

Mystery of the Feasts

Series 1-15

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Introduction to *Mystery of the Feasts*

Why Study the Feasts of the Lord?

The feasts of Israel are not dusty relics of an ancient calendar. They are **God's prophetic blueprint**, woven into Scripture by the Holy Spirit to declare His plan of redemption from beginning to end. Each feast is both history and prophecy, both shadow and substance, both memorial and mystery.

Leviticus 23 calls them “the feasts of the LORD” (not merely of Israel), reminding us that they belong to Him and reveal His purposes. The Hebrew word for “feast” (*mo'ed*) literally means **appointed time**—divinely scheduled appointments on God's calendar. Every feast marked an appointment between God and His people, but beyond that, every feast foreshadowed Christ.

The Apostle Paul put it this way:

“Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:17)

The feasts are shadows cast backward from the body of Christ. The lamb of Passover was a shadow of the true Lamb. The bread without leaven was a shadow of the sinless Christ. The wave sheaf was a shadow of His resurrection. The trumpet was a shadow of His call. The booth was a shadow of His dwelling with us.

To study the feasts, then, is to study the story of redemption. They are not random festivals, but rehearsals of God's saving acts—rehearsals that Christ Himself has fulfilled and will yet fulfill.

The Dual Nature of the Feasts

The feasts operate on two levels:

1. **Historical/Israelite Level** – They remembered God’s acts for Israel (deliverance from Egypt, provision in the wilderness, giving of the Law, preservation in exile). They shaped the nation’s worship and identity.
2. **Prophetic/Christological Level** – They looked forward to God’s ultimate acts in Christ (the cross, resurrection, Spirit outpouring, return, and Kingdom). They are the roadmap of redemptive history.

Thus, to ignore the feasts is to miss one of Scripture’s clearest outlines of God’s plan.

The Structure of God’s Calendar

The biblical feasts fall into three cycles, corresponding to the agricultural seasons of Israel—but more importantly, to the stages of God’s redemptive plan.

- **Spring Feasts** – Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Pentecost.
Fulfilled in Christ’s first coming: His death, burial, resurrection, and the Spirit’s outpouring.
- **Fall Feasts** – Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles.
Yet to be fulfilled in His second coming: the Rapture, Israel’s national repentance, and the Millennial Kingdom.
- **Other Feasts/Fasts** – Purim, Hanukkah, Gedaliah’s Fast, Tisha B’Av.
These arose from Israel’s history but carry deep prophetic meaning: God’s hidden providence, His true Light, the tragedy of fallen leadership, and the sorrow of exile.

Together, they tell the whole story: from the Lamb slain to the King enthroned, from exile to restoration, from shadow to fulfillment.

Why This Series?

This series, *Mystery of the Feasts*, exists to uncover the hidden treasures of the feasts—those overlooked connections, prophetic foreshadows, and Christ-centered truths that many believers miss.

We study them not as legal obligations (the Church is not bound to observe them) but as spiritual revelations. They reveal:

- **Christ’s Work** – Every feast points to Him.
- **Israel’s Story** – The feasts tell the tale of Israel’s past, present, and future.

- **The Church's Hope** – The feasts foreshadow our salvation, Spirit-empowerment, and coming glory.
- **God's Calendar** – They outline God's timeline for history, past and future.

By walking through each feast in detail, we see how God planned redemption long before Christ came, and how He will consummate it when Christ returns.

The Flow of the Series

This 15-part series unfolds as follows:

1. **God's Calendar of Redemption** – The feasts as a divine calendar.
2. **Christ Our Passover** – Fulfillment in the Lamb of God.
3. **The Sinless Bread of Life** – Christ as unleavened bread.
4. **Firstfruits of Resurrection** – Christ as the firstfruits of new life.
5. **Pentecost and the Spirit's Fire** – The Spirit's outpouring and the Church's birth.
6. **Trumpets and the Rapture Call** – The prophetic call of God's people home.
7. **Days of Awe and Tribulation** – The foreshadowing of Jacob's trouble.
8. **Day of Atonement and Israel's Redemption** – The national repentance of Israel.
9. **Tabernacles and the Coming Kingdom** – God dwelling with man in the Millennium.
10. **Sabbath Rest in Christ** – The true rest fulfilled in Him.
11. **Purim and Hidden Providence** – God's unseen hand in history.
12. **Hanukkah and the True Light** – Christ as the Light of the world.
13. **Gedaliah's Fast and Collapse** – The tragedy of failed leadership.
14. **Tisha B'Av and Israel's Sorrows** – The mourning of exile and destruction.
15. **From Shadows to Fulfillment** – Christ as the substance of every feast.

This order not only follows Israel's calendar but also traces God's story from the cross to the crown, from the Lamb to the Lion, from shadows to glory.

The Central Message

The central message of the feasts—and of this series—is simple but profound: **Christ is all in all.**

- He is the Passover Lamb.
- He is the Unleavened Bread.
- He is the Firstfruits.
- He is the Baptizer of Pentecost.
- He is the Trumpet call.
- He is the High Priest of Atonement.
- He is the King of Tabernacles.
- He is the Light of Hanukkah.
- He is the unseen Hand of Purim.
- He is the Rest of the Sabbath.
- He is the Comforter in sorrows.

Every feast whispers His name. Every fast cries out for His redemption. Every shadow points to His body.

Why It Matters for Us Today

Why does this matter for Christians today?

