

Lessons from the People of Israel

Grace Fellowship Church

Almond

“Shaped like almond blossoms ... a knob/bulb and a flower.”

“Almond” is the Hebrew noun **SHAQED**, שקד. Scholars believe it derives its name from **SHAQAD** that means, “to be vigilant, to keep watch.”

In the definition of **SHAQAD** we find, *“The idea of watching is so basic to the root that the name for the almond tree is taken from it **SHAQED**. The almond tree in Israel can bloom as early as January or February and is considered the “announcer, watcher, or waker” of spring. God used this idea as an object lesson for Jeremiah to remind him that He is watchful and prompt to carry out His promises (**Jer. 1:11f**).”* (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary.)

This tree, a member of the rose family, very much resembles the peach in form and blossom; it is the only other species of the same genus, amygdalus communis.

The almond is diffused by culture from China to Spain, on both sides of the Mediterranean, in the south of England, and in southern portions of the United States. There is no region, however, where it thrives better than in Syria.

There are four species of wild almonds in the Bible lands. Four being the number of Creation and Material Completion.

The common variety grows to the height of 25 feet.

The almond tree blossoms toward the end of January or the beginning of February, before the coming of the leaves. So, that the appearance of a tree in full bloom is striking. Although the blossoms are tinged with pink, the general effect is white. The bloom of some varieties is almost pure white. From a little distance, in other parts the delicate pink, always present at the inner part of the petals, is diffused enough to give a pink blush to the whole blossom. The fruit is a drupe with a dry fibrous or woody husk, which splits into two halves as the fruit ripens.

The early blossoming is the origin of the name **SHAKED**, which contains the idea of “early.” The Hebrew name of the almond is the, “waker, wakeful, hastening,” in allusion to its being the first of the fruit trees to awake in the winter and put forth its blossoms.

Ex 23:16, “Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field.”

Read: 1 Cor 15:20-23

Rom 8:23, "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."

1 Cor 16:15, "Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints."

James 1:18, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

The masses of almond trees in full bloom in some parts of Palestine make a very beautiful and striking sight.

The Hebrew **SHAQED**, means, "the awakening one," probably from its early blossoming.

The common wild variety grows a kernel, which is bitter from the presence of a substance called amygdalon, which yields in its turn prussic (hydrocyanic) acid.

Young trees are grafted with cuttings from the sweet variety or are budded with apricot, peach, or plum. The fruit is eaten in two stages, the first the tender, acidic, unripe, crisp pod, and the other, the ripe almonds, so familiar everywhere.

The bitter Almond was primarily used for its oil, while the sweet was used for desserts.

Gen 27:34, "When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!""

Rev 10:9-11, "So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said* to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.""

Charles Ryrie: The eating of the little scroll was to remind John that although these truths from God may be pleasant to his taste, they were bitter when digested, because they spoke of judgment. The revelation of God's judgment, on careful reflection should always bring heaviness of heart to the child of God. Ezek 2:8-3:27

Read: **Ezek 2:8-3:3, 17**

"Bitter" and **"sweet"** speak to the dual effect of God's word.

To the one who loves and obeys the Word, it is sweet as honey; to the one who rejects the Word and is bitter towards it, the Word judges and is bitter to them. Just as Salt preserves flesh and deadens the Land. Both represent His Word, one in provision for Life the other in Judgment.

Read: Ex 15:22-27; Lev 16:12-13; 2 Cor 2:14-17

In **2 Cor 2:17**, "peddling" is, **KAPELEUO**, "a huckster, to retail, to adulterate, corrupt."

"Sincerity" is **EILIKRINEINA** that means, "clearness, purity, sincerity." It comes from **HEILE** that means, "the sun's ray," and **KRINO** that means, "to judge, decide." **EILIKRINES** then means, "judged by sunlight, tested as genuine, pure, sincere."

Here Paul contrasts the deceitfulness of the religious hucksters of his day with his pure motives and honorable methods in preaching the gospel.

Mat 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

In **Ex 25:33-34**, **SHAQAD**, means, "to be or make something almond shaped, make like almonds, cups shaped like almond blossoms."

Its cognate **SHAQED** means, "the almond tree or nut; (as being the earliest in bloom)."

SHAQAD is a primitive root that also means, "to be alert, sleepless; to be on the lookout, remain, wake, awake, watch for, be alert, wait."

The Greek words:

GREGOREUO [gray-gor-yoo-o], means, "keep awake, watch, be vigilant"

AGRUPNEO that means, "to be sleepless, that is, keep awake, watch."

Read: **Mark 13:32-37**

Mat 26:38-41 w/ Mark 14:34-38 in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Mat 25:13 "Ten Virgins" w/ **24:42** Second coming of the Lord (including the Rapture).

1Cor 16:13, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14Let all that you do be done in love."

The first mention of the word "Almond" in English is found in **Gen 30:37**, where "**Jacob took rods of fresh poplar, and of the almond (LUZ) and of the plane-tree; and peeled white streaks in them,**" as a means of **securing "ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted"** lambs and goats.

The King James Version "**hazel**" **LAUZ**, is the modern Arabic name for "almond." **Luz** was the old name of **BETHEL** (meaning House of God). Jacob used the almond (KJV, "hazel") as a breeding device to increase his herds. Although not the same word, Almond has a fertile connotation bringing forth offspring. Just as the Word of God is fertile to bring forth Eternal Life.

The first use of **SHAQAD** [our word] is when Israel (Jacob) directed his sons to carry almonds as part of their present to Joseph in Egypt, **Gen 43:11**. Note: Just after Joseph was born, Jacob performed the fertility process to gain his freedom from Laban.

Palestine is a land where the almond flourishes; whereas, in Egypt it would appear to have been uncommon. The Word flourished in Palestine, while in Egypt (analogous for Satan's cosmic system) it did not.

Isa 42:6; 49:6; Israel in the land of Palestine was to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Jacob sent almonds as one of the best fruits of the land to satisfy the Egyptian ruler. Just as the Word / Christ Jesus should satisfy us today.

Next, we see the blossoms of the almond are mentioned in **Ex 25:33 f; 37:19**

"Cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop (i.e. knob) and a flower."

It is doubtful exactly what was intended—the most probable is that the cup was modeled after the calyx of the almond flower, (blossom, flower, green protective outer portion of the flower).

The bowls for the oil were most likely shaped like almonds. (**Ex. 25:33-34**).

With its oblong oval shape sharpened at one end and rounded at the other, the almond nut is remarkably graceful, possibly depicting the Grace of God. [Just as other things already mentioned.]

This naturally led to its selection for ornamental carved work; and it was the pattern selected for the bowls of the golden lampstand.

With its early bloom and striking color, it symbolizes the speedy awakening and powerful results of light.

2 Peter 3:9, " The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Then we see, Aaron's rod that budded was an almond branch formed into a rod. **Num 17:2, 3** Aaron's rod miraculously produced ripe almonds, showing he and his tribe were the only chosen priests. **Num. 17:8**

Num. 17:8, "Sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds." Cf. Heb. 9:4

It identified the priesthood for the age of Israel and set the precedence for the Priesthood.

In the age of grace, all believers are members of the new order of Priest and have our precedence in the resurrected Christ. **Heb 7:11-12, 24; 1 Peter 2:5-9**

Next, we see an almond tree in full bloom upon a distant hillside has a certain likeness to a head of white hair, in **Eccl 12:5**, where in the description of old age, it says **"the almond-tree shall blossom."** The reference is to the white hair of age. The early-appearing white bloom of the almond serves as a picture of the graying of a person's hair, pointing to the haste with which old age comes and the certainty of death. Almond blossoms symbolize the end of one's days on earth. **Gen 42:38; 44:29, 31; Deut 32:25; 1 Kings 2:6&9**

Prov 20:29, "The glory of young men is their strength, and the honor of old men is their gray hair."

The early blossom meant for Jeremiah that the almond watched for spring and gave the prophet a wordplay on the "almond" (Hebrew, **SHAQAD**) and his task to watch (Hebrew, **SHAQAD**) (**Jer. 1:11**).

The almond tree reassured Jeremiah that God was not asleep, but that He was watching (**SHAQAD**) The striking snow-white blossoms also reminded Jeremiah that God's care to perform what He promised would be as striking as the blossoming almond tree.

This word is used as an emblem of our Lord's, "promptness., watching, or hasten."

Psa 70:1, "O God, hasten to deliver me. O LORD, hasten to my help!"

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

James 1:19, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

"Bulbs" KAPHTOR is, "art of the ornamentation of the seven-branched lampstand in the Tabernacle." (**Exodus 25:31-36; 37:17-22; "calyx"**).

KAPHTOR means, "knop, knob, bulb, capital (top of a column), lintel, to encircle."

Read: **Amos 9:1-10**

Amos 9:1, "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and He said, "Smite the capitals so that the thresholds will shake, and break them on the heads of them all! Then I will slay the rest of them with the sword; They will not have a fugitive who will flee, or a refugee who will escape... 'Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?" declares the LORD. "Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?"

The original homeland or staging area of the Philistines, perhaps the island of Crete or on the southwest coast of Asia Minor.

CAPHTOR, (a wreath shaped island). The name of a city which means, "a crown." This has the connotation of strategic importance; of a nation, city, people, or structure.

Just as our Lord won the strategic victory by striking Satan on the capital. **Gen 3:15**

Gen 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

KAPHTOR – Read: **Zeph 2:10-15**

The capitals or the pillars of the temples and palaces shall lie broken and strewn upon the ground, and among those desolate fragments of her pride unclean animals will prey and devour.

