

# The Plan of God – Revealed by His Holy Days

Long before the 10 commandments were given at Mount Sinai, while the children of Israel were still in Egypt, we see the annual Holy Days being observed, in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Exodus.

All of God's Holy Days are listed in one chapter of the Bible – Leviticus 23. Notice the first one mentioned is the seventh day Sabbath, verse 3. It tells us in Exodus 31:13-17 that this special day would always remain a sign between God and His people. By keeping it we recognise Him as the God of Creation for afterwards He rested on the seventh day. The Sabbath is a weekly memorial to God's Creation, and it also points forward to the seventh one thousand year period – the Millennium, when God will establish His Kingdom here on the earth (2 Peter 3:8, Hebrews 4:9-11). So, we too refrain from work on this day and use it for holy purposes.

All of these days mentioned in Leviticus 23 as “holy convocations”, are “commanded assemblies” when God's people come together in worship to honour Him often celebrating the day with a festival meal. Verse four also shows that we cannot know years in advance when the special “high Sabbaths” listed here will occur. They will only be able to be proclaimed “in their seasons” because they are determined by observation of the month of the “aviv” or Abib, the barley harvest in Israel, and observation of the new moon, just as they were at the time of Christ, not by calculation as the Hebrew calendar determines, hundreds of years in advance !

The seven annual Sabbath days picture God's great plan of redemption for mankind. Only by observing and keeping these days, year after year, can you come to understand the rich symbolism of the Plan of God, for God gives deeper spiritual understanding only to the obedient.

## Passover

Interestingly, this first feast day is not like the others for work **can** be done on it. Leviticus 23:5. The full instructions for ancient Israel were given in Exodus 12:1-14. The Passover lamb was killed at dusk (Hebrew ben ha arbayim) which occurs after sunset (ba ereb) that ends the 13<sup>th</sup> day and begins the 14<sup>th</sup> day. This was the very evening Christ kept the Passover with His disciples the night before His crucifixion. (read Luke 22)

This lamb, without blemish, represented Jesus Christ. Just as the children of Israel were protected by the blood of their lamb, we are covered by Christ's blood, shed for our salvation. John 1:29, 1Peter 1:18-19.

Christ made changes to the keeping of the Passover ceremony in Luke 22:19, 20 and John 13:4,5,13,14. That is why we no longer need to kill a lamb, but rather take bread and wine to picture our acceptance of Christ's death for us.

The Passover pictures the death of Christ for the remission of sins that are past. We need to repent day by day for any future sins.

The Passover ceremony is only for baptised Christians. Children should stay at home if possible. If not they must sit quietly and watch.

Unbaptised adults may take part in the footwashing but not take the bread and wine.

## How to keep the Passover Ceremony

So, though we can work on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, we gather together for the Passover service after the sunset which starts the 14<sup>th</sup> day. We sit silently before the start of the service because it is such a serious memorial, and we read the accounts of His death.

Opening Prayer – ( in summary) Thanks for our Lord and Saviour who became the Lamb of God, our Passover who died in our place. We meet in fulfilment of the instructions He gave us and as we eat the bread and drink the wine, we do so in memory of His death. As we wash each other's feet we remember Christ's example of Love, Humility and Service, the pattern we must follow.

Read -

Luke 22: 7-20

PAUSE

John 13: 1-17

FOOTWASHING

PAUSE men wash another's feet, women wash another woman's feet

Then read

John 6: 47-58

1 Peter 2: 19-25

Isaiah 53: 1-9

1 Corinthians 11:23-24, 27-32

Then uncover the unleavened bread and pray , in your own words asking God to 'Bless the bread as a symbol of the body of Christ, broken for our sins.'

Thank God for His power to heal us pictured by Christ's special sacrifice of His beating with stripes (Isaiah 53:5, 1Peter 2:24) and for the forgiveness of sins which we have through Jesus' death.

Break and distribute bread.

PAUSE

Then cover it with a clean cloth

Then read

1 Peter 1:18-21

1 Corinthians 11:25

Then uncover the wine and ask God to bless it as a symbol of the shed blood of our Saviour.

Thank God for His love which allowed His son, who was prepared to sacrifice His life, to die for us, so that our sins can be forgiven.

Distribute the wine (only a very small amount)

PAUSE

Replace glasses and cover with a clean cloth

**Message** (Give a brief message on any aspect of salvation, preparing ourselves by repentance, fruits of the spirit etc).