1. **It Deepens Our Faith** – We see the precision of God’s plan and the centrality of Christ.
2. **It Strengthens Our Hope** – The feasts outline what is still to come: the Rapture, Israel’s redemption, the Kingdom.
3. **It Fuels Our Worship** – Understanding the feasts makes us marvel at God’s wisdom.
4. **It Sharpens Our Witness** – The feasts show the unity of Scripture and the truth of Christ, powerful for sharing the gospel with Jews and Gentiles alike.

Conclusion: The Mystery Unveiled

The feasts are mysteries, but not unsolvable riddles. They are treasures hidden in plain sight, waiting to be uncovered. They reveal the God who controls history, the Christ who fulfills prophecy, and the Spirit who empowers His people.

This series, *Mystery of the Feasts*, is not about going back to shadows, but about beholding the substance. It is about seeing Christ in Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Purim, Hanukkah, and every fast and feast. It is about learning God's calendar and living in light of His promises.

Above all, it is about hope. For if Christ fulfilled the feasts of His first coming precisely, we can be sure He will fulfill the feasts of His second coming just as precisely.

So let us study, rejoice, and wait for the trumpet. For the shadows are passing, and the substance is coming.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

1 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – God's Calendar of Redemption

Introduction: God's Appointed Times

When we think of calendars, we usually picture the pages hanging on the wall, reminders popping up on our phones, or schedules packed with meetings, errands, and deadlines. But God has a calendar of His own, and it looks very different from ours. His calendar is not filled with dentist appointments or national holidays—it is filled with **appointments of redemption**.

These appointments are the **feasts of the Lord**, given to Israel in the Law of Moses. Found in **Leviticus 23**, they are not merely Jewish traditions. God Himself calls them **"my feasts"** (Leviticus 23:2). The Hebrew word for feast, *moedim*, literally means **appointed times**. They are God's appointments, set long before the world was ready to receive them.

To Israel, they were national celebrations, harvest festivals, and sacred observances. But to the believer in Christ, they are much more—they are **shadows of things to come**, as Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:16-17**. Each feast was a rehearsal, a prophetic picture pointing to Christ and His redemptive plan.

This first essay in our series *Mystery of the Feasts* lays the foundation. We will look at the overall purpose of the feasts, how they outline God's calendar of redemption, and why they matter to us today.

God's Calendar vs. Man's Calendar

Man's calendar shifts with kings and empires. The Romans stamped their rulers' names onto months. Modern governments adjust days for commerce, war, or politics. But God's calendar is eternal. His calendar marks not man's achievements, but His plan of salvation.

Every feast was an **appointment with God**—a time when His people were to stop, remember, and rehearse His work of deliverance. These weren't optional extras or cultural add-ons. They were central to Israel's worship and identity.

And more than that, they were prophetic rehearsals of the most important events in all of history: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the coming of the Spirit, the Rapture, the Tribulation, the Second Coming, and the Millennial Kingdom.

God set His appointments thousands of years in advance. And He has never missed one.

The Seven Feasts of Leviticus 23

The core of God's calendar is found in Leviticus 23, which outlines **seven feasts of the Lord**:

1. **Passover** – Deliverance by the blood of the lamb.
2. **Unleavened Bread** – Separation from sin.
3. **Firstfruits** – The first harvest offered to God.
4. **Pentecost (Feast of Weeks)** – The wheat harvest and offering of two loaves.
5. **Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)** – A memorial of blowing trumpets.
6. **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)** – Israel's sins covered by blood.
7. **Tabernacles (Sukkot)** – Dwelling with God in joy and provision.

These seven cover the full span of redemption. They are not random ceremonies; they are an ordered story. And that story divides neatly into two halves: the **spring feasts**, already fulfilled in Christ's first coming, and the **fall feasts**, awaiting fulfillment at His second coming.

The Spring Feasts: Fulfilled in Christ's First Coming

The first four feasts were fulfilled to the very day by Jesus at His first coming:

- **Passover → The Cross.**
On Passover, Christ was crucified as the true Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7).
- **Unleavened Bread → The Burial.**
During Unleavened Bread, Christ—the sinless Bread of Life—was in the grave. His body saw no corruption (Psalm 16:10).
- **Firstfruits → The Resurrection.**
On the day of Firstfruits, Christ rose from the dead as “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20).
- **Pentecost → The Spirit Given.**
On Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out, and the Church was born (Acts 2). The two loaves waved before God pictured Jew and Gentile united in one body.

The timing is exact. The Lamb slain, the Bread without leaven, the Firstfruits of resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit—all were fulfilled precisely on the days appointed. God's calendar is precise.

The Fall Feasts: Foreshadowing Christ's Second Coming

The final three feasts are yet to be fulfilled. They look forward to Christ's return and the consummation of God's plan.

- **Trumpets → The Rapture.**
The trumpet blast foreshadows the catching away of God's people (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; 1 Corinthians 15:52).
- **Day of Atonement → Israel's Repentance.**
Israel will one day look upon Him whom they pierced and mourn (Zechariah 12:10). National repentance and cleansing will come.
- **Tabernacles → The Kingdom.**
Tabernacles, the feast of dwelling with God, points to Christ's millennial reign and ultimately to the eternal state (Revelation 21:3).

We are living between **Pentecost** and **Trumpets**, in what might be called the long summer of the Church Age. The next appointment on God's calendar is the trumpet.

Other Feasts and Fasts

Beyond the seven main feasts, Jewish history added other observances, each carrying prophetic meaning:

- **Purim** – God’s hidden providence (Esther).
- **Hanukkah** – The feast of dedication and the true Light (John 10:22).
- **The Fast of Gedaliah** – Collapse after rejecting God’s order (Jeremiah 41).
- **Tisha B’Av** – Mourning for destruction, foreshadowing future restoration.