The pelican, a ceremonially unclean bird, a.k.a. cormorant, perhaps an extinct bird, but it has its Hebrew name from "vomiting." It vomits up the shells it had swallowed whole after they had been opened by the heat of the stomach and so picks out the animal contained inside. The very image of greediness and uncleanness.

2 Peter 2:22, "It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Rev 3:15-17, "'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, "The wild birds will dwell there with the animals." Their beautiful buildings will be buried under the sands."

Nahum had also prophesied the fall of Nineveh and its complete destruction.

God describes the punishment of other nations, so the Jews would know that he would avenge them of their enemies in the long run.

“Flower” is the Hebrew word **PERACH**, “calyx, bloom, blossom, bud, flower.” The Calyx is the green protective outer coating of the flower. The root **Parach**, figuratively means, “to flourish, break forth.”

Isa 27:6, “In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, And they will fill the whole world with fruit.”

Num 17:8, “Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.”

Ezek 7:10-11, “Behold, the day! Behold, it is coming! Your doom has gone forth; the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed. ¹¹“Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness. None of them shall remain, none of their people, none of their wealth, nor anything eminent among them.”

The striking manner in which flowers burst into bloom for a few short weeks in spring and then faded into withered leaves was viewed as an illustration of the transient nature of human life. **Job 14:2; Ps. 103:15; Isa. 40:6; 1 Pet. 1:24**

The flowers of spring (**Song of Sol. 2:12**) signify renewal.

The **“fading flower”** of **Isaiah 28:1** represented the downfall of God’s disobedient people.

The **“lilies of the field”** (**Matt. 6:28**) grew unassumingly and without any outward signs of anxiety.

If God takes care of the lilies, so God will take care of His children who need not worry uselessly.

The phrase, **“flower of her age”** (**1 Cor. 7:36**) described a girl reaching womanhood.

The rich pass away just as quickly as the period of time for blooming flowers passes away, (**Jas. 1:10-11**).

Then in **Gen 28:1-22**, Jacob journeys to Haran, (northwestern Iraq today), at the urging of his mother Rebekah to Isaac, to find a wife from his uncle Laban’s family. There he finds Rachel but is tricked into marrying Leah first, and then was allowed to marry Rachel, after a total of two seven-year periods of service.

On Jacob’s trip to his Uncle, God met him in a dream at Luz confirming the passage of Abraham’s covenant to Jacob. This dream is widely known as Jacob’s Ladder.

Jacob, after sanctifying the place, he called it "Bethel" = House of God. Jerusalem was the place where the Temple was built, but Bethel was second to it as a place of worship, both in praise of God and apostasy of false gods.

Holman Bible Dictionary, "Bethel was important in the Old Testament for both geographic and religious reasons. Because of its abundant springs, the area was fertile and attractive to settlements as early as 3200 B.C. Religiously, Bethel served as a sanctuary during the times of the patriarchs, judges, and the divided kingdom, hence was second only to Jerusalem as a religious center. The ark of the covenant was kept in Bethel during a period of the judges (Judg. 20:27), so the tribes converged there upon Benjamin to avenge the moral atrocity at Gibeah (Judg. 20:18-28), offering sacrifices and seeking the Lord's direction (Judg. 21:1-4). Bethel also was a place where both Deborah (Judg. 4:5) and Samuel (1 Sam. 7:16) judged the civil and religious affairs of the Israelites in the area. Jeroboam I made it a religious center of his innovative, apostate religion of the Northern Kingdom. He erected a golden calf both here and in Dan with non-Levitic priests and an illegitimate feast to compete with the celebrations and religion of Jerusalem, ten and a half miles to the south in Judah (1 Kings 12:29-33)."

"Bethel," House of God, reminds us that we are the temple of God during the Church Age. **1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21.**

Formerly it had the name **Luz**, which means Almond Tree. Almond trees were the first to blossom after the winter months and are a type of first fruits. The blossoms are called in Hebrew **SHAQED**, "the awakening one," probably from its early blossoming.

This has an analogy to Jacob's spiritual life. It was his place of awakening, **Gen 28:16-17, 21**. Here he believed on the Lord and received the promise first given to Abraham.

Later in **Gen 35:1-16**, at this same place, Jacob's name was changed by God to Israel. This was signified by the repeating of the promise previously given to him. See also **Hos. 12:4, 5**.

The promise God gave to Israel included the bringing forth of the Messiah. This was also seen in the story of Jacob meeting Rachel, his uncle's daughter and eventual wife, for the first time, **Gen 29:5-10**.

Here we see an appointed time for all the flock to be watered. Signified by the rolling away of the stone from the mouth of the well, just as all people can be watered by our Lord, as a result of His resurrection that was proved by the rolling away of the stone from the tomb. Jesus Christ is the spring and water of life. **John 4:7-15; Rev 7:17; 21:6; 22:17**

John 4:14, "But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

Rev 7:17, "For the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Rev 21:6, "Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."

The almond also speaks to Christ and the Church, as the first fruits, as a result of His resurrection. **1Cor 15:20; Rom 8:23; James 1:18**

1 Cor 15:20, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."

Rom 8:23, "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."

James 1:18, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

The Almond fruit is eaten in two stages: the first the tender, acidic, unripe, crisp pod, and the other, the ripe almonds, so familiar everywhere. Varieties of almonds are classified in two categories, bitter and sweet.

The bitter Almond was primarily used for its oil, while the sweet was used for desserts.

Gen 27:34, "When Esau (Jacob's brother) heard the words (blessing of Jacob) of his father (Isaac), he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!""

Here the duality of the bitterness of loss and judgment for the unbeliever and sweet blessing for the believer is seen

The Word of God is said to be bitter sweet.

Rev 10:9-11, " So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.""

Charles Ryrie: The eating of the little scroll was to remind John that although these truths from God may be pleasant to his taste, they were bitter when digested, because they spoke

of judgment. The revelation of God's judgment, on careful reflection should always bring heaviness of heart to the child of God. Ezek 2:8-3:27

"Bitter" and **"Sweet"** speak to the dual effect of God's word through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. It is blessings for the believer who is advancing in God's Word and Plan, and judgment for the unbeliever and reversionistic believer.

To the one who loves and obeys the Word, it is sweet as honey; to the one who rejects the Word and is bitter towards it, the Word judges and is bitter to them, just as salt preserves flesh and deadens the land. Both almonds and salt, and bitter and sweet represent His Word. One in provisions for life, the other in judgment.

Now the place of this anointing holds significant meaning too, because Bethel became the land of Ephraim. (It was originally to be part of the tribe of Benjamin [son of my right hand] but they either did not win it or hold it, and it became part of Ephraim. Later it was part of the Northern Kingdom.) **"Ephraim"** means, "fruitful". Again, we have an analogy to the Word and Spirit, as we in the church produce the Fruit of the Spirit when we apply the Word of God. **Gal 5:22-23**

So, the area that Jacob consecrated with oil was the place of the early awakening by the bitter sweet that became the house of God in the land of fruitfulness. Just as you and I (believers in the Church Age) came to salvation by the efficacious grace of God at positive volition to the gospel message and are the dwelling place of God as first fruits. In that place, we are called to produce – the Fruit of the Spirit. **1 Cor 3:16; Eph 3:14-19; Col 3:16; James 4:5**

Living Simply—Yet Focused, by Oswald Chambers

"Look at the birds of the air Consider the lilies of the field ..." (Matthew 6:26, 28).

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin"—they simply are! Think of the sea, the air, the sun, the stars, and the moon—all of these simply are as well—yet what a ministry and service they render on our behalf! So often we impair God's designed influence, which He desires to exhibit through us, because of our own conscious efforts to be consistent and useful. Jesus said there is only one way to develop and grow spiritually, and that is through focusing and concentrating on God. In essence, Jesus was saying, "Do not worry about being of use to others; simply believe on Me." In other words, pay attention to the Source, and out of you "will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). We cannot discover the source of our natural life through common sense and reasoning, and Jesus is teaching here that growth in our spiritual life comes not from focusing directly on it, but from concentrating on our Father in heaven. Our heavenly Father knows our circumstances, and if we will stay focused on Him, instead of our circumstances, we will grow spiritually—just as "the lilies of the field."

The people who influence us the most are not those who detain us with their continual talk, but those who live their lives like the stars in the sky and “the lilies of the field”—simply and unaffectedly. Those are the lives that mold and shape us.

If you want to be of use to God, maintain the proper relationship with Jesus Christ by staying focused on Him, and He will make use of you every minute you live—yet you will be unaware, on the conscious level of your life, that you are being used of Him.

The Almond Typology Summary

- Early waker
- Resurrection
- First Fruits
- 4 – Material Completeness
- 2 – Incarnation
- Bitter and Sweet – Word
- First Mention – Fertility = **Gen 30:37**
- First Hebrew – The Best = **Gen 43:11**
- Client nations – Israel 1st = **Isa 42:6; 49:6**
- Bring it to the World
- Candlestick = **Ex 25:33-34**
- Light Glorifying Christ
- Grace of God
- Speed and Power
- Aaron’s Rod = Priesthood Precedence = **Num 17:2-3**
- White Flower = White/Gray Hair – Imminence of death and depicting wisdom
= **Eccl 12:5**

Covenants of Israel

Four Covenants are Unconditional and One is Conditional.