Read

John 14: 1-4, 19-21

Matthew 26: 30

Then sing a hymn as did the disciples on that last night, and depart.

This is a solemn assembly – not an evening for casual talk or fellowship.

## Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23: 6-14, Exodus 12: 15,16, Exodus 13: 6, 8-10.

We are to remove all leaven from our homes before the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

The Passover covers our past sins. **This** feast, in which all leaven or any food with leaven in it, is removed from our homes, pictures the way that “the Lord’s law may be in our mouths.”

Leaven pictures sin, and so we are to strive equally to remove sin from our lives. We eat only unleavened bread this week to show that we are putting on the pure character of Jesus Christ, - righteousness.

There are two High Sabbaths, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month. No work is to be done on those days, though work can be done on the other days, but we meet together to worship God on the two High Sabbaths and enjoy a meal together. Each can bring some food - - one may bring bread, another milk, another meat, another fruit etc, then we all share to make a balanced meal.

The message given on those days may be about any aspect of the Passover Season, its history and events, for example the way that the Israelites were held in slavery in Egypt but then left Egypt behind, just as we have been held in bondage to sin but now determine afresh during this week to leave sin behind. Repentance, baptism, the Holy Spirit and its fruits ( Galatians 5 ) which should be visible in our lives can also be the subject of messages.

In Acts 20:6, and Acts 12: 3-4, we can see that this Feast was still being kept by the early New Testament Church, long after the death of Christ.

## Recipe for Unleavened Bread

4 cups flour  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
3 tablespoons butter  
2 tablespoons olive oil , (or vegetable oil), mixed into 1 cup of water

Cut butter into small pieces and rub into the flour with your fingers

Add the oil and water and mix together to form a ball of dough – use more water if required

Roll out or press into **thin** large rounds

Bake in a hot oven or on a flat hot surface for about 10 minutes

These can be broken into little pieces for the Passover service and can also be eaten as bread all week.

## Feast of Firstfruits

Also known as the Feast of Weeks, and Pentecost, this Feast or Holy Day reveals the very next part of God’s Plan for Mankind ! If Passover is about Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, and Unleavened

Bread about our departure from sin to seek after righteousness, the Feast of Weeks is about the resulting Firstfruit Harvest !

Pentecost means “Fiftieth”, the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Sabbath that occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

In Leviticus 23:9-11 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.”

This harvest continued for 7 weeks – verse 15 “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete.”

In verse 21, we arrive at Pentecost, “And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” Even the gentile Christians observed Pentecost : 1 Corinthians 16:8 “ But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.”

In Acts 2:1 we find the disciples of Christ gathered together to observe this very day. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” It was on this day that Christ founded the New Testament Church, by granting His Holy Spirit to those who had gathered to worship.

All of God’s Holy Days are commanded assemblies (“holy convocations”) on which we are not to work. If they had not gathered that day, they would not have received the Holy Spirit !

Like all the days listed in Leviticus 23, the Feast of Firstfruits has special meaning and also pictures part of God’s Plan.

First, it’s meaning. In the land of Israel in the Middle East there are two harvests each year. The first is produced by the winter snow and rain and is the Spring grain harvest. Later comes the main harvest at the end of Summer, produced by the latter rain. This is a much bigger harvest.

The Spring harvest starts with the wave sheaf of Leviticus 23:10 “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest.”

This is the Abib or Aviv barley harvest. It represents the harvest of the spiritual firstfruits who have been called, chosen, and faithful to God down the ages. We read of them in Revelation 14:14, where they are pictured before God’s throne in Heaven, after the resurrection.

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

They are considered virgins because they followed God’s word, rather than the teachings of false churches.

James 1:18 “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

Always their pattern and example is Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps”

The wavesheaf itself represents Jesus Christ, the very first of the Firstfruits to be resurrected – the “firstborn of many brethren.” Significantly, on that same day was offered a lamb without blemish with its attendant meat offering of two tenth deals of fine barley flour mingled with oil.

Leviticus 23:13 “And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin.”

This barley flour may well have been ground from that wavesheaf. This abib barley offering was quite free from leaven, for this was during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and represents the firstfruit barley harvest which started that day and continued for 7 weeks through to Pentecost, and in turn the spiritual harvest of God’s saints.

We read of this in the book of Revelation. There is coming a time when Satan will be full of wrath because he realizes his rule here on the earth is nearing its end. He will bring about the persecution of God’s faithful servants at the 5<sup>th</sup> seal.