While not part of Leviticus 23, these too can be read as prophetic shadows, showing God’s hand in Israel’s history and His plan for the future.

The Hidden Mysteries

The feasts are called *moedim*—appointed times. But they are also **mysteries**, because hidden within their details are prophetic truths.

- The **numbers** are prophetic: 7 days, 50 days, the 10th day—all have symbolic weight.
- The **harvests** line up with resurrection and judgment.
- The **rituals** foreshadow Christ: the lamb without blemish, the removal of leaven, the waving of the sheaf.
- The **order** tells the whole story of redemption.

These are not accidents. God wrote His plan into Israel’s yearly rhythm, so that every generation rehearsed redemption without even realizing it.

Living by God’s Calendar

We are not under the Law; we are not required to keep the feasts. But understanding them changes how we live.

- Passover reminds us of Christ our Lamb.
- Unleavened Bread calls us to holy living.

- Firstfruits assures us of resurrection.
- Pentecost empowers us by the Spirit.
- Trumpets keeps us watching for the Rapture.
- Atonement assures us Israel will one day be restored.
- Tabernacles gives us hope of dwelling with Christ forever.

Living by God’s calendar means living with anticipation. We know what He has done, and we know what He will yet do.

Conclusion: God’s Calendar of Redemption

When you look at man’s calendar, you see shifting days and uncertain plans. When you look at God’s calendar, you see absolute certainty. He fulfilled the spring feasts with precision. He will fulfill the fall feasts just as surely.

That is the mystery of the feasts: they are not relics of the past but rehearsals of the future. They reveal that God has a plan, a schedule, a calendar of redemption—and He has never missed an appointment.

We are living in the prophetic gap, waiting for the trumpet. And when it sounds, the calendar will move forward once again, right on time.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

2 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Christ Our Passover

Introduction: The Lamb in God’s Plan

The feast of **Passover** is the foundation of Israel’s calendar and the beginning of God’s redemptive story in picture form. Everything else flows from it. Without Passover, there is no deliverance from Egypt, no Exodus, no Promised Land, and no future for Israel as God’s covenant people. Passover is not just an annual Jewish tradition—it is the cornerstone of God’s entire plan of salvation.

But even more than that, Passover is a **prophetic picture** of Christ. Paul makes this crystal clear in **1 Corinthians 5:7**:

“For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”

That single verse unlocks the entire feast. The lamb in Exodus was never just about Israel’s survival in Egypt—it was about Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. In this essay, we will explore Passover in detail: its historical foundation, its prophetic fulfillment, its hidden mysteries, and its ongoing application to us as believers.

By the end, you will see why Christ is rightly called *our Passover*, and why this feast sets the tone for every other feast in God’s calendar of redemption.

The First Passover: Exodus 12

The first Passover was instituted on the night of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. After nine devastating plagues, Pharaoh still hardened his heart. The tenth plague would be decisive: the death of the firstborn. But God provided a way of escape for His people.

In **Exodus 12**, God commanded every household of Israel to take a lamb:

- **A lamb without blemish.** (v. 5)
- **Killed in the evening.** (v. 6)
- **Its blood applied to the doorposts and lintel.** (v. 7)
- **Its flesh roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread.** (v. 8)

That night, the Lord passed through Egypt and struck down the firstborn of man and beast. But wherever He saw the blood, He passed over. **Exodus 12:13** says:

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you...”

This was Israel’s redemption, their deliverance from slavery. It was a literal salvation by blood, pointing forward to a greater salvation by the blood of Christ.

The Lamb Without Blemish

Every detail of the Passover lamb points to Jesus. It had to be without blemish—perfect, spotless, whole. This foreshadows Christ’s sinless nature. Peter wrote:

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:19)

No ordinary man could qualify. Only the sinless Son of God could be the true Passover Lamb. His perfection was not only moral but also sacrificial. He alone could stand in the place of sinners.

The Blood on the Doorposts

The blood of the lamb had to be applied to the doorposts and lintel. It was not enough to kill the lamb; the blood had to be visibly applied.

This teaches us a vital truth: it is not enough that Christ died—His blood must be applied personally to us by faith. Many lambs died that night, but only those who applied the blood were spared. Likewise, many hear of Christ, but only those who believe and receive His blood by faith are saved.

The placement of the blood—on the top and sides of the doorway—also forms a striking picture. The blood above, the blood on either side, dripping down to the ground—it forms the sign of the cross, written on every Israelite doorway that night.

The Flesh Roasted with Fire

The lamb was not to be boiled or eaten raw, but roasted with fire. Fire in Scripture is a symbol of judgment. Christ endured the fire of God’s wrath on the cross. Isaiah 53:10 says:

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...”

The eating of the lamb pictures personal appropriation. Just as the Israelites had to eat the lamb for themselves, so each of us must personally receive Christ by faith. Salvation is not collective; it is individual.

The Urgency of the Meal

Israel was told to eat the Passover in haste, with loins girded, shoes on, and staff in hand (Exodus 12:11). Why? Because salvation was not just about safety that night—it was about preparation for a journey.

When we receive Christ, we are not just spared from judgment; we are set on a new path. The Christian life is not a passive escape—it is an active pilgrimage. Passover begins the journey toward the Promised Land.

Christ, Our Passover Sacrificed

Fast forward 1,500 years. Jesus enters Jerusalem during Passover week. John the Baptist had already declared Him:

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

The timing is perfect. While Israel is selecting their lambs, Christ enters Jerusalem. While lambs are being slain, Christ is nailed to the cross. While blood is being sprinkled at the Temple, Christ’s blood is poured out at Calvary.