- The **Abrahamic Covenant** defines the race for client nation Israel. Abraham became a Jew at age 99; circumcision was the sign, **Gen 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:18; 22:15-18; 26:3-4; Ex 6:2-8.**
- The **Palestinian Covenant** defines the land for client nation Israel, **Gen 15:18; Num 34:1-12; Deut 30:1-9; Josh 1:3-4.** This is the real estate of the client nation.
- The **Mosaic Law** defines the policy for client nation Israel (both spiritual and temporal policy). This is the one Conditional Covenant.

Codex 1: 10 Commandments, Decalogue, Freedom Code

Codex 2: Ordinances, Spiritual Code

Codex 3: Judgments, Establishment Code, National Heritage

- The **Davidic Covenant** defines the dynasty for client nation Israel, **2 Sam 7:8-16; Ps 89:20-37.**
- The **New Covenant** defines the restoration of the client nation Israel at the Second Advent and its millennial modus operandi. **Jer 31:31-34.** This is part of the contract and is not operational until the Second Advent.

Distinction between Israel and the Church

Lewis Sperry Chafer has documented 24 contrasts between Israel and the Church, (Systematic Theology, IV, 47-53).

They show that the two groups cannot be united into one. They also show that God is dealing with each separately, in special and distinctive programs.

- The Extent of Biblical Revelation:
Israel—nearly four-fifths of the Bible;
Church—about one-fifth.
- The Divine Purpose:
Israel—the earthly promises in the covenants;
Church—the heavenly promises in the gospel.
- The Seed of Abraham:
Israel—the physical seed, of whom some become a spiritual seed;
Church—a spiritual seed.
- Birth:
Israel—physical birth that produces a relationship;
Church—spiritual birth that brings relationship.
- Headship:
Israel—Abraham;
Church—Christ.
- Covenants:
Israel—Abrahamic and all the following covenants;
Church—indirectly related to the Abrahamic and New Covenants.
- Nationality:
Israel—one nation;
Church—from all nations.
- Divine Dealing:
Israel—national and individual;
Church—individual only.
- Dispensations:

Israel—seen in all ages from Abraham;
Church—seen only in this present age.

- Ministry:

Israel— no missionary activity and no gospel to preach;
Church—a commission to fulfill.

- The Death of Christ:

Israel—guilty nationally, to be saved by it;
Church—perfectly saved by it now.

- The Father:

Israel—by a peculiar relationship God was Father to the nation;
Church—we are related individually to God as Father.

- Christ:

Israel—Messiah, Immanuel, King;
Church—Savior, Lord, Bridegroom, Head.

- The Holy Spirit:

Israel—came upon some temporarily;
Church—indwells all.

- Governing Principle:

Israel—Mosaic law system;
Church— grace system.

- Divine Enablement:

Israel—none;
Church— the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- Two Farewell Discourses:

Israel—Olivet Discourse;
Church—Upper Room Discourse.

- The Promise of Christ's Return:

Israel—in power and glory for judgment;
Church—to receive us to Himself.

- Position:

Israel— a servant;
Church—members of the family.

- Christ's Earthly Reign:

Israel—subjects;
Church—co-reigners.

- Priesthood:

Israel—had a priesthood;
Church—is a priesthood.

- Marriage:
Israel—unfaithful wife;
Church—bride.

- Judgments:
Israel—must face judgment;
Church—delivered from all judgments.

- Positions in Eternity:
Israel—spirits of just men made perfect in the new earth;
Church—church of the firstborn in the new heavens.

Seven Feasts of Israel

There are 7-Feasts in which the Lord commanded the nation of Israel to conduct when they entered into the promise land.

Passover, a one-day feast, commemorating the last plague against Egypt and the Jews freedom from slavery.

It also signified the Lord passing over their sins until the perfect sacrifice was made, saving everyone from the slave market of sin. **Lev. 23:4 ff**

Fulfilled by Jesus' Death on the Cross. 1 Co. 5:7

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, a seven-day feast commemorating the removal of sin.

Seven is the number of completion speaking to the completed work of Christ on the cross by:

- Having no sin, impeccability, and
- The removal of the penalty of sin for man. **Lev 23:6**

Fulfilled by Christ's burial and time spent in the grave. 1 Co. 5:7-8

The Feast of First Fruits, another seven-day feast commemorating the harvest and logical grace blessings from God. **Lev 23:9**

Fulfilled by Christ's resurrection. 1 Co. 15:23

The Feast of Pentecost, commemorating the sin of man and the peace made between sinful man and perfect God. **Lev. 23:15**

Fulfilled by Christ's ascension and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-5

The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), a two-day feast ushering in the civil New Year. **Lev. 23:23**

Yet to be fulfilled at the Exit Resurrection / Rapture. 1 Co. 15:52 w/ 1 Thess 1:10

The Day of Atonement, (Yom Kipper), a one-day feast where atonement for sins where made for the family. **Lev. 23:26**

Yet to be fulfilled at the Christ's second coming. 1 John 2:2; Zech 12:7-14; 14:4; Mat 24:29-31; Rev 1:7, 19

Feast of Tabernacles, a seven-day feast, commemorating Israel's release from Egypt where they wandered in the wilderness and the Lord dwelt among them in the tabernacle. **Lev. 23:33**

Yet to be fulfilled – When Christ sets up His Millennial reign on earth and tabernacles / dwells among us once again. Zech 14:16; John 7:8

An interesting note related to the 7-Feasts is that they also are the outlines of the beginning of human life.

A normal / average pregnancy lasts 280 days from the last menstrual cycle to the day of birth.

If placed on an ideal Jewish calendar, it would begin on the first day of the new year which falls on the spring equinox with the first day of Nisan, the new moon of the first month or March 21st.

It would end with the child's birth 280 days later or on December 25th, Christmas day or on Kislev; the accurate date of Chanukah, the Feast of Dedication (**John 10:22**).

Then on the fourteenth day of the first month the egg appears.

The day which the Passover is to be celebrated.

An egg is commanded to be used in the Passover supper signifying new life based on the sacrifice of the Lamb.

His crucifixion on Passover gave us each the chance for a new and everlasting life.

Within 24-hours, the egg must be fertilized or it will pass on.

So, on the 15th day of Nisan, the seed must be planted, speaking to the feast of unleavened bread; memorializing the planting of our Lord in the ground, His burial.

His burial prepared for each of us the glorious resurrection to come.

The next feast, Feast of First Fruits occurs the on the next Sunday following the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It can occur the next day or seven days later.

The fertilized egg then travels down the fallopian tube toward the uterus where it implants itself.

The fertilized egg then travels down the fallopian tube toward the uterus where it implants itself.

This can take anywhere from 2 to 6 days.

The implantation speaks to the planting of the spring crops which are presented to the Lord for his acceptance.

The next step is a long wait until the embryo becomes a human fetus. This takes 7 Weeks or approx. 50 days – The Feast of Pentecost.

After 7-weeks, the generic embryo becomes a new creature. **2 Co. 5:17**

2 Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

The for the next 7-months, the fetus basically grows in size. At the beginning of the seventh month hearing is fully developed.

Coincidence that this occurs on the Feast of Trumpets. The first day of Tishri

The next development is in the 2nd week or 10-days later when the blood of the fetus now had to change and be prepared to be self-sustaining.

This is the day of Atonement when the blood sacrifices atoned for the sins of Israel and sustained their life eternal.

Lev. 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Next, the Lungs develop on the 15th day and safe delivery is now possible.

On the Feast of Tabernacles the Lord will deliver safely the believing Jew and Gentile into the Millennial reign. And the Tabernacle is where the Spirit (**pneuma**) dwells within us.

The last stage of pregnancy is borrowed from an additional feast, the Feast of Lights or Chanukah, an eight-day celebration.

The eight-day Feast allows for the timing to be fulfilled and birth to occur. As Jesus is the light of the world, a new light enters the world by Gods divine timing and breath.

So, as we each fulfilled the 7-Feasts before our birth, Christ will fulfill all 7-Feasts before the birth of His earthly Kingship.

Firstborn

Luke 2:7, "And she gave birth to her firstborn son; ..."

"**Firstborn**," is the Accusative Singular of the Adjective PROTOTOKOS, πρωτότοκος. It is used 8 times in the NT. It is also used in some ancient manuscripts in **Mat 1:25**, but the oldest and most reliable texts do not include it there.

Luke notes that this was Mary's first born son to continue the emphasis of the virgin birth. This leaves open the possibility that she had other children, as she did, as we noted in **vs. 5**. Otherwise, Luke would have stated that Jesus was her "only begotten son," MONOGENES HUIOS.

Now, we see in Scripture that there is more to this title. Within ancient Israel there were basically two understandings of "firstborn."

1. The first is the understanding as the "firstborn of the inheritance." The ancient Jews regarded the firstborn male child as the "firstborn of the inheritance," because the first male child usually received a double portion of the father's inheritance and assumed the role of the father as head of the family upon his death.
2. The second understanding is the "firstborn of the sanctuary." This is because the firstborn child of the mother was consecrated to the Lord and had to be redeemed through an offering. Joseph and Mary made such an offering for her firstborn child Jesus in **vs. 22-24**. In theory a lamb was to be offered, but in practice the poor were allowed a smaller sacrifice of two doves or two young pigeons. The offering they made for Jesus was a typical poor person's offering.

Therefore, upon Jesus' birth, He was consecrated, set apart, unto God the Father for a special work and service as the sacrificial Lamb, who would receive a great inheritance as the head of the Church!

Being "firstborn," was also a part of and in fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus is the "firstborn" Son of God the Father, Who in **Psa 89:27**, prophesied that His first born son would be a great king. **Psa 89:27, "I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."** Thus, being the firstborn involved some measure of status and inheritance in this messianic prophecy, as we will note below.