Revelation 6:9-11 “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

Some of the Faithful, who will continue to witness, will lose their lives, Revelation 12: 10-11.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Very soon afterwards, at the 6<sup>th</sup> seal of Revelation 6, Christ returns for his saints, both dead, and alive – Matthew 24:29-31: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

And Thessalonians 4:15-17.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

It is most likely that this harvest of the firstfruit saints is pictured by the offering of the unblemished lamb and its abib meat offering on the day of the Wavesheaf, in Leviticus 23, because this harvest will take place 3 ½ years before Christ establishes His Kingdom here on the earth at the Feast of Tabernacles. That would place the resurrection of the saints on or about wave sheaf day in the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Revelation 12:14 “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

The actual day of Pentecost is not ½ a year before the Feast of Tabernacles, so that pictures something quite different !

The use of the word “wilderness” in verse 14 can be compared to that in Revelation 17:3.

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

This “wilderness” was that place to which the Apostle John was carried in the future to view his vision.

Isaiah had a similar experience in Isaiah 21: 1 “The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.”

This was a vision or “burden” of Babylon’s fall in the future. Both these men had a confusing experience similar to the vortex swirls we have seen time travellers venture into in films. Both prophets viewed future events after travelling through what Isaiah describes as “desert whirlwinds” and John describes as a wilderness.

So, in Revelation 12:14 John saw the church carried “into her place, where she is nourished for 3 ½ years. Where is this place ? Revelation 14:1 “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

Revelation 15:2 “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

It is on the sea of glass, before God’s throne in heaven ! Immortal spirit beings do not need physical food. What John is describing here is the final preparation of God’s saints to rule with Christ on earth, and their “nourishment” with all the gifts and knowledge they will need as kings and priests.

Revelation 20:4 “ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Now, lets progress to the Feast of Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. During those seven weeks the barley harvest is completed. Then comes the firstfruits of the **wheat** harvest.

Exodus 34:22 “And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of **wheat** harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end.”

This time, in addition to the seven lambs normally sacrificed in the Feast days, two more lambs are to be offered. – Leviticus 23 verse 19 “ Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings” These are a special, out of the ordinary offering and also represent spiritual firstfruits, but with their meat offering of two wave loaves made out of **wheat containing leaven**. These are not likely to represent the Bride of Christ. The two lambs picture a larger harvest and the loaves containing leaven show that this part of the spiritual harvest was not fully prepared when Christ returned for His Bride.

Matthew 25:8 “And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”

As a result they were left behind by Christ and had to wash their robes clean in “great tribulation”. Revelation 7: 9, 14. “ After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands”

14 “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Not for them the clean white bridal linen of Revelation 19:7-8 !

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

Sadly, some of these Christians had the attitude described in Revelation 3 : 14-19

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

They had lost their spiritual zeal and become more concerned with their physical lives than the spiritual work to which God had called them. Their diligence had waned along with their contact with God through prayer and Bible study, even though they still kept God’s commandments. God’s Holy Spirit was almost quenched.

Revelation 12: 17 “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

There have been other Christians down the ages like these, who, while not fully qualified have nevertheless made a stand for their beliefs in the face of severe persecution. These too now fully repent and many will give their lives for Christ in the final 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation.

Daniel 7:25 “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

Having missed out on the first resurrection, their change to immortality will be later, as denoted by the future tense in the promises described to them in Revelation 7: 15-17

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne *shall* dwell among them. They *shall* hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither *shall* the sun light on them, nor any heat.”

Compare that with the past tense for the 144,000 in the earlier verses.

So there are two groups of Firstfruits. One, the Bride of Christ, the other the “great multitude” of Revelation 7 who will arise in the second resurrection, at the end of the 1000 years.

So, what does happen in the future on the actual day of Pentecost ? Long ago Ancient Israel participated in a marriage ceremony and covenant with God at Mount Sinai, on the day of Pentecost, where they agreed to the law of God, as a part of that Covenant. Exodus 24:7 “And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.”

In the future, Spiritual Israel (that is also converted gentiles), true Christians, stand before God the Father on the sea of glass some seven weeks after their change or resurrection. They are to take part in their eternal marriage to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, on the same day of Pentecost.

Revelation 19: 7-9 “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

This is the climax of the seven weeks of the abib barley harvest, the spiritual harvest of God’s Saints, down the ages. The Lamb is at last to claim His Bride who has long waited for her bridegroom, through storm and calm, through sorrow and joy, through darkness and light, often praying for Him to come quickly.