Paul sums it up simply: **“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”** (1 Corinthians 5:7)

Every detail of the original Passover finds its fulfillment in Him. The lamb, the blood, the fire, the eating, the haste—all of it points to Jesus.

The Mystery of the Timing

The precision of God’s timing cannot be overstated. Jesus died at Passover, was buried during Unleavened Bread, and rose on Firstfruits. The feasts are not vague symbols—they are exact appointments.

This shows us two things:

1. God is sovereign over history.
2. God has a calendar, and He keeps it perfectly.

If He fulfilled the spring feasts exactly, we can trust Him to fulfill the fall feasts exactly.

The Destroyer and the Blood

On the first Passover, the destroyer went through Egypt, and only the blood saved. Today, the destroyer is still real—sin brings death, and the wages of sin is death. The only hope is still the blood.

Notice that God said, **“When I see the blood, I will pass over you”** (Exodus 12:13). He didn’t say, “When I see your good works” or “When I see your heritage.” The only thing that saved was the blood. The same is true today: not religion, not morality, not effort—only the blood of Christ.

The Leaven Purged

Passover was immediately followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Paul connects this directly to Christ in **1 Corinthians 5:7–8**:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

In other words, the sacrifice of Christ demands a life of holiness. Just as Israel removed leaven from their homes, we must purge sin from our lives. The blood saves us, but holiness follows.

Hidden Prophecies in the Passover

There are many hidden details in Exodus 12 that foreshadow Christ:

- The lamb was chosen on the 10th day, examined until the 14th—just as Christ was inspected and questioned in Jerusalem before His crucifixion.
- Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (Exodus 12:46)—fulfilled in Christ’s crucifixion (John 19:36).
- The blood was applied with hyssop (Exodus 12:22)—the same plant used to lift vinegar to Christ’s lips (John 19:29).
- The Passover was to be a memorial forever—pointing to the eternal memorial of Christ’s death in the Lord’s Supper.

Every line drips with prophecy fulfilled in Christ.

The Lord’s Supper: Passover Transformed

On the night before His crucifixion, during Passover, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. He took bread and said, "This is my body." He took the cup and said, "This is my blood."

The old Passover became the new covenant. No longer do we look back to Egypt; we look back to Calvary. No longer do we eat the lamb; we remember the Lamb who was slain once for all.

Personal Application: Our Passover

So what does it mean to say, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"? It means three things:

1. **Safety from Judgment.** Just as the blood saved Israel from the destroyer, Christ's blood saves us from the wrath of God.
2. **Deliverance from Bondage.** Passover was the start of the Exodus. Salvation is not just forgiveness; it is freedom from sin's slavery.
3. **Journey to a New Land.** Passover began the journey to the Promised Land. Salvation begins our journey toward the heavenly city.

Christ's sacrifice is not just a historical fact—it is our personal deliverance, freedom, and hope.

Prophetic Glimpses: Passover and the Rapture

Some see in Passover a prophetic glimpse of the Rapture. Just as Israel was delivered out of Egypt before judgment fell fully, so the Church will be delivered before the Great Tribulation.

Egypt is a type of the world. Pharaoh is a type of the devil. Israel's deliverance is a type of the Church's deliverance. The blood marks those who belong to God, and the destroyer cannot touch them.

While this is not the primary fulfillment, it is a powerful picture. Passover reminds us that God knows how to deliver His people before pouring out judgment on the world.

Conclusion: Behold the Lamb

When John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, “**Behold the Lamb of God,**” he was pointing back to Exodus 12 and forward to Calvary. The Passover lamb is Christ, and Christ is our Passover.

Without Passover, there is no redemption story. Without the Lamb, there is no deliverance. Without the blood, there is no salvation. But with Christ, there is safety, freedom, and hope.

The mystery of the feast is no mystery at all once the Lamb is revealed. Passover was always about Him. And now, because of Him, the judgment passes over, and we are free.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

3 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – The Sinless Bread of Life

Introduction: Bread Without Leaven

The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately follows Passover in God’s calendar. The two are so closely connected that they are often spoken of together. In fact, in Luke 22:1 it says:

“Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.”

Why? Because you cannot separate them. Passover speaks of deliverance by the blood, while Unleavened Bread speaks of separation from sin. Together, they reveal both the price of redemption and the purity it produces.

For Israel, this feast was simple but strict: for seven days they were to eat no bread with leaven. Every crumb of leaven was to be removed from their homes. It was a complete purge. But the deeper meaning, the mystery hidden within, is that **leaven represents sin**, and the feast points to **the sinless life of Christ and the sanctified walk of His people**.

In this essay, we will explore the historical foundation of Unleavened Bread, its prophetic fulfillment in Christ, its application to the Church, and its mysteries for the future. At the heart of it all stands one truth: **Jesus is the sinless Bread of Life**.

The Command of the Feast

Unleavened Bread is first described in **Exodus 12:15–20**:

- For seven days, Israel was to eat unleavened bread.

- On the first and seventh days, they held holy convocations.
- No leaven was to be found in their houses.
- Anyone who ate leavened bread was cut off from Israel.

This was not optional. It was a serious command, tied to Israel's very identity. Later, in Leviticus 23:6–8, the instructions are repeated, showing its permanence in the covenant calendar.

But why unleavened bread? Because leaven is a picture of corruption. Left alone, leaven spreads through the dough, puffing it up and changing its nature. In the same way, sin spreads through a life, corrupting and puffing up with pride.