Of the 8 usages of PROTOTOKOS in the NT, all but one refers to Jesus. The other usage refers to the firstborn of the Egyptians who were destroyed on Passover night, **Heb 11:28**. Of the other 7, (the number of spiritual perfection), only one refers to His birth to Mary, our passage, which is the first time it is used in the NT. The other six, (the number of man), refer to Him being the Son of God.

Each of the instances of PROTOKOS referring to Jesus Christ as the firstborn of God can be classified in 4 groups that essentially capture every understanding.

1. Christological, **Col 1:15-17**.

Col 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, cf. **Heb 1:1-3**, the firstborn over all creation. By Him all things were created, and they were created for Him as well. With respect to the rest of creation, He is the firstborn, thus heir over all things. With respect to God He has been designated the only begotten of the Father, **John 1:18**. Thus, He is the first and the only Son of God. The meaning of PROTOKOS in **Col 1:15**, is a statement about the rights, privileges, and prerogatives of Jesus, the Divine Son of God. In addition, neither in this verse, nor in any other containing the word "firstborn" regarding His relationship to God, is there a suggestion that the 2nd Person of the Trinity was literally born, created, or generated, as God is eternal and never born. Therefore, this first category speaks to the Person of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Who is God, the creator and sovereign of the heavens and the earth.

2. Soteriological, **Col 1:18-20; Rev 1:5**.

Col 1:18, "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."

Rev 1:5, "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood."

Christ is also the "firstborn of the dead." He is the first "in order" from the perspective of salvation history, to have risen from the dead. He rose victoriously, triumphing over death and having broken the power of death. Because His death was substitutional, it was also representational. He redeemed believers from sin through His death providing salvation for all who would believe in Him. Therefore, those who have believed in Him have been justified through His resurrection, **Rom 4:25**.

Rom 4:25, "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

Christians are dead and buried to sin with Him; in like manner they have been raised to the new life in and with Him, **Rom 6:4; Eph 2:5f**.

Rom 6:4, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

3. Ecclesiastical, **Rom 8:29; Heb 12:23.**

Rom 8:29, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."

Heb 12:23, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect."

Since Christians have been raised with Christ, they are also members of the body of the firstborn Son from the dead. We walk to be conformed to His image as the Son of God. This does not mean that we will be made Divine into gods. It means we have been placed into the family of God as brothers and sisters, of which comprise His Church or the "general assembly" of the firstborn of God, cf. **Acts 20:28**. As such, we are co-heirs in and with Christ, firstborn heirs, those to whom a double portion of the inheritance is due.

Rom 8:17, "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."

4. Eschatological, **Heb 1:6.**

Heb 1:6, "And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, 'AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM'."

This text recalls that God first brought His firstborn Son into the world called the 1st Advent, and then all the angels will worship Him, which speaks of His 2nd Advent. At His first coming, Christ was clothed in humility, but when He comes again, He will come with multitudes of angels who worship Him as the sovereign Lord on His throne, **Heb 1:6-9; Rev 19:11-16**. Likewise, "the world" is part of the inheritance of the firstborn which He will share with His brothers and sisters at His 2nd Advent, **Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23**. The One whose head suffered under a crown of thorns will become King of kings and Lord of lords, **Rev 19:16; Dan 2:37**. Then the prophecy, **"I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth," Psa 89:27**, will see its eternal fulfillment.

Therefore, the title, "firstborn," has a Christological, Soteriological, Ecclesiastical, and Eschatological meaning. These tell us of the person and work of Jesus Christ who has redeemed mankind to build a church unto God that will be glorified and blessed for all of eternity.

Nehemiah the Gates of Jerusalem

The following are the gates noted in **Nehemiah Chapter Three**. Each gate from the Jerusalem wall mentioned by Nehemiah is unique and has a specific message about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These messages are vivid and clear in our day just as they were in 445 BC and prior. These gates were used by God to reveal the coming Messiah to the Jews of that day. They reveal Him from His first coming sacrifice, to His Second Coming, and final judgment of man and Angels. It is fascinating how God finds many different ways to tell the message of Christ, the good news. This is one more. Praise be to God the Father who desires salvation for all. **1 Tim 2:4**

The Sheep Gate (v. 1-2) Reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (**John 10**). This was the first gate repaired, for without the sacrifice, there is no salvation. Note that the sheep gate had no locks or bars, for the door of salvation is ever open to the sinner. This is the only gate that was sanctified, setting it apart as a special gate.

They sanctified it—As they began with the sacred offering as soon as they got an altar built, it was proper that the gate by which these sacrifices entered should be consecrated for this purpose, i. e., set apart, so that it should be for this use only.

The Fish Gate (v. 3-5) Reminds us of soul-winning, being “fishers of men” (**Mark 1:17**).

The Old Gate (v. 6-12) Speaks of the old paths and the old truths of the Word of God (**Jer 6:16** and **18:15**). The people of the world are forever looking for “some new thing” (**Acts 17:21**), and they refuse to go back to the basic truths for salvation, eternal life, and everyday living. Jesus Christ and salvation is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Heb 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

The Valley Gate (v. 13) Reminds us of the humility of the Lord becoming the God/Man and the type of humility we should put on.

In **Phil 2:1-10**, we see Christ descending from the glories of heaven into the valley of human limitation and even death.

We do not enjoy the valley, but often God must take us there to bring a blessing to our lives.

The Dung Gate. (v. 14) Apparently this is the gate through which the waste and refuse of the city were taken. Imagine how difficult it would be to repair a gate in such a place! Certainly, this speaks to us of the cleansing of our souls (**2 Cor 7:1; Isa 1:16-17; 1 John 1:9**).

Later some of the Jews were to complain about the rubbish; see **Neh 4:10**.

The Gate of the Fountain (v. 15-25) Illustrates the ministry of the Holy Spirit; see **John 7:37-39**.

It is interesting to note the order of these gates: first, there is humility (the valley gate), then cleansing (the dung gate), and then the filling of the Spirit (the fountain gate).

The Water Gate (v. 26-27) Speaks of the Word of God, which cleanses the believer (**Eph 5:26; Psa 119:9**).

Note that this is the seventh gate mentioned, and seven is the Bible number for perfection, completeness—the perfect Word of God.

Note too that this gate needed no repairs! **“Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven” (Psa 119:89)**.

Gate: Needed no repair

The Horse Gate (v. 28) Introduces the idea of warfare.

Certainly, there are battles in the Christian life, and we must be ready to fight. **2 Tim 2:1-4**.

Rev 17:14 “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the called and chosen and faithful*.”

The East Gate (v. 29-30) Makes us think of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, **Matt 24:27**.

In **Ezek 10:16-22; 11:22-25**., the prophet saw God’s glory depart from the temple by the east gate, but later in (**Ezek 43:1-5**), he saw God’s glory return **“from the way of the east.”**

James 2:23, “and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.”

The Gate Miphkad (Muster, Inspection, Master) (v. 31-32) Speaks of God’s judgment.

The Hebrew word **miphkad** – מִפְּקָד (mif-kawd’) means, “appointment, account, census, mustering.” It carries the idea of troops showing up for review. Certainly, God is going to call all souls up for judgment one day.

Rom 14:10; 1 Cor 3:10-20; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15.

Mat 21:42, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes?"

As you review these gates and their order, you can see the suggestion of the full picture of the Christian life, from the sheep gate (salvation) to the final judgment.

Rom 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is recognized as the day that Jesus publicly announced to the Jews that their Savior and King had arrived. It was a day in which He publicly said why He had come, which ultimately was to serve them by going to the Cross. At the same time, this was the day that prophecy foretold to be the day when the Messiah would come and consequently be “**cut off**,” that is, rejected by the people. Compare **Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 62:11; Psalm 118:26-27** with **Daniel 9:24-25**.

Zech 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The prophecy of the rejection of the Messiah is found in **Daniel 9:24-25**.

In **Daniel 9:24-27**, we have a three-fold prophecy telling of;

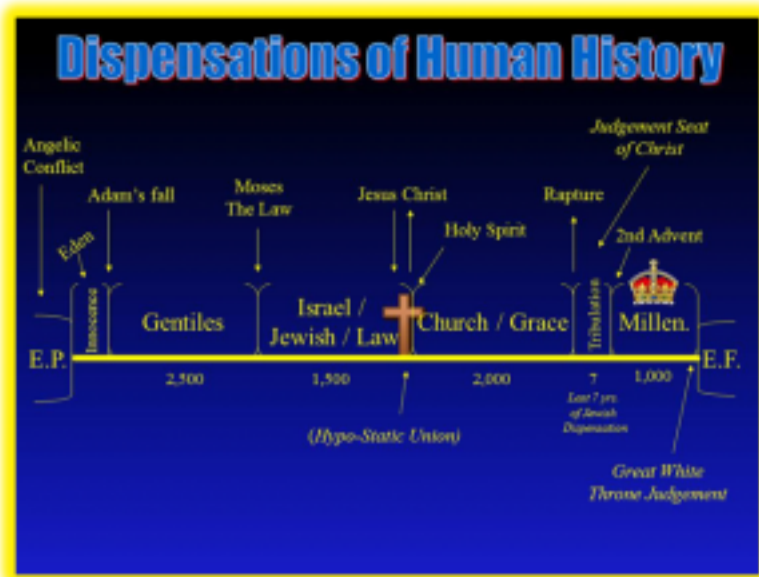
1) the time frame that Israel would be in captivity, 2) the First Advent of our Lord when he would be “cutoff,” and 3) the duration of the Tribulation with the revealing of the Antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation.