At last He has brought her to the marriage and the celebration begins. Pentecost, the Feast of Firstfruits, is complete !

## Feast of Trumpets

“And the Lord spake.....saying, in the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial (not a shadow) of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein.” (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Here is pictured to us that next event in God’s redemptive Plan, when Christ shall finally return in clouds, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). It will be at the seventh trumpet – (Revelation 11:15-17).

Christ directly intervenes in world affairs at the seventh of the last trump (Revelation 11:15-19). A trumpet is a symbol of war. He comes in a time of worldwide war – when the nations are angry! Christ will begin to set up again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16) – to set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people (Isaiah 11:11) – to search out and find His lost sheep that the ministers of the churches have failed to search out and save during this period (Ezekiel 34:1-14).

Note exactly when this takes place “And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they [Israel] shall come which were ready to perish ...and shall worship the Eternal in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 27:13).

When will Israel be re-gathered? At the sound of the trump – at the final return of Christ. Because the churches have forgotten the Festival of Trumpets, many think that the return of the Jews to Palestine now is the fulfilment of this prophecy!

Christ’s direct intervention in world affairs at the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet will be the next great event in the Plan of Redemption.

And perhaps the glorious final return shall occur, in whatever year it may be, on this very day of the Feast of Trumpets! – who knows? While we cannot say for certain, this is possible. The crucifixion was upon the Passover Day – the very day! The Holy Spirit came, beginning the selection of the firstfruits of salvation, on the very day of Pentecost. Had not those 120 disciples been observing this annual Sabbath – had they not been assembled there in holy convocation – could they have received the blessing of the in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?

The Feast of Trumpets is a day of rejoicing and as the weekly Sabbath, holy unto the Lord (Nehemiah 8:2,9-12). The Levites were to blow the trumpet (Numbers 10:8), but we do not do so today as this was only a temporary duty of the Levitical priesthood.

This means that we must study God's word and be aware of prophecy concerning the end time events. If we are not diligent to do this we will not know what to expect, and will probably not be prepared for His arrival to gather His saints, so that we will not be with Him at his return, probably on the Feast of trumpets.

## Day of Atonement, or the Fast

Next, let us read Leviticus 23:26-32 – “And the Lord spake ...saying...also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; an ye shall afflict your souls [fast]... It shall be a Sabbath of rest and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, **from even to even**, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.” At-one-ment with God! Man at last made ONE with his maker! (this of course means that we are neither to eat or drink from sunset to sunset).

Again, in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Leviticus, verses 29 and 31, where the symbolism of the Day of Atonement is explained we find it instituted a holy Sabbath to be kept forever! “And this shall be a statute **forever** unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country or a stranger that sojourneth among you ...It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever.”

Notice too, in Leviticus 23:32, the expression “from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” Every Sabbath keeper quotes this passage to show that the Sabbath begins at sunset. If we believe that, then why not keep the Sabbath that this very text is speaking of – the annual high Sabbath of the Day of Atonement, instituted forever? Is it consistent, to continually quote this text to show when to begin the Sabbath, and then refuse to keep the very Sabbath referred to?

## Meaning pictured by Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event, to take place after the final return of Christ, which the world has entirely lost sight of because it has failed to see the true significance of these annual Sabbaths, holy unto the Lord. It has failed to keep them as a constant reminder of God's plan of redemption!

The symbolism of the events of the Day of Atonement, as carried out before the crucifixion, in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Leviticus, is worth examination.

Verse 5 – “And he [Aaron, or the High Priest] shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering.”

Verse 6 – The High Priest offered a sin offering for himself and his house.

Verses 7 and 8 – “And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, the one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat [margin, Hebrew, Azazel].

Now because this has not been understood, there are many different views and opinions and ideas and explanations and, we here pause sufficiently to go into this in some detail. Let us, regardless of our own former convictions, study with open minds, without prejudice, proving all things, as the Bible requires. The key to the whole explanation lies in a correct understanding of the meaning of Azazel. This word does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament. The Comprehensive commentary has “Spencer, after the oldest opinions of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks Azazel is the name of the devil, and so Rosen - The word scapegoat signifies the goat which went away.”

The One Volume Commentary says: “The word ‘scapegoat’ in the A.V. is not a translation. It is merely an interpretation of the supposed meaning by the translators.”