To purge leaven was to purge sin. To eat unleavened bread was to embrace purity. This was God's message to Israel—and through them, to us.

The Bread of Affliction

Unleavened bread was sometimes called “the bread of affliction” (Deuteronomy 16:3). Why? Because it reminded Israel of their hasty departure from Egypt. They had no time to let the bread rise; they left in a rush, delivered by the blood of the lamb.

This bread was plain, simple, unadorned. It was not puffed up, not enhanced, not sweetened. It was humble, flat, pure. What a picture of Christ, who came not in pomp or pride but in humility. Isaiah 53:2 describes Him:

“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

He is the true Bread of Life, simple yet sufficient, humble yet holy.

Christ, the Sinless Bread of Life

Jesus Himself declared in John 6:35:

“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

He was born in Bethlehem, which literally means “House of Bread.” He fed the multitudes with bread, showing Himself as the provider. But most importantly, He offered Himself as the true bread from heaven, given for the life of the world.

Unlike all others, He was without leaven—without sin. Peter says:

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” (1 Peter 2:22)

Paul affirms:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

And John adds:

“In him is no sin.” (1 John 3:5)

The unleavened bread was not just a dietary command—it was a prophetic picture of Christ’s sinless humanity. Every bite reminded Israel of the One who would one day be broken for their iniquities.

Buried Without Corruption

Unleavened Bread not only speaks of Christ’s sinless life but also of His sinless burial. While Passover points to His death, Unleavened Bread points to His time in the grave.

Psalms 16:10 prophesied:

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

And Acts 2:27 confirms its fulfillment in Christ. Unlike all others who return to dust, His body did not decay. He lay in the tomb during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, fulfilling it perfectly as the unleavened, incorruptible Bread.

Purge Out the Old Leaven

Paul makes the connection explicit in **1 Corinthians 5:7–8**:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Here Paul ties Passover and Unleavened Bread together. Christ is our Passover sacrifice. Therefore, we must live as Unleavened Bread—purged of sin, living in sincerity and truth.

The feast becomes a call to sanctification. If the blood delivers us, the unleavened bread separates us. Salvation is not just being spared from wrath; it is being set apart for holiness.

Leaven as a Picture of Sin

Throughout Scripture, leaven is used as a symbol of sin, corruption, and false doctrine. Jesus warned His disciples:

- “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:6) – Hypocrisy and false teaching.
- “Beware of the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15) – Worldly compromise.

Paul also wrote of the danger:

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” (Galatians 5:9)

Leaven spreads quickly, invisibly, inevitably. In the same way, sin spreads if not dealt with. The only solution is total purge—just as Israel had to remove every crumb from their homes.

Seven Days of Purity

The feast lasted seven days, the number of completeness. This pictures the complete sanctification God desires in His people. We are not just to have moments of holiness—we are called to a life of holiness.

Peter exhorts us:

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15–16)

Unleavened Bread was not about a single meal but a week-long lifestyle. Likewise, holiness is not a one-time act but a continual walk.

The Mystery of the First and Seventh Days

The feast began and ended with holy convocations. The first day marks our new birth—the beginning of a life of holiness. The seventh day points to our final perfection in glory. From start to finish, we are called to be unleavened.

This is the mystery of sanctification: we are already unleavened in Christ (positionally holy), yet we are called to purge out leaven daily (practically holy). It is both a finished work and an ongoing process.

The Hidden Leaven of the Heart

Israel had to search their homes with candles to find hidden leaven. Likewise, we must search our hearts for hidden sin. David prayed in Psalm 139:23–24:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is not about external ritual but internal reality. God desires truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6).

Christ in the Tomb and Our Sanctification

The timing of this feast is no accident. While Israel ate unleavened bread, Christ lay in the tomb. His sinless body saw no corruption. And because of Him, we too are made unleavened in God’s sight.

Romans 6:4 says:

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

The burial of Christ is not just history—it is our sanctification. In Him, the old leaven is buried, and we rise to walk in purity.

Prophetic Hints for the End Times

Unleavened Bread also carries prophetic hints for the end. Just as Israel purged leaven before judgment fell on Egypt, so the Church is called to purge sin before the trumpet sounds.

In the Tribulation, Israel will again be called to purity through affliction. Ezekiel 20:37 speaks of God causing them to “pass under the rod” and bringing them into the bond of the covenant. The feast, then, foreshadows both the Church’s sanctification now and Israel’s future purification.

Application for the Church

How do we “keep the feast” today? Paul answers: not by literal unleavened bread, but by sincerity and truth.

That means:

- **Holiness in life.** Refusing the leaven of sin.
- **Honesty in spirit.** No hypocrisy, no false fronts.
- **Clarity in doctrine.** No compromise with error.

The world offers puffed-up bread—fluffy but corrupt. Christ offers unleavened bread—plain but pure. Which do we choose?

The Bread of Communion

Every time we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we handle bread. In many churches, it is unleavened, connecting directly to this feast. That bread reminds us not only of Christ’s body but also of our call to holiness.

When Paul warned the Corinthians about unworthy communion, he was reminding them that the table must be unleavened—not in ritual, but in reality. We cannot partake of Christ while clinging to sin.

Conclusion: The Sinless Bread of Life

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is more than an ancient dietary rule. It is a prophetic picture of Christ, the sinless Bread of Life, buried without corruption, and given for the life of the world.

It is also a call to us: to purge the leaven of sin, to walk in sincerity and truth, and to live as unleavened bread in a corrupt world.