Comparing that prophecy with the accounts of **Nehemiah 2:4-8**, we have the beginning of the counting for the time of “**Messiah to be cutoff**,” (rejected), as prophesized by Daniel.

The overall Prophecy in **Dan 9:24-27** includes 70 weeks, **verse 24**. As is common in prophecy, one day is equivalent to one year.

Therefore, when each day in a week equals a year, we have a total of seven prophetic years in one week of this prophecy. Next, we take seven prophetic years and multiply that by seventy weeks to gain a total of four hundred and ninety prophetic years in this prophecy. (7 days in a week = 7 years x 70 weeks = 490 years in total.)

Now this overall prophecy is broken down into 2 parts with three time frames.



1) From the decree to rebuild until Messiah, **verse 25**, there is:

- a) 7 weeks, and
- b) 62 weeks after which Messiah is cut off.

2) The **“prince,”** (i.e., the Antichrist) makes a covenant with Israel for 1 week. (7 years)

So, we have:

- 7 weeks = 49 years
- 62 weeks = 434 years
- 69 weeks = 483 years
- 69 weeks = 483 years
- 1 week = 7 years
- 70 weeks = 490 years

From the time of the prophecy, beginning according to **Neh 2:4-8**, to the time of our Lord’s processional entrance into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) is 483 years.

$490 - 483 = 7$ years left, which is the time frame for the Tribulation, the last week of the Age of Israel.

We have an exact prediction in Scripture of the First Advent of our Lord when He was to be rejected **“cut off”** by His people.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in each of the gospels. They each depict the story of this procession into Jerusalem while riding of the back of a colt. We can read about it in **Mat 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-50.**

Remember that each of the Gospels has a specific emphasis in its message. That is why we have different pieces of the full account recorded in each Gospel. As such:

- The book of **Matthew** emphasizes His Kingship, and was first written for the Jews proclaiming Christ as the King.
- The book of **Mark** emphasizes His Servant hood, and was first written for the Romans or the Gentles proclaiming Christ as the Savior.
- The book of **Luke** emphasizes Jesus as the Son of Man, and was first written for the unbelieving Gentiles proclaiming His substitutionary sacrifice for man.
- The book of **John** emphasizes Christ as the Son of God, and was first written for Christians proclaiming His Hypostatic Union.

Christ's procession was a type of victor's procession. It was a procession indicating the victory to come. Typically, a victor's procession comes after the victory is won. This was the way the Romans hailed their victors in battle. Yet, because God lives in eternity, even though in time the victory had not occurred, in God's eyes, it was completed billions of years ago. So, Christ allowed this procession to occur telling the people that their King and Savior had come.

This message was ultimately a sign for the Jews and the world that their Savior King had come. It was also clearly prophesied in **Zech 9:9**; with **Isaiah 62:11** and **Psa 118:26**. So, this procession was one of over 300 Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah that was fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Zech 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Donkeys have a specific role in the assistance to man. They were not normally used by military personnel, cf. **Num 22:21; 1 Sam 25:20**. Yet, in contrast to earthly kings who used horses, chariots, and other symbols of war to show their might, cf. **Zech 4:6; Ex 15:1; Psa 20:7; Isa 31:1-3**, this King distinguished Himself by riding upon a donkey, a simple beast of the common person, often used for transportation and carrying loads during times of peace. It was known as the "**beast of burden**," **Mat 21:5**. Therefore, Jesus' use of the donkey is consistent with His first coming as the "**Prince of Peace**," **Isa 9:6**.

Isa 9:6, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

The phrase in **Zech 9:9**, "**and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey**" certainly does allude to the royal blessing in **Gen 49:8-12**. **Gen 49:11**, "**He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; he washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes**," and it should be translated "riding on a donkey-a purebred jackass." Cf. **Rev 5:5**.

The phrase, "**a colt, the foal of a donkey**" is also used in the Mari texts, (an ancient civilization North West of Babylon in what is Iraq today), to designate the animal which the Amorites preferred for slaughtering in treaty/covenant ratification ceremonies. Thus, the phrase was used in Covenant contexts to stress the ritual purity of the sacrificial animal.

However, the emphasis, both in **Zech 9** and in the Gospels, is not so much on the covenant terminology as much as it is on the Royal symbolism. That is, Jesus the Lion from the tribe of Judah is Israel's king, He is the Royal Messiah.

Around the Time of the Passover, as Israelites came from all over the world, there was a tradition they had. They would go up the hill opposite to where Jesus would one day enter into Jerusalem and would often sing **Psalms 24** with emphasis on **verses 3-6**. This was followed in **verses 7-10**. On the day of our Lord's entry, the people singing these words could look across the valley and see Jesus coming and make the connection with **Zech 9:9**, **"Behold, your King comes."** Jesus intended for them to make that connection.

The prophecy of **Zech 9:9** is compared with and fulfilled in the gospel accounts found in **Mat 21:5; Mark 11:10; John 12:14**.

Notice that the Old Testament prophecies are not just proclaiming the coming King. They also indicate His saving work! When the Israelites would read **Zech 9:9**, **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey,"** they understood that the coming King is righteous and victorious in the accomplishment of salvation for his people, this is Messiah's glory. Yet, He is also afflicted, and He comes riding on the Covenant donkey; this is Messiah's suffering.

Therefore, when Jesus rode in on a donkey, it signified more than his humility. It tells us that He came to shed His blood of the Covenant to bring peace between God and man.

Zech 9:10-12 then speaks symbolically of Christ's work on the Cross.

Zech 9:10-12, **"I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹²Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; this very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you."**

But just as Satan influenced the woman in the Garden of Eden to confound and confuse God's Word in the mentality of her soul in **Gen 3:1-3**, he did so with the Jews of Jesus' time. Satan had parlayed the Hebrew's lack of concentration and faithfulness towards the Word of God and Occupation with the person of Christ with their negative volition, so that when the Messiah had arrived and publicly displayed Himself in complete fulfillment of prophecy, they were completely confounded as to who He was, and in emotional revolt of the soul, praised Him as the one who would solve their problem of Roman occupation. They only remembered the first part of prophecy regarding Jesus as their King, and in their arrogance, completely forgot about their need for a Savior to free them from the slave market of sin.

Psa 118:22-29, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. ²³This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! ²⁶Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. ²⁷The LORD is God, and He has given us light; bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. ²⁸You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. ²⁹Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

This is compared with Jesus' processional account in **Mat 21:9; Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13.**

We see that they had missed the message completely. Note that John adds to the story what was truly going on in the hearts of the people of Jerusalem.

John 12:16, "These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him."

Notice that the Cross is not in view yet in John's accounts. So, when John says, "**they had done these things to Him,**" which carries a negative connotation to it, he is referring to the false motivations in the hearts of the Jews at this time.

The people were saying all the right things, but what was truly in their heart was all wrong as told in **John 12:9-11, 18, 34, 37, 42-43.**

- They wanted to be freed from the tyranny of Rome. They did not want a martyr.
 - They wanted their kingdom but did not recognize that their sins kept them excluded from the kingdom.
 - They wanted physical salvation and not soul salvation.
- That is why Jesus wept when approaching the city, **Luke 19:41,**

Nevertheless, Jesus publicly presented Himself demonstrating His service to them, even though they would reject it.

Palm Sunday is about a crowd who gathered together for political expediency, not spiritual recognition. They wanted the crown right there and then, just as present-day celebrations of Palm Sunday connote the very same thing. The majority of Christians today do not understand the order of things. They do not understand dispensationalism, and in their blind excitement, they are trying to establish "the earthly worship of the King, Jesus Christ" ... Now!!

Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, and other such Christian religions believe in Amillennialism; (that is, that we are either in the Millennium already or that we are to usher in the Millennium with our good works). They along with other denominations, such as Pentecostals

and some Baptists, do not believe in salvation by faith alone in Christ's work on the Cross alone. They believe that you must be a good person in order to get to heaven. These are the same deceptions that Satan parlayed on the Jews 2,000 year ago, when Christ presented Himself as their Savior/King. And as we have seen, they rejected Him, because they believed in themselves and their good works and their human righteousness for salvation. They did not need a Savior for the forgiveness of their sins. That is the same mentality in most Christian denominations today who are waving palms around worshipping the King. They have taken it upon themselves to try and fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic kingdom on earth as they wave their palms in praise of the King, instead of accepting Him as the only means of their Salvation. They did this in **John 12:13** and continue to do it right up to this very day!

John 12:13, "Took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel.""

They celebrate a Second Advent reality, but we are still in the First Advent age which is to celebrate the Cross of Jesus Christ; as commanded in **1 Cor 11:23-26**.

Understanding the Cross and its accomplishments is POWER to the believer, but foolishness to the unbeliever. The Cross was Christ being obedient, so we could be conformed to the image of God, **Heb 5:8; Rom 8:29; John 3:21**. The cross is The Lord Jesus Christ's triumph over sin and death and the bondage of Satan! The cross must come before the crown. To expect otherwise is blasphemous!

Passover

I want to share with you what the Biblical Passover supper in Jesus' time would entail, and show you the many symbols of Christ's completed work upon the Cross. The records today of the first century Jewish celebration are scarce, but the majority of what I will show you is documented as authentic at that time. The basic source for the ancient Passover ceremony is the tractate PESACHIM in the Mishnah, a document that was written in circa. A. D. 200 by Rabbi Judah ha-Nassi. Judah had received it via oral tradition dating back to the great Rabbi Hillel, who lived in the century before Christ.