True, the English word ‘scapegoat’ signifies “one who bears blame or guilt for others. But ‘scapegoat’ is an English word and is not a translation of the Hebrew word Azazel. The word ‘scapegoat’ and the meaning attached to this English word, is not a translation of the Hebrew word Azazel, and therefore it is not the word inspired originally. Continues the One Volume Commentary: “Azazel is understood to be the name of one of those malignant demons.”

## Types Of Christ and Satan

These two goats were of course, **types**. Notice it was necessary to be decided by lot, which one was qualified to represent Christ, and which Azazel. Some say both were qualified. The scripture does not say this. Let us not assume it. Now a lot is a solemn appeal to God to decide a doubtful matter. It is a sacred religious ceremony. It includes a supernatural act of God.

Notice, men were unable to decide which goat was qualified to represent Christ. This involved an appeal to God to decide! “one lot for the Eternal, and the other lot for Azazel.” Now one lot was for the Lord – this goat typified Christ – but the other lot was not for the Lord, did not typify Christ, but Azazel, Satan! These words most naturally suggest that Azazel is the name of a person, here contrasted to the Eternal, notice the contrast – one for the lord, the other for Azazel.

Now the goat which God selected through lot, to represent Christ, was slain – as Christ, it’s anti-type was slain. But the other goat selected by God to represent Azazel was not slain, but was driven, alive, into an uninhabited wilderness. It was not a resurrected goat, symbolising the resurrected Christ, for it never died.

The uninhabited wilderness, to which this goat was driven, cannot, as we shall show, represent heaven, where Christ went. Heaven is not uninhabited.

After God designated which goat represented Christ, and which Azazel, the High Priest (verse 11) killed the bullock for a sin offering for himself, then took the burning coals of fire and the sweet incense into the Holy of Holies, also sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy seat, typical of the throne of God, covering the tables of testimony (the 10 commandments written on tablets of stone). This the High Priest was required to do in order to purify himself to officiate, and to represent Christ’s High Priest. In the anti-type, this was not done, for Christ our High Priest, had no need of this purification as the priests did.

Now the Levitical high priest is ready to go out and officiate.

Next the goat which God selected by lot to represent Christ, as the sin offering of the people was killed.

So the sins of the people were borne by this goat, even as Christ, finally, once for all bore our sins on the cross. But Christ rose again from the dead, and ascended to the throne of God in heaven.

Now, who, or what, from this point on in the Levitical ceremony, typified the resurrected Christ, who went to heaven ? Some say the goat representing Azazel. Let us see.

The risen Christ, now at the right hand of the throne of God in Heaven (1Peter 3:22), is called what ? Our high priest ! What was the earthly type of God's throne ? The uninhabited wilderness ? That is where the live goat went!

The earthly type of God's throne was the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. After Christ died He went to the heavenly mercy seat interceding for us, as our high priest. "...entering into whatever is within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:19-20).

Now, again, who, or what, in the Levitical ceremony of the Day of Atonement typified the risen Christ, our high priest, who went within the veil to God's throne in heaven ? The one goat had been slain. It represented the slain Christ. It can no longer represent the risen Christ. The slain Christ was not our High Priest as the Levitical priesthood, with it's high priest, did not end until Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven as a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The risen Christ was High Priest.

Now who took this part in the Levitical ceremonies, temporarily re-enacted year by year, on this eternal Holy Day ? It was the Levitical high priest, not the goat representing Azazel !

## The High Priest – Type of Christ

As soon as the slain goat was dead, who went within the veil, presenting the blood of this goat before the typical throne of God?

Leviticus 16:15 "Then shall he [the high priest] kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and [NOW the high priest himself typifying the work of the RISEN Christ] bring his blood within the veil... and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and (verse 16) he shall make an atonement for the holy place."

And so it was the high priest taking the blood within the veil, to the mercy seat, that typified the risen Christ figuratively taking HIS blood, once for all, within the veil to the very throne of God in heaven, there to intercede for us as High Priest.

The slain goat represented the crucified Jesus. The High Priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat into the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of holies, a type of God's throne, represented and did the work of the RISEN CHRIST, who ascended to the right hand of the majesty of the majesty on High, there interceding as our High Priest.

The high priest going within the veil, into the Holy of Holies, symbolised Christ's return to heaven. The work he did while in the Holy of Holies symbolised Christ's work these 2000 years interceding for us, presenting His shed blood before the mercy seat in heaven.

Now, returning, symbolising Christ's return to earth, what did he do?

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him [Fenton: shall carry upon itself] all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

And Aaron shall ...wash his flesh with water ...and he that let go the goat for the scapegoat [Azazel] shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward shall come into the camp” (Leviticus 16:20-26).