Christ our Passover was sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the feast—not with leaven, but with the purity that comes from Him. For seven days, for seventy years, for eternity—He calls us to holiness.

This is the mystery of the feast: that in Christ, the unleavened Bread of Life, we are made pure, sustained, and set apart for God.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

4 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Firstfruits of Resurrection

Introduction: The Power of the First Sheaf

When the Lord outlined Israel’s calendar in Leviticus 23, the **Feast of Firstfruits** was unique among the spring feasts. Passover spoke of the lamb slain. Unleavened Bread spoke of separation from sin. But Firstfruits spoke of **new life**, of the first sheaf of the harvest waved before the Lord as a pledge of the greater harvest to come.

For Israel, this feast marked the beginning of the barley harvest. For the Church, it points directly to **the resurrection of Jesus Christ**. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 15:20**:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

That single verse ties the feast to its fulfillment. The wave sheaf was not just about grain—it was about Christ, the first to rise from the dead, guaranteeing the harvest of resurrection to follow.

In this essay, we’ll explore Firstfruits from four angles:

1. Its historical foundation in Israel.
2. Its prophetic fulfillment in Christ’s resurrection.
3. Its practical meaning for the believer.
4. Its future promise of the resurrection harvest yet to come.

The Command of Firstfruits

The feast is outlined in **Leviticus 23:9–14**. God commanded Israel that when they entered the Promised Land and reaped the harvest, they were to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits to the priest. The priest would wave it before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath, and it would be accepted on their behalf.

Several key details stand out:

- It was a **sheaf of the very first harvest**, not the full harvest.

- It was waved **on the morrow after the Sabbath**, meaning on a Sunday.
- It was a pledge that the rest of the harvest belonged to God.

Israel understood this as a way of giving God the “first taste” of the crop, trusting Him for the full harvest to come. But God had hidden a greater mystery in the timing and meaning of this feast.

The Timing: The Day After the Sabbath

Firstfruits was celebrated on the day after the Sabbath following Passover. In other words, it always fell on the **first day of the week**—Sunday.

What happened on that day, centuries later? **Jesus Christ rose from the dead.**

Matthew 28:1 says:

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”

The timing is exact. Christ died on Passover, was buried during Unleavened Bread, and rose on Firstfruits. God’s calendar was perfectly fulfilled.

Christ the Firstfruits

Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 15:20–23** are the heart of the matter:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”

Christ’s resurrection was not an isolated miracle—it was the **firstfruits** of a greater harvest. Just as the wave sheaf guaranteed the rest of the crop, Christ’s resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who belong to Him.

The Wave Sheaf and the Empty Tomb

The priest waved the sheaf before the Lord as a symbol of acceptance. The empty tomb is God's declaration of acceptance. The sacrifice of Christ was accepted, the debt paid in full, and the first sheaf of the resurrection waved before heaven itself.

Romans 4:25 says Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." His resurrection proves the work of redemption is finished and accepted.

Resurrection as a Harvest

It is no accident that God chose harvest imagery. Resurrection is like a harvest:

- **The seed dies and is buried** → the body dies and is sown in the ground.
- **New life springs forth** → resurrection life emerges, incorruptible.
- **The first sheaf is waved** → Christ rises first.
- **The full harvest follows** → all who are His will rise at His coming.

Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 15:35–44, explaining that the body is sown in corruption but raised in incorruption, sown in weakness but raised in power. The imagery is agricultural because Firstfruits was agricultural—but it points to resurrection glory.

The Order of Resurrection

Paul uses military imagery when he says:

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Corinthians 15:23)

The word *order* refers to a rank or company in formation. There is an order to resurrection:

1. Christ the firstfruits (already fulfilled).
2. They that are Christ's at His coming (the Rapture).
3. Later resurrections at the end of the Tribulation and Millennium.

Firstfruits is the beginning of the sequence. It is the pledge that the rest will follow in due order.

The Mystery of the Two Loaves

Interestingly, Pentecost (50 days later) involved two loaves waved before the Lord (Leviticus 23:17). Firstfruits was a single sheaf; Pentecost was two loaves. The one sheaf represents Christ, the single firstfruits. The two loaves represent Jew and Gentile brought together in the Church. The order is deliberate.

The Personal Assurance of Firstfruits

What does this mean for us personally? It means resurrection is not a vague hope but a guaranteed reality. Because Christ rose, we too will rise.

Jesus declared in John 11:25–26:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

The grave is no longer the end. It is only the seedbed for resurrection. Firstfruits assures us that death has lost its sting.

Prophetic Glimpses: Firstfruits and the Rapture

Just as Firstfruits was the pledge of harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is the pledge of the Rapture. The trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise, and we who are alive will be caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

The feast reminds us that resurrection is not just Christ’s past event but our future destiny. His empty tomb is the down payment on our own.

Hidden Mysteries in the Feast

Several hidden details enrich the picture:

- The sheaf was from the **barley harvest**, the earliest crop—just as Christ was the first to rise.
- The offering included a lamb of the first year without blemish—again pointing to Christ.

- The sheaf had to be presented before any other harvest could be eaten (Leviticus 23:14). This means no other resurrection could precede Christ's. He is truly "the firstfruits."

Israel and the Future Harvest

Prophetically, the feast also points to Israel's future restoration. Just as the first sheaf guaranteed the full harvest, so Christ's resurrection guarantees the national resurrection of Israel (Ezekiel 37's vision of dry bones coming to life).

Romans 11:15 says:

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

Israel's restoration is part of the harvest pledged by Christ's resurrection.