PESACHIM is from the Hebrew word **PESACH** that means, "to pass or spring over." From it comes the Greek word **PASCHA** which is translated as "Paschal" in the RSV of **1 Cor 5:7**, and "Passover" in the NASB and most other modern translations.

1 Cor 5:7, "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."

Passover is a one-day feast celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month of the religious new year, Nissan, commemorating the last plague against Egypt and the Jews freedom from slavery. It also signified the Lord passing over their sins, **Lev 23:4 ff, Num 28:16.**

As we have noted before, the feast was fulfilled by Jesus Christ upon His death on the Cross, **1 Cor 5:7.**

There are several aspects of the modern-day celebration that we will omit, because they have been added since the first century. Things like the eating gifilte fish, a boiled egg, or having a bare lamb shank bone on the plate; these do not date back to the time of Jesus.

Overall the meal was a simple one, comprised of various hors d'oeuvres, lamb, unleavened bread, and wine. The symbolic significance of the meal, however, is rich and complex.

Remember that the Passover was a festive occasion; a celebration of the nation's release from Egyptian bondage. Therefore, we too should celebrate it in a joyous way as it represents for us today; the completed work of Jesus Christ on the Cross to free us from the slavery of sin and our sin natures, **Rom 7:1-6, 24-25; 8:1-2.**

Before They Could Sit Down to Eat the Passover Feast, Several Things Needed to Happen First:

- On Abib (Nisan) 10, they were to select the lamb that the family would consume. It was to be a one-year-old unblemished male lamb chosen by a member of the household. In A.D. 33, Nisan 10 fell on "Palm Sunday" as we call it today, the day Jesus made his "untriumphal" or "tearful" entry into Jerusalem on the donkey, which we noted

in our Palm Sunday doctrine. It is evident that He was presenting Himself as the unblemished sacrifice for the nation on that day.

It is noted that the slaughter of the lambs would not take place until Nisan 14, **Ex 12:6**, the day Jesus was crucified. And in fact, Passover lambs were slain between noon and 3 p.m. on Nisan 14, the three hours of darkness, when Jesus was on the Cross paying the penalty for our sins, **Mark 15:33**.

Mark 15:33, "When the sixth hour (12 noon) came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour (3 pm)."

Also note that when Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom, **Mark 15:38**, right when the last of the lambs would be on the altar in front of the sanctuary!

When the lambs were slain, the Levites would chant the Hallel Psalms, **Psa 113-118**, repeatedly, which we will note at the end of the lesson.

- Then on Nisan 13, they would search the house for any leaven, (yeast, as we call it today). Usually on the evening before the Passover meal was eaten, the father (head of the household) led his family through the house by candlelight, looking in nooks and crannies for any leaven in the house. In honor of this celebration and the feast of "Unleavened Bread," no leaven was supposed to be in the home at that time. At the end of the search, the father would say, "All leaven that is in my possession, which I have seen, and that which I have not seen, be it null, be it accounted as the dust of the earth."

This practice apparently stems from a rabbinic interpretation of **Zeph 1:12, "I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent in spirit."**

Since leaven often represents sin, Paul makes the link between the leaven of the Passover and our commitment to Christ in, **1 Cor 5:7, "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."**

Yet, this ritual represented the body of Jesus Christ that had no sin of its own; therefore, qualifying Him to be the spotless lamb sacrifice.

- On Nisan 14, they would slaughter the Lambs as noted above. This was a picture of Christ's sacrifice upon the Cross.

Later they would gather together to celebrate the Passover feast. When they would gather, foot washing was the norm. It was not a part of the Passover as commanded by God, but was the custom in Palestine when one entered a home to eat a meal. As guests and family members entered the home to celebrate Passover, a servant or slave would often be there to wash their feet. This was the task of the lowest class of people. Incredibly Jesus used their current day custom symbolically and took on this role in **John 13**, even though He was the "head of the family."

Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." It embodies His principle that "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all," Mark 9:35; cf. John 13:15.

In addition, as we have studied in previous lessons, washing of the feet is a symbol of the confession of sins, **1 John 1:9**, before partaking of the Passover celebration. Just as we today are to "examine ourselves" and "judge ourselves rightly" before partaking in the Communion celebration, **1 Cor 11:28-31**. Interestingly, there is also hand washing later on in this meal, which also represents confession of sin, if necessary, as the celebration continued.

Therefore, both the slaughter and washing of the feet symbolize what Jesus would later do for the disciples and us. The slaughter was for our salvation positionally, and the washing was for our cleansing experientially. Both are made possible, because of His payment for our sins at the Cross.

Another interesting aspect of the celebration was the "non-ritual wine." Before they partook of the ritual wine, they were permitted to drink wine that had no religious significance. This non-ritual wine is also allowed between the first and second cups of ritual wine, and between the second and third cups. Just as the Lord turned water into wine at the Canaan wedding, here too He allowed the drinking of alcoholic beverages. But as Scripture tells us, we should not get drunk, **Eph 5:18**.

Then there was the first hand-washing. Once all the guests arrived, they would perform the ritual hand-washing that Jews from antiquity have done before every meal. This may have been done before they sat, or while sitting, and after the first wine.

The Table setting. In front of each seat there were four glasses for "ritual" wine, labeled as such, (the non-ritual wine glass would not be on the table, but given to guests after they arrived and after their feet were washed). There was one plate, cutlery, and napkin. Several candles were on the table. They also had seating labels in place. On the table was the CHAROSETH, (a mixture of apples, nuts, honey, and red wine that looks like mud or mortar – to represent the bricks they built in captivity), unleavened bread, vegetables, and vinegar (KARPAS). In addition, representative bottles of wine were there too, all labeled.

The ancient custom of relaxation was not too far from our modern day living rooms, where we socialize and seem to eat most of our meals. They would relax around a low table, about 18" off the ground, sprawled out on pillows, being served by the help.

Seating at Passover was assigned, beginning with the head of the family at one end, and the guests would wrap around the table either from the oldest to youngest, or the most important to the least important.

The Cups:

There were four ritual cups of wine used for the Passover. The Mishnah says that even the poorest man in Israel must drink the four ritual cups, even if it means selling all his possessions! During the meal, a prayer is uttered over each cup, and the four verbs of **Ex 6:6-7** are recited, one over each cup.

After they were seated the first prayer, the KIDDUSH, or prayer of sanctification is uttered by the father, head of the household.

“Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine... And you, O Lord our God, have given us festival days for joy, this feast of the unleavened bread, the time of our deliverance in remembrance of the departure from Egypt. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to enjoy this season.”

The 1st Cup: Next, the first cup of ritual wine is poured and the first verb of **Exodus 6:6-7** is recited by the father:

Ex 6:6a, “I am the LORD, and I will bring (YATSA) you out from under the burdens (yoke) of the Egyptians.”

The first cup represents sanctification, signifying our Positional, Experiential, and Ultimate setting apart based on the work of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The wine was then drunk. After this cup, they could drink non-ritual wine until the second cup was served. The non-ritual wine may be any of the previously mentioned non-ritual wines, or it may be the wine used for the first cup.

Next was the eating of the KARPAS, (bitter herbs), and the first dipping.

The head of the house would dip bitter herbs, traditionally lettuce or celery, into salt water or vinegar. He would dip the bitter herb together with the chief guest of honor, the person on his right, and then the bitter herbs are passed on down the table. This represented the bitterness of being in bondage, and also of our Lord’s sorrow, having to take on the sins of the entire world, as He demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the suffering of the first three hours on the Cross, culminated by the last three hours when He continued to cry out, **“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me.”**

After all partook of the KARPAS, all the food is removed from the table. This heightens the interest of the evening, prompting the questions from the youngest son.

The 2nd Cup: At this time, the Second Cup is poured, but not yet drunk.

This “Cup of Deliverance/Joy/Praise,” represented the 10 Plagues against Egypt, and signified the Lord’s deliverance.

Questions from the youngest son/least significant person:

- Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but this night only unleavened bread.
- On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs, but this night only bitter herbs. Why do we dip the herbs twice?
- On all other nights, we eat meat roasted, stewed, or boiled, but on this night, why only roasted meat?

Answers by the father: The father recounts the history of Israel from Abraham to Moses and the giving of the Law, as commanded to do so in **Ex 10:2; 12:26-27; 13:8.**

Interestingly, Stephen, just prior to being martyred, recited this to the Pharisees, as noted in **Acts 7:2-38** with some parts left out. Then, beginning in **Acts 7:39**, he goes beyond what was to be recited and begins to pronounce his indictment against the religious leaders.

After the Q & A, all food and wine is returned to the table, including the lamb. The Father now explains the significance of the lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, by also singing the first half of the Hallel.

Psalms: **Psa 113-114.** He did this in one of two ways: With the father singing the lines and the family saying "Hallelujah" after each verse, or all singing the psalms together.

Next was a prayer over the Second Cup:

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine."

Ex 6:6b: "I will deliver (NATSAL) you from their bondage."

Then there was a second hand-washing: This hand-washing is done out of respect for the unleavened bread that is about to be eaten. As you know, unleavened bread represents the humanity of our Lord who was the perfect sacrificial lamb.

Then the Paschal Lamb, CHAROSETH, vegetables, and vinegar, and two of the unleavened bread wafers are served.

The father says a prayer over the bread: **"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to eat unleavened bread."