## The Azazel Goat Not Our Sin-Bearer

Let us get this straight!

Is there justice with God? Isn't God a God of justice, as well as of compassion and mercy? Who is the real author of our sins? The Devil is the author of them, even as Christ is the author of our salvation. Jesus took our guilt- our blame, our sins, upon Himself as an innocent substitutionary sacrifice. He was an innocent victim. He loved us, and was willing to die for us. Our guilt – our sins, were carried by Him, and Him alone – and God forgives them when we repent and accept His sacrifice. And yet – is this, if we stop there, full justice?

The real cause – the actual author of those sins was Satan the Devil. Is it justice for Christ to bear guilt that is not His, while the Devil goes off scot-free? Do you not suppose God's great plan will finally work full Justice by placing the original blame and guilt right where it belongs?

Now note carefully this distinction. Christ bore our guilt. For we have been guilty, even though the Devil was the original cause of it all. But justice certainly demands that God place right back on the head of the Devil his guilt – not our guilt – for leading us into sin. We were guilty too, and our guilt Christ bore – yet all our sins belong right back on the Devil as his own guilt!

Now notice another point. The Azazel goat carries away the sins of all the people already forgiven. These sins were already fully paid for by Christ's substitute sacrifice, symbolised by the killing of the innocent goat, before those same sins were finally laid on the live goat.

The Devil is the real author of all sin. Can we, then, be finally made **at one** with God, as long as this instigator of sin is with us? Can we not see he must first be driven away? And there would not be justice with God unless his own guilt in our sins were placed right back on his head? Is it justice for Christ to bear the devil's guilt, as well as our own guilt, for our sins? Christ has carried our sins, but must He continue to carry them? Should they not be removed entirely from us, and from the presence even of God?

So the killing and sprinkling of the blood of the first goat visibly pictures the means of reconciliation with God, through the substituted sacrifice of an innocent victim. And the final sending away of the second goat, laden with those sins, no less vividly pictures the effect of that event, the complete removal of those paid for sins.

Webster says “to atone means to set at one, to join in one – to form by uniting.” We shall not be completely joined in one, and united with God until this is done.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation, we have the prophecy of the second coming of Christ. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter, what is to happen?

Exactly what this 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Leviticus shows. The Devil is sent away – the symbol here used is the “bottomless pit” symbol of an uninhabited desolate wilderness, and he is sent there by a fit man – this time an angel from heaven. Now the devil is not killed. He does not die. He is still alive a thousand years later – after the millennium (Revelation 20:7).

A few points that will come to mind. Both goats were “presented before the Lord” Can Satan be presented before the Lord? Job 1:6 and 2:1 says he has presented himself before the Lord. Note too, Azazel was driven away from the Holy of Holies, a symbol of God's presence.

And so the annual Day of Atonement was instituted forever to keep continually before God's children and His church the plan of redemption, to occur after the final coming of Christ.

## Feast Of Tabernacles

Now we come to the Festival of Tabernacles – or Feast of Booths – the sixth festival. Let us notice the instruction, concerning this occasion;

“Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing and from thy winepress. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter ...seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto the Eternal thy God in the place which the Eternal shall choose; because the Eternal thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful ...and they shall not appear before the eternal empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Eternal thy God which He hath given thee.” Deuteronomy 16:13-17.

Here is the festival of Tabernacles, to be kept for seven days, beginning the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month of God’s Sacred Calendar. (note: this is not the Hebrew calendar kept by the Jews today. That has been changed by the Jews over some 900 years after the death of Christ. He kept the correct calendar with the Jews of his day.)

Leviticus 23:33-35: “And the Eternal spoke to Moses saying : Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Eternal. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.”

On the first of these days is a holy convocation – a commanded assembly. No work is to be done. “...and ye shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days ...It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.” Leviticus 23:40-44.

Notice that it is commanded forever.

Here are pictured those final culminating events in God’s great plan: after Christ has died for our sins to redeem mankind, after He has sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His name to become kings and priests through the thousand years – after His glorious final return – after He has finally restored the redeemed by placing all the sins upon the head of Satan, their real author, and separating both him and the sins from the presence of God and His people, thus finally perfecting the **at –one-ment**, making us finally joined in one – then we are ready for that final series of events, the commencement of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the reaping of the great harvest of souls for a thousand years.

This festival is a picture of the millennium!

