. And Jesus will return.

We see repentance – during Feast of Trumpets – the Tribulation.
We see restoration – during Yom Kippur – the Second Coming.

Yom Kippur/the Day of Atonement - Lev. 23:26-32; Lev. 16

On the Day of Atonement Aaron, the High Priest, offered a bull as a sin offering for himself. The bull’s blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat that sat upon the Ark of the Covenant. The Mercy Seat has also been called “the seat of atonement”. Atonement in the Hebrew - kippor – means “to cover”. Aaron’s sins were atoned for; the High Priest’s sins were covered. He could then present the sacrifices for the nation.

There were two goats – one to be offered before the Lord – it was the Lord’s goat; the other was the scapegoat. Aaron slaughtered the Lord’s goat on the altar and sprinkled its blood on the Mercy Seat. Aaron then laid both his hands on the head of the live goat – the scapegoat - and confessed over it the sins of the children of Israel. He then sent it away into the wilderness. This was a picture of Israel’s sins being removed for one year. Yom Kippur was repeated each year.

I’m suggesting that Jesus will return (physical Second Coming return) at Yom Kippur. His Spirit will be poured out upon the 1/3rd of the Jewish people left at the end of the Tribulation. Jesus will return and Israel, those left at the end of the Tribulation, will be eternally RESTORED! The historical observance of Yom Kippur looks ahead to the restoration of Israel at the end of the Tribulation – those who are left have repented, they call upon the Lord, Jesus returns, and Israel is restored because of their belief in their Messiah. Yom Kippur will be fulfilled at the physical Second Coming of Jesus!

How is Yom Kippur observed today? There is no Temple – there’s no altar. They were both destroyed in 70 AD. How are sins then forgiven? God requires a blood sacrifice according to Lev. 11:17 - to atone for sins. There is no assurance of forgiveness in Judaism today. According to Jewish tradition, at sundown on Yom Kippur – the books that were opened at the beginning of the 10 days of awe – at Rosh Hashanah - are closed. Their physical fate is sealed for one year. And, the next year they will go through the entire ritual again – hoping to be restored - physically.

Feast of Tabernacles – the last feast – the 7th feast in the 7th month

What does tabernacle mean? To dwell. Who expressed His desire to dwell with man? GOD! Ex. 25:8 - *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* Following the Second Coming of Jesus at Yom Kippur, Jesus will establish His earthly, physical, literal kingdom – ON EARTH – the Millennial Kingdom.

Do you see the flow within the three fall feasts?

Feast of Trumpets – repentance – purging (Mal. 3:3) - the time of Jacob's trouble. The Feast of Trumpets is fulfilled in the Tribulation.

Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement – restoration. Yom Kippur is fulfilled at Jesus' Second Coming

Feast of Tabernacles – rejoicing - God dwelling with man. The Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

To whom were the Feasts of the Lord given? To the Jews. So, when we ask in reference to “end times,” “Are we there yet?” – we need to first define “WE”! If you say, “Are WE there yet,” who do you mean by “we”?

Paul mentions three groups in Scripture: I Cor. 10:32 - *Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,*

Jewish people – descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Gentiles – non-Jews
Church of God – “one new man” comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus (Eph. 2:15).

Does one become Jewish by physical birth? Yes!

Does one become a Gentile by physical birth? Yes!

Judaism is a belief system.

Christianity is a belief system.

If you're a believer in Jesus – be you Jewish or Gentile – if you're born again – since Pentecost – baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) upon being saved/born again /justified/declared righteous, to what group do you belong? The Church.

Physically speaking – if you were born Jewish – you're still Jewish. If you were born Gentile/not Jewish – you're still Gentile/not Jewish.

Israel is a nation created by God (Isa. 43:1), chosen by God and sustained by covenant promises (Deut. 7:6-9). God chose Israel as an earthly political entity to accomplish HIS purposes. Not all individuals in Israel are saved (Rom. 9:6; 11:28).

Jesus is the King of Israel (Jn 1:49), the King of the Jews (Mk. 15:2).

Jesus is the head of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).

God's purpose and program for Israel was revealed in the OT.

God's purpose and program for the Church was not revealed in the OT. Paul calls the Church a "mystery" not revealed in ages past (Eph. 3:1-7).

The Church did not exist in OT times. Matt. 16:18 - Jesus states that He would build His Church. This indicates that the Church did not yet exist.

How does one become a member of the Church? Believers are placed into the Church (the body of Christ - Col. 1:24), through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) which began at Pentecost – when the Holy Spirit descended and permanently indwelt those who were and are justified/declared righteous.

AND, in Ephesians 1:19-20 we are told that the Church is built on the foundation of Jesus' resurrection. The Church could not have existed in OT times.

The Church is clearly portrayed as distinct from Israel (I Cor. 10:32). Thus, the Church is not a continuation of OT Israel.

Do you see a distinction between Israel and the Church?

You may hear someone say, "God has Israel on hold at this time." What does that mean?

God is not using Israel at this time as His redemptive tool (His witnesses) since the Jewish religious leadership's rejection of Jesus as their Messiah (Matt. 12).

God is now using the Church as His redemptive tool (His witnesses) until the Rapture of the Church prior to the Tribulation.

BUT do we see God's hand on Israel at this time? YES! WHY? They are the "apple of God's eye" – God has promised protection. Israel continues to exist against all odds BECAUSE God is accomplishing His purposes through Israel.

Have all of God's plans/purposes been accomplished? Not yet. Thus, Israel remains in the mix. God is setting the stage for end times through Israel. . . . And so, against all odds we have seen GOD fight for Israel in 1948 (War of Independence), in 1956 (Sinai War), in 1967 (Six Day War), in 1973 (Yom Kippur War). We saw in the summer of 2014, when a rocket was launched at Israel from Gaza – and the Iron Dome failed to destroy it – a wind "suddenly" appeared and swept that rocket – aimed at Israel – into the Mediterranean Sea!

When the Church has completed her task – as God's redemptive tool, she will be caught up – raptured – the Bride of Christ will meet the Lord in the air.

Then God will seal 144,000 Jewish male virgins (Rev. 7:1-8; Rev. 14:1-5) during the Tribulation – using them as His redemptive tool. The impact of their service to God: Rev. 7:9ff – *a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.*

Rev. 7:9ff speak to the GREATEST REVIVAL of which we read in Scripture!

CONSIDER: God originally chose Israel to function as His witnesses!! God's plan is NEVER thwarted. He chose Israel to function as His witnesses – and they will.

Re: “end times” for Israel and the “last days” for the Church – we need to realize that in His Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24), Jesus lays out the signs for Israel prior to His physical Second Coming.

The coming of Jesus in the Rapture for the Church is imminent. There are no signs. It can happen in the next moment; nothing else must take place before the Rapture of the Church. “Imminent” – “upon us”!

So, the question remains, “Are we there yet?” “Where is there?” “Are we in end times?”

WAIT! HOLD ON! Are we really in END TIMES? Says who?

Are we in the last days? When people ask you that question (if they do), do you not know how to respond?

QUESTIONS

What events are captured in the fall feasts?

What was new to you?

What can you share with your Jewish friends/neighbors?

Why did I ask to whom God gave the feasts? What difference does that/will that make?

How will these truths from God’s word impact your walk with Him?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Pray about how you might share with your Jewish friends/neighbors

Look up the Scripture verses/passages in week 2’s handout

Seek to grasp the distinctions between Israel and the Church

Study Romans 11:16-24 re: the olive tree

Read the handout for week 3 in preparation for next week