The Feast Fulfilled in Us

Though we don't keep the feasts literally, the principle applies spiritually. We live in resurrection power now. Romans 6:4 says we should "walk in newness of life." Colossians 3:1 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Firstfruits means not only that we will rise one day but that we should live as risen people today. Sin and death no longer rule us. We walk in resurrection life now.

Conclusion: The Guarantee of Glory

The Feast of Firstfruits is not just about ancient harvests. It is about the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of His people. It is about the pledge, the guarantee, the assurance that because He lives, we shall live also.

Christ is the first sheaf waved before God. The tomb is empty, the sacrifice accepted, the harvest guaranteed. Our hope is not wishful thinking—it is anchored in history, fulfilled in Christ, and secured for eternity.

This is the mystery of the feast: that one empty tomb assures millions of future empty tombs. The grave cannot hold those who belong to the risen Christ. The trumpet will sound, the harvest will be reaped, and the firstfruits will be followed by the full ingathering.

5 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Pentecost and the Spirit’s Fire

Introduction: The Feast at Fifty

Pentecost is the fourth of the seven feasts of the Lord and the final one of the spring cycle. Its Hebrew name is *Shavuot*, meaning “Weeks,” because it was celebrated seven weeks (or 50 days) after Firstfruits. Its Greek name, *Pentēkostē*, means “fiftieth.”

For Israel, Pentecost marked the wheat harvest and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. For the Church, Pentecost marks the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the body of Christ.

The Feast of Passover spoke of redemption by blood. Unleavened Bread spoke of sanctification and purity. Firstfruits pointed to resurrection. Pentecost points to **power**, to the fiery coming of the Spirit that would indwell and empower believers to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This essay explores Pentecost in four parts:

1. The Old Testament foundation of the feast.
2. Its fulfillment in Acts 2 with the coming of the Spirit.
3. Its ongoing significance for the Church.
4. Its prophetic implications for the future.

The Old Testament Pentecost

The instructions for Pentecost are found in **Leviticus 23:15–21**. Israel was commanded to:

- Count **seven sabbaths** from the day after Firstfruits, making 50 days.
- Present a new grain offering from the wheat harvest.
- Wave **two loaves of bread baked with leaven** before the Lord.
- Offer seven lambs, a bull, and two rams as burnt offerings, along with sin offerings and peace offerings.
- Hold a holy convocation and do no servile work.

A few details are especially significant:

1. **The counting of days** tied Pentecost directly to Firstfruits. Just as Firstfruits was fulfilled in Christ's resurrection, Pentecost is fulfilled in the Spirit's coming 50 days later.
2. **The two loaves with leaven** stand out. Unlike the unleavened bread of earlier feasts, these loaves contained leaven. This hints at Jew and Gentile, both with sin, brought together into one body by the Spirit.
3. **The harvest setting** shows that Pentecost was a feast of ingathering. Spiritually, it foreshadows the ingathering of souls through the gospel.

Pentecost and Sinai

Jewish tradition also connects Pentecost to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Exodus 19 records that Israel arrived at Sinai in the third month after leaving Egypt, and the Law was given amid fire, smoke, thunder, and the sound of a trumpet.

Compare this with Acts 2: when the Spirit was given, there was the sound of a rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire, and voices declaring the wonderful works of God. At Sinai, the Law was written on stone tablets. At Pentecost, the Law was written on hearts by the Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3).

The parallel is clear: Pentecost marks a new covenant moment, just as Sinai did.

The Fulfillment: Acts 2

Pentecost was fulfilled in dramatic fashion in Acts 2.

- **The sound of a rushing mighty wind** filled the house (v. 2). Wind is a symbol of the Spirit (John 3:8).
- **Tongues like fire** sat on each of them (v. 3). Fire is a symbol of God's presence and power.
- **They spoke in other tongues** as the Spirit gave utterance (v. 4). This was not gibberish but real languages, understood by Jews from many nations present in Jerusalem.

Peter stood up and explained that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:17).

Three thousand souls were saved that day, marking the birth of the Church.

The Two Loaves: Jew and Gentile

One of the mysteries of Pentecost is the waving of two loaves baked with leaven. Why two? And why leaven, when leaven usually represents sin?

The answer lies in the mystery revealed by Paul: the Church is made up of both **Jew and Gentile**, both sinners, both redeemed and united by the Spirit into one body.

Ephesians 2:14–16 explains that Christ broke down the wall between Jew and Gentile, creating “one new man” through the cross. Pentecost is the picture of this new body being formed by the Spirit.

The Spirit’s Fire

The tongues of fire in Acts 2 symbolize the Spirit’s purifying, empowering presence. Just as fire fell on the altar in the Old Testament, fire now fell on the living sacrifices—the believers.

The Spirit’s fire accomplishes several things:

- **Purification** – Burning away sin and filling with holiness.
- **Illumination** – Giving boldness and clarity to preach Christ.
- **Empowerment** – Equipping believers with gifts to build the body.

Jesus had promised this in Acts 1:8:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Pentecost was not about personal ecstasy; it was about power for mission.

Pentecost and the Birth of the Church

Pentecost marks the birth of the Church. Before Acts 2, the disciples were still waiting, still fearful, still incomplete. After the Spirit came, they became bold witnesses, filled with power.

This was the beginning of the “mystery” Paul later described:

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:6)

The Church was not an afterthought but part of God’s eternal plan, revealed at Pentecost through the Spirit.