## Pictures The Millennium

To portray His plan, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in Palestine as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls. In Palestine there are two annual harvests. The first, produced by the early rain, is the Spring grain harvest. Second, produced by the “latter rain”, comes the main harvest – the much greater fall harvest.

Now notice when the Festival of Tabernacles is to be held: “at the year’s end” (Exodus 34:22). In this verse the festival of tabernacles or booths is specifically called the “feast of ingathering.” The harvest year ended at the beginning of Autumn. Just as Pentecost pictures the early harvest – this church age, so the festival of ingathering or tabernacles pictures the fall harvest – the great harvest of souls in the millennium!

Today is not the only day of salvation. Today is **a** day of salvation. Isaiah said so: chapter 49, verse 8.

In fact, the original Greek words of Paul in 2Corinthians 6:2 should be translated “**A** day of salvation,” not “the day of salvation.”

Turn for a few minutes to the book of Zechariah to understand this more thoroughly. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> chapters we have a picture of Christ returning and the reconciliation of the world commencing. Here the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets and Atonement is made plain.

Next notice the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter. The time is the millennium. “The Eternal shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Eternal, and His name one ... there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. (verses 9-11). It is the time when “living waters” – salvation, the Holy Spirit – “shall go forth out from Jerusalem” verse 8). The “waters” are literal as well as figurative. God often pictures His spiritual plan by material events.

In that day, when the earth is safely inhabited, when the Holy Spirit is granted to all human kind, what happens? “And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up, from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, **and to keep the feast of tabernacles.**”

## Gentiles Forced To Keep The Feast Of Tabernacles

Notice this 16<sup>th</sup> verse of Zechariah 14. After Christ returns, the nations – mortal Gentiles who have not yet received salvation – will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! How could they keep a festival that was abolished at the cross? They could only keep it if it were commanded forever.

And what will happen if they refuse to obey God? “And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.” Strong words!

The nations will be forced to keep the feast of tabernacles, from year to year, when Christ s ruling with a rod of iron!

And if the nations still won’t obey? “There shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen” – there are still heathen nations just beginning to learn the way of salvation – “that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.” This shall be the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles” (verses 17-19). To receive salvation even the Gentiles will have to keep this festival. Of course it is commanded **forever!**

## When Christ Returns

**Then** it is that God shall set His hand again **the second time** to recover the remnant of His people – Israel (Isaiah 11:11).

**Then** it is that “The Lord will come with fire, and ...by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh ... And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape [these plagues] of them unto the nations [Gentiles] .... That have not heard my name, either have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the gentiles” (Isaiah 66:15,16,19).

**Then** it is that “living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,” and the Gentile nations that have not heard previously “shall even go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles!” ( Zechariah 14:8,16).

**Then** it is that many nations “shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain [nation] of the Lord ... and he will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares ...neither shall they learn war any more ... In that day saith the Lord...the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever” Does “forever” mean forever? (Micah 4:1-7). This does not apply to God’s church now – but to the glorious time of the kingdom, after Christ returns – what a wonderful plan of redemption!

Adam sinned. All of us have sinned. From Adam to now, it is a chronicle of man without God – of human suffering and failure. And so God, in His great wisdom, has permitted men to prove to themselves what sinners they are – how helpless they are – of themselves!

And finally we shall have to learn the lessons that it is only when God himself undertakes to save men – by sending Jesus to rule with a rod of iron, that the world can really be saved! And so, those

now being saved are a firstfruits of salvation, and will have the very great honor of being Christ's assistants in that wonderful Kingdom work of redemption!

**That** is God's true Plan of redemption, as taught from Genesis to Revelation! And how contrary to the

Popular teaching! But it is the Plan, nevertheless, pictured in God's annual Holydays. And had the churches continued to keep these Holydays, they would never have lost sight of this plan, and come under the deception of false religions!

Now we customarily quote Isaiah 66:23, showing that the Sabbath will be kept in the millennium, as proof we must keep it now. Will we, then, when we read Zechariah 14:6, showing that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept in the millennium, be consistent by keeping it today?

Can we qualify as a son of God – a king and priest – ruling with Christ on His throne, assisting at that time, if we now refuse to keep these festivals! Notice that Christ kept the Feast of Tabernacles. The apostle John devoted an entire chapter of his gospel – the seventh chapter – to describe what Jesus said and did, during the Feast of tabernacles in the last year of His ministry.