Then they broke the unleavened bread. The host breaks the guest of honor's bread, and they dip it together in the CHAROSETH and bitter herbs. The guest in turn breaks his neighbor's bread, and they dip it together, and so on down the line.

Now the meal can be eaten, and they drink the second cup of wine. After it was drunk, any wine that they already drank may now be drunk non-ritually.

The 3rd Cup: The third cup is the "Redemption cup." It represented redemption of sins through the blood of the Paschal Lamb, signifying the Lord's propitiation of our sins. Today it represents redemption of sins, signifying the Lord's propitiation of our sins; **TETELESTAI, "It is finished"** as we drink this cup during our communion celebrations, representing the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which represents the completion of the payment of the penalty of our sins.

Prayer and consumption:

So, after the meal was eaten, the third cup is poured. The last of the unleavened bread wafers is blessed, broken, and eaten.

They would pray, **"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to eat unleavened bread."**

All the participants recited this post-meal grace together, and then the prayer over the wine.

"The name of the Lord be blessed from now until eternity. Let us bless him of whose gifts we have partaken: Blessed be our God of whose gifts we have partaken, and by whose goodness we exist."

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine..."

Then the father recited the third verb from **Ex 6:6c**, **"I will redeem (GA'AL) you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments."**

Then the wine from the third cup was drunk. Also, no non-ritual wine may be drunk between the third and the fourth cup.

The 4th Cup: The fourth cup was used, and the final Hallel Psalms were sung.

The fourth is the "Cup of Elijah" or "Cup of Completion / Acceptance." (Christ did not drink this cup). This cup is yet to be drunk and is in anticipation of His return. It signifies the preservation and affirmation of hope. The fourth cup of wine was poured and blessed by all:

"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine..."

Then the father recites the fourth verb from **Ex 6:7**: **"Then I will take (LAQACH) you as my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."**

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not drink from this cup, as He stated in **Mat 26:29**, "**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.**" Cf. **Luke 22:18**.

He was signifying His Second Advent, when He would establish His Millennial reign. The kingdom is represented in the 4th Cup, just as God led Israel to the Promised Land, after releasing them from captivity of the Egyptians. So too, will He restore Israel to its promised land upon His 2nd Advent.

Notice what our Lord said next in **vs. 30**, "**After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**"

The hymn was **Psa 115-118** that was now sung as a closing hymn.

The Feast of Pentecost

**One of the Seven Feasts of Israel Fulfilled by our Lord.
The Beginning of the Church and Church Age.**

Its Name:

The name Pentecost is from the Greek word **PENTEKOSTE, πεντηκοστή** (pen-tay-kos-tay') that literally means, "fiftieth." This word used for the feast is only found in the New Testament, **Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8.**

This Festival is:

- First spoken of in **Exo 23:16** as "**The Feast of Harvest, the Firstfruits of your labor,**" because it concluded the harvest of the later grains.
- In **Exo 34:22; Deut 16:10; 16; 2 Chron 8:13**, it is called "**The Feast of Weeks, the Firstfruits of the wheat harvest,**" because it was celebrated seven complete weeks, or fifty days, after the Feast of Firstfruits, **Lev 23:15-16.**
- In **Num 28:26**, it is called "**The Day of the Firstfruits,**" because the first loaves made from the new grain were then offered on the altar, **Lev 23:17.**

The Hebrew name for the feast, **SHAVUOT**, is the masculine plural of the Hebrew noun for "**weeks**"- **SHEBUA** – שָׁבוּעַ (shaw-voo-ah), that means, "a period of seven or week."

Its Origin:

It is the second of the three annual festivals, (Unleavened Bread and Ingatherings / Booths / Tabernacle are the other two), that God gave to Israel when He gave them the Law. At that time, He established seven major Feasts that they were to celebrate throughout their generations. Of the seven, those three, including **SHAVUOT**, were principal feasts in which all able-bodied males were required to attend, **Exo 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut 16:16; 2 Chron 8:13; Psa 42:4; 122:4; Ezek 36:38; Luke 2:44; John 4:45; 7:1-53.**

Its Time of Celebration:

The time fixed for celebrating Pentecost is the fiftieth day from "**the day after the Sabbath**" of the Feast of Firstfruits, **Lev 23:11, 15-16**; or, as given in **Deut 16:9**, "**seven full weeks after the sickle was put to the standing grain.**" It is essentially a harvest celebration, where the term "**weeks**" was used of the period between the grain harvests from the barley harvest (Firstfruits), to the wheat harvest (Pentecost), a period of about seven weeks or fifty days to be exact. The fiftieth day, according to the Jewish Canons, may fall on 5th, 6th, or 7th Sivan. Therefore, from the Feast of Firstfruits there are seven complete weeks, i.e., forty-nine days, were to be counted, and then on the fiftieth day this feast was held which fell on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan, (about the end of May or early

June). It lasted for one day. Calling it "**Firstfruits**" is not to be confused with the Feast of Firstfruits that is celebrated less than 50 days prior, which coincides with our Lord's Resurrection.

Its Purpose:

The purpose of this feast was to commemorate the completion of the wheat, grain harvest. It was celebrated as a Sabbath with rest from ordinary labors and the calling of a holy convocation, **Lev 23:21; Num 28:26**. It was a feast of joy and thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest season. The manner in which it was to be kept is described in **Lev 23:15-19; Num 28:26-31**. Besides the sacrifices prescribed for the occasion, everyone was to bring to the Lord his "**tribute of a free-will offering,**" **Deut 16:9-12, 16**.

The Old Testament does not give it the historical significance which later Jewish writers have ascribed to it. Pentecost is the only one of the three great feasts which is not mentioned as the memorial of events in the history of the Jews. Yet some believe, as has been adopted by later tradition, that the Feast of Weeks is associated with the giving of the Law at Sinai, on the fiftieth day after the deliverance from Egypt, cf. **Exo 12 and 19**. Some also think that **Deut 16:12** may have connected the Sinai event and the festival, but Scripture does not indicate any definite link between Sinai and Pentecost.

The Israelites were admonished to remember their bondage on that day and to re-consecrate themselves to the Lord, **Deut 16:12**, but it does not commemorate the giving of the Law at Sinai or the birth of the national existence, in the Old Testament conception, **Exo 19**.

Philo, Josephus, and the earlier Talmud are all ignorant of this new meaning which was given to the day in later Jewish history. It originated with the great Jewish rabbi Maimonides and has been copied by Christian writers. And thus, a view of the Jewish Pentecost has been originated, which is wholly foreign to the scope of the ancient institution.

Nevertheless, there are several interesting parallels between the giving of the Law to establish the Jewish dispensation and the giving of the Holy Spirit to establish the dispensation of the Church.

Its Offerings:

Its distinguishing feature was the offering of "**two leavened loaves**" made from the new corn of the completed wheat harvest, which with two lambs were waved before the Lord by the Priests as a peace and thank offering. According to the Mishna (Menachoth, xi.4), the length of the loaves was 7 handbreadths, its width 4, its depth 7 fingers.

The other sacrifices were a burnt offering of a young bullock, two rams and seven lambs with a meat and drink offering, and a kid for a sin offering, **Lev 23:1, 15-19**.

In total, the offerings included: the daily offerings; and a kid of the goats for a sin offering; two young bulls, one ram, seven yearling lambs, for a burnt offering; three one-tenth ephahs of flour and oil for each bull, two one-tenth ephahs for the ram, one-tenth an ephah for each lamb, grain offering; one-half hin of wine for the bull, one-third hin of wine for the ram, one-fourth hin of wine for each lamb, drink offering. After the above was presented, the new grain offering of two wave loaves, made of two one-tenth ephahs of wheat flour, baked with leaven, was offered. With these were offered seven yearling lambs, one young bull, and two rams, for a burnt offering, with the prescribed grain and drink offerings; a male goat, for a sin offering; two yearling lambs for a peace offering. These could not be eaten until after this ceremony, **Lev 23:14; Josh 5:10-11**, and none of this bread was placed on the altar because of the leaven content. The feast was concluded by the eating of communal meals to which the poor, widows, orphans, strangers, and the Levites were invited. Until the Pentecostal loaves were offered, the produce of the harvest might not be eaten, nor could any other Firstfruits be offered.

The whole ceremony was the completion of the dedication of the harvest to God as its giver, and to whom both the land and the people were made holy, which was begun by the offering of the wave-sheaf at the Feast of Firstfruits.

Christ's Fulfillment of the Feasts of Israel:

Each of the Feasts of Israel point to an aspect of the coming Messiah and were a picture of God's Plan of Salvation for mankind.

- Christ in His First Advent fulfilled the first four Feasts.
- The last three will be fulfilled at His Second Coming.

Here we note the feasts according to **Lev 23**, and the New Testament reference to Christ's Fulfillment.

Passover, a one-day feast, commemorating the last plague against Egypt and the Jews freedom from slavery. It also signified the Lord passing over their sins until the perfect sacrifice was made, saving everyone from the slave market of sin, **Lev 23:4 ff.**

- Fulfilled by Jesus' Death on the Cross, **1 Cor 5:7.**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, a seven-day feast commemorating the removal of sin. It entailed the removal of sin as depicted by the removal of all leaven (yeast) and the hiding away of the unleavened bread, **Lev 23:6.**

- Fulfilled by Christ's burial and time spent in the grave. **1 Cor 5:7-8**

The Feast of Firstfruits, another seven-day feast commemorating the harvest and logical grace blessings from God, **Lev 23:9.**

- Fulfilled by Christ's resurrection, **1 Cor 15:23.**

The Feast of Pentecost, commemorating the sin of man and the peace made between sinful man and perfect God, **Lev 23:15.**

- Fulfilled by Christ by sending the Holy Spirit to Indwell every Church Age believer, **Acts 2:1-5**.

The Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah / Rosh Hashanah), a one-day feast ushering in the civil New Year, **Lev 23:23**.

- Yet to be fulfilled at the Exit Resurrection or Rapture of the Church, **1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 1:10; 4:13-18**.

The Day of Atonement, (Yom Kippur), a one-day feast where atonement for sins were made for the family, **Lev. 23:26**.

- Yet to be fulfilled at Christ's Second Advent, **1 John 2:2; Zech 12:7-14; 14:4, Mat 24:29-31; Rev 1:7, 19**.

Feast of Tabernacles, a seven-day feast, commemorating Israel's release from Egypt, where they wandered in the wilderness and the Lord dwelt among them in the tabernacle, **Lev 23:33**.

- Yet to be fulfilled when Christ sets up His Millennial reign on earth and tabernacles / dwells among us once again, **Zech 14:16; John 7:8**.

Current Day Jewish Celebration:

The wheat harvest has to do with modern time's rituals within the Jewish Church. They celebrate **SHEVUOT / Pentecost** today as the **Firstfruits of the Wheat harvest** speaking of God's Divine provision.

In that celebration, it is customary to read the Ten Commandments in the synagogue in keeping with the tradition of linking Shavuot (Pentecost) to the Giving of the Law, which we noted above as a later addition. Yet, since the Word (Jesus Christ) is the bread of life this may not be farfetched, but is not documented in the Bible or by early historians.

Also on this day they read the book of Ruth for three reasons.

- The setting of Ruth is the harvest.
- She became a follower of the God of Israel, just as Israel became a follower of the Almighty at Mount Sinai.
- The Book of Ruth announces the ancestry of King David, Ruth's great-grandson who, according to Jewish tradition, was born and died on Shavuot.

In Ashkenazic synagogues, (Eastern European descent – mainly the name for Germany, **Gen 10:3**), they recite a twelfth-century poem called Akdamut in the Aramaic language. This poem extols God and heralds the Messianic future.

In Sephardic congregations, (Iberian and N. African descent), a poetic ketubah, marriage contract, between God and Israel is offered.

So even in the modern celebration of Pentecost, we see the signs of Messiah harvesting His bride.

Shavuot (Pentecost) Customs: *From Jews for Jesus web site.*

- It is customary to read the Ten Commandments in the synagogue, in keeping with the tradition of linking Shavuot to the Giving of the Law.
- We read the book of Ruth at Shavuot for three reasons. The setting of Ruth is the harvest. She became a follower of the God of Israel, just as Israel became a follower of the Almighty at Mount Sinai. And the Book of Ruth announces the ancestry of King David, Ruth's great-grandson who, according to Jewish tradition, was born and died on Shavuot.
- In Ashkenazic synagogues, our people recite a twelfth-century poem called Akdamut in the Aramaic language. This poem extols God and heralds the messianic future. In Sephardic congregations, a poetic ketubah (marriage contract) between God and Israel is offered.
- It is customary to decorate homes and synagogues with green plants and flowers. According to tradition, we do so because Shavuot is the day of judgment for trees and because grass grew on Mount Sinai, the place of the Giving of the Law. Also, green plants remind us of the trimming used to adorn the people's baskets of Firstfruits.
- There is a custom of staying awake all night on the eve of Shavuot to read the Torah, the Psalms, and the Talmud. One Midrash tells us that God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai at noontime, but the Israelites were still asleep and Moses had to rouse them. Some say the present custom of staying awake all night is a way of atoning for our failure to be awake and alert when God appeared to us.
- One tradition states that when Israel received the dietary laws (kashrut) and realized that the pots being used were not kosher, the only solution was to eat dairy products which didn't need to be cooked! For that reason, dairy foods are eaten during Shavuot. Another tradition states that after receiving the Torah, the Israelites were too hungry to wait for meat to be cooked, so they simply made a dairy meal instead.
- Since the nineteenth century, Reform Jews have used the occasion of Shavuot to hold confirmation ceremonies, just as our people were "confirmed" in our faith at Mount Sinai, when we entered into the Covenant and Ruth was "confirmed" into the fold of Israel. The Christian holiday of Pentecost or Whitsunday is a confirmation time for Christians to receive first Communion. Some Shavuot customs beautifully express how our spiritual needs relate to our physical needs:
- According to one rabbinic interpretation, dairy foods are eaten at this time, because the Bible compares the Torah to milk in the **Song of Songs 4:11: "Honey and milk are under your tongue."** Another reason is that the law of Firstfruits is right next to the law that prohibits boiling a kid in its mother's milk, possibly to avoid imitating pagan rites. As we consider how God's word "feeds" us, physical requirements become images of our spiritual necessities.
- We array our homes and synagogues with flowers and plants to symbolize that the Torah is a tree of life. As a tree provides fruit and nourishment, so does the word of God.
- A Jewish child would learn the alef-bet on the Shavuot of his or her fifth year. A special treat followed—a taste of honey to help the child associate God's word with sweetness, as it says in **Psalm 119:103, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"**

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary Notes:

"Present-Day Observance". This festival is annually and sacredly kept by Jews on the 6th and 7th Sivan—i.e., between the second half of May and the first half of June, thus prolonging it to two days. In accordance with the injunction in **Leviticus 23:15-16**. The three days preceding the festival, on which the Jews commemorate the giving of the law, are called "the three days of separation and sanctification," because the Lord commanded Moses to set

bounds about the mount and that the people should sanctify themselves three days prior to the giving of the law (**Exodus 19:12, 14, 23**).

On the preparation day, the synagogues and private houses are adorned with flowers and fragrant herbs; the males purify themselves by immersion and confession of sins, put on festive garments, and go to the synagogue, where, after evening prayer, the hallowed nature of the festival is proclaimed by the Cantor in the blessing pronounced over a cup of wine. The same is also done by every head of a family before the evening meal. After supper, either in the synagogue or in private houses, the reading of Scripture continues all night, the reason given being that, when God was about to reveal His law to Israel, He had to awaken them from sleep; to remove that sin they now keep awake during the night.

In the general festival service of the morning special prayers are inserted for the day, which set forth the glory of the Lawgiver and of Israel; the Great Hallel is recited; the lesson from the law (**Exodus 19:1, 20, 25**), the Maphtir (**Numbers 18:26-31**), and the lesson from the prophets (**Ezekiel 1:1-28; Ezekiel 3:12**) are read, the evening prayer (Musaph) is offered, and the benediction is received by the congregation, their heads covered by the fringed wrapper.

On the second evening, they again go to the synagogue, using there the ritual for the festivals, in which are again inserted special prayers for the occasion, chiefly those on the greatness of God and on the giving of the law and the Ten Commandments. The sanctification of the festival is again pronounced, both by the Prelector in the synagogue and by the heads of the families at home. Prayers different from those of the first day, also celebrating the giving of the law, are mingled with the ordinary prayers; the Hallel is recited, as well as the book of Ruth; the lesson read from the law is **Deut. 15:19-16:17**, and the lesson from the prophets is **Habakkuk 2:20-3:19**, or **Habakkuk 3:1-19**; prayer is offered for departed relatives; the Musaph Ritual is recited; the priests pronounce the benediction; and the festival concludes after the afternoon service, as soon as the stars appear or darkness sets in."

The Beginning of the Church and Church Age:

During His Upper Room Discourse, Jesus prophesized regarding the sending of the Holy Spirit in **John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:5, 8**.

In **John 16:7-15**; we see three purposes for sending the Holy Spirit.

John 16:8, "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples 50 days after his Resurrection and 10 days after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the festive time when Jews from different countries were in Jerusalem to celebrate this annual Feast of Shavuot, **Acts 2:1-4**. The day of Pentecost is noted in Scripture as the day on which the Spirit descended upon the

apostles, signifying the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit for the Church Age believer to uniquely empower and enable them to fulfill God's Plan for their lives. This was demonstrated to the apostles and people when the apostles began to speak in foreign languages they had never spoken before, languages that were understood by the Jews visiting Jerusalem whose native tongues were of various foreign languages, **Acts 2:1-13**. In addition, under Peter's preaching, many thousands were converted to Christ in Jerusalem, **Acts 2:14-47**.

Notice that in Peter's address he touches upon the three purposes Jesus prophesied about, as for the reason for sending the Holy Spirit.

1) **John 16:9, "Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me."** Cf. **Acts 2:14-24**.

2) **John 16:10, "And concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me."**

3) **John 16:11, "And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."** Cf. **Acts 2:33-36**

We see that Pentecost was an important festival for Paul too in **Acts 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8**.

Firstfruits:

As we have noted there are actually two "Firstfruits" Feasts. The first to celebrate the barely harvest which represents the Jewish believers, and the second to celebrate the wheat harvest that represents the Church Age believers. This has to do with the promise of resurrection as Paul noted in **1 Cor 15:20-23, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the Firstfruits of those who are asleep. ²¹For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the Firstfruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,"**

Each in its own order: Church Age believers will be raised first at the end of the Church Age and just prior to the beginning of the Tribulation, (the dead first and then those who are alive at that time, **1 Thes 4:15-18**); this is called the Bravo company. Then the Jewish Dispensation believers and Tribulational Martyrs at the end of the Tribulation, which concludes the Age of Israel; this is Charlie company. And then millennial saints at the End of the Millennium will be raised; this is Delta company, **"each in its own order."**