Pentecost and the Harvest of Souls

Pentecost was a harvest feast, and fittingly, the first sermon brought in a great harvest—3,000 souls (Acts 2:41). Later, 5,000 more were added (Acts 4:4). The Spirit’s coming inaugurated the great harvest of souls that continues to this day.

Jesus had said in John 4:35:

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”

Pentecost shows us that evangelism is not by human strength but by the Spirit’s power. The gospel is the sickle, and the Spirit is the wind that drives it.

Living in Pentecost Power

For the believer today, Pentecost means we live in the age of the Spirit. We are not left as orphans; we are indwelt and empowered by the Comforter.

This means:

- We are sealed by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13).
- We are guided by the Spirit (Romans 8:14).
- We are gifted by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- We are filled by the Spirit for boldness (Ephesians 5:18).

Pentecost is not just a historical event but a daily reality for those who walk in the Spirit.

Prophetic Implications

While Pentecost was fulfilled in Acts 2, it also carries prophetic hints. Some see in it the foreshadowing of the end of the Church Age, just as it marked its beginning.

- The two loaves could also picture the full completion of Jew and Gentile in Christ.

- The harvest imagery points to the final ingathering of souls before the Rapture.
- The connection to Sinai (with fire and voice) may foreshadow the trumpet and fire of the last days.

Just as Passover was fulfilled in Christ's death, and Firstfruits in His resurrection, Pentecost was fulfilled in the Spirit's coming. But it also looks ahead to the consummation of the Church's mission and the gathering of the harvest at the end of the age.

Contrast: Sinai and Pentecost

The giving of the Law at Sinai and the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost make a powerful contrast:

- At Sinai, 3,000 died because of sin (Exodus 32:28).
- At Pentecost, 3,000 were saved by grace (Acts 2:41).
- At Sinai, the Law was written on stone.
- At Pentecost, the Law was written on hearts.
- At Sinai, fire burned on the mountain.
- At Pentecost, fire rested on believers.

The contrast shows the superiority of the new covenant. What the Law could not do, the Spirit accomplishes.

Conclusion: The Spirit's Fire Still Burns

The Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled in Acts 2, but its meaning still burns today. It reminds us that:

- Christ rose as Firstfruits, and the Spirit followed as the guarantee of harvest.
- The Church was birthed in fire, not in human power.
- The Spirit is still with us, sealing, guiding, gifting, and empowering.
- The harvest is still white, and the mission is still urgent.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the fire that fell in Jerusalem still burns in every believer who yields to the Spirit. Pentecost is not just a day in history—it is the reality of the Spirit’s presence until the trumpet sounds.

6 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Trumpets and the Rapture Call

Introduction: The Sound of Awakening

If there is one sound that pierces Scripture like a thread, it is the **sound of the trumpet**. From Sinai’s thunder to Jericho’s walls, from Israel’s assemblies to the last trumpet of Paul’s letters, the blast of the trumpet is God’s instrument of announcement, warning, and gathering.

In the cycle of the feasts, the **Feast of Trumpets** (*Rosh Hashanah*) marks the beginning of the fall season. In Israel’s history, it was a memorial of blowing trumpets, a sacred day of rest and convocation (Leviticus 23:24–25). But in prophecy, it points forward to something far greater: the call of God’s people at the Rapture.

In this essay, we will examine the Feast of Trumpets from four angles:

1. Its historical practice in Israel.
2. Its prophetic symbolism as the Rapture.
3. Its call to readiness for the believer.
4. Its role in God’s calendar leading into the Tribulation and Kingdom.

The sound of the trumpet is both a comfort and a warning. For the believer, it is the call home. For the world, it is the sound of the beginning of judgment. This is the mystery of the Feast of Trumpets—the Rapture call of God.

The Command of the Feast

Leviticus 23:24–25 says:

“In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

The Hebrew name is *Yom Teruah*—“Day of Blowing” (of trumpets or shouts). Later it became associated with the civil new year, Rosh Hashanah, but biblically it is simply the feast of trumpets.

Trumpets in Israel had several uses:

- To **call the assembly** (Numbers 10:2).
- To **signal movement** in the camp (Numbers 10:5–6).
- To **sound alarm** for war (Numbers 10:9).
- To **announce the king** (1 Kings 1:34).
- To **mark holy days and sacrifices** (Psalm 81:3).

Thus, the Feast of Trumpets was not just a noise-making holiday; it was a prophetic rehearsal of the day when God Himself would blow the trumpet to call His people.

Trumpets in Israel’s Story

Throughout Israel’s history, trumpets played key roles:

- At Sinai, the trumpet grew louder and louder as God descended in fire (Exodus 19:16–19).
- At Jericho, seven trumpets brought down the walls (Joshua 6).
- In the Temple, trumpets accompanied worship and sacrifice (2 Chronicles 5:12–13).
- In coronations, trumpets proclaimed the king (2 Kings 9:13).

All of these foreshadow the ultimate trumpet blast—the call of God’s people to Himself and the announcement of the King of kings.

The Trumpet and the Rapture

The New Testament connects the trumpet directly to the Rapture:

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17:

“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.”

1 Corinthians 15:52:

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

The Feast of Trumpets finds its prophetic fulfillment here. Just as the trumpet in Israel gathered the people, signaled movement, and announced the king, so the trumpet of God will gather the Church, signal our departure, and announce the coming King.

The “Last Trump” Explained

Some confuse the “last trump” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 with the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11. But these are not the same. The trumpet of the Rapture is the **trump of God**, a trumpet of blessing and gathering. The trumpets in Revelation are trumpets of angels, trumpets of