## Why Called The Feast Of Tabernacles

During the millennium, the Kingdom of God into which we may be born will rule the nations which are composed of humans begotten by the Spirit of God. The billions of mortals alive during the millennium, will still be heirs to the Kingdom of God. They will not yet have inherited it as long as they remain flesh, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1Corinthians 15:50). "Ye must be **born** again – "of the Spirit" to inherit the Kingdom, said Jesus.

Remember that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were merely heirs when they dwelt on earth (Hebrews 11:9). While heirs they dwelt in tabernacles or booths, sojourning in the land of promise. Tents or temporary dwellings pictured that they were not yet inheritors. Thus we read of the feast of Tabernacles that "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days ... that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 23:43). Israel dwelt in booths in the wilderness before they entered the promised land. These booths pictured that they were only heirs. Even during the millennium, when the Kingdom of God is ruling over mortal nations, the people will be only heirs to the Kingdom. They must overcome their carnal nature and grow in knowledge and wisdom to inherit the promises.

## Yet Another Festival! The Last Great Day

Did you notice that the Feast of Tabernacles is only the sixth festival? There is yet another – the seventh! The Feast of Tabernacles, is, strictly speaking, seven days long – to picture the entire millennium. Seven is God's number of completeness. Therefore, there must be also seven festivals. Let us notice where it is mentioned: "On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord ... On the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you ... it is a day of solemn assembly; ye shall do no manner of servile work (Leviticus 23:34,36).

This eighth day, technically a separate feast, is called "the last day, that **great** day of the feast" (John 7:37).

What does this final Holy Day represent?

Notice what Jesus preached about on that day. "If a man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink ... out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.(But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive..) (John 7:37-39).

This was Jesus' sermon giving the meaning of the Last Great Day!

Now turn to Revelation 20, after the millennium what happens? A resurrection! The dead stand before God. This couldn't include true Christians today, as they are being judged now. It couldn't refer to those converted during the millennium. They have already inherited the Kingdom during the millennium, after living out a normal life span.

Those in this resurrection will be those who were not in the first resurrection – those left behind, and those who died in ignorance in past ages! They are not brought to life until after the millennium (Rev 20:5).

## Pictures The Day of Judgment

Remember half of God's people were not prepared when Christ returned at the 6<sup>th</sup> seal. [Matthew 25:1-10]. These Christians have to prove their faithfulness during the great Tribulation of the last 3 ½ years

Most will not survive, and die as martyrs. When they are resurrected though, they are finally qualified to join God's family, and are given special positions in God's service, as immortal spirit beings – Rev 7:9, 13-17.

For those who died in ignorance, or even not fully understanding what it means to be a true Christian, this is that judgment day mentioned in Matthew 10:15. They then will be given an opportunity to receive salvation. (Ezekiel 16:53-55 makes this very plain. Even those in Israel who died in their sins will be given their first opportunity to understand the truth of God and His way (Ezekiel 37). The prophet wrote that God would pour out His Spirit on those resurrected (verse 14). This is precisely the salvation that Jesus mentioned in His sermon on that Great Day of the feast in the autumn of 30AD.

This eighth day, which immediately follows the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, pictures the completion of the plan of redemption. That final day of salvation. Isaiah tells us there will be a period where all people will live to be 100 years old. (Isaiah 65:20). It is just prior to the new heaven and the new earth (verse 17). There won't be little children born then. All –parents and children young and old – will be resurrected. “They are the seed blessed of the Eternal, and their offspring with them” (verse 23).

Notice that the “book of life” – typifying salvation – is opened (Rev 20:12). Here, Revelation presents the final view of the “judgment day” – the conclusion of the time when all will live to be 100 – as the present material heaven and earth are perishing – and the faithful are receiving their final reward at the throne of Christ. The wicked – those who refuse to obey – are seen perishing in the lake of Fire!

What a marvellous plan! All have an equal opportunity.

And finally, notice in Leviticus 23:37-38: after describing these annual Holydays, it says: “These are the feasts of THE LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be HOLY CONVOCATIONS ..BESIDES THE SABBATHS OF THE LORD.” We are, then, to keep these **beside** the Sabbath of the Lord.

**Sunday** is the weekly rest day of this modern churchianity, but the Sabbath is the day of the Lord.

Christmas, New year, Easter, and a host of others are the holidays that have come directly from Babylon, but these seven annual holydays are the HOLYDAYS OF THE LORD! Let us forsake the pagan holidays of this world, and observe the true holydays OF THE LORD, so that we can fully understand the Plan of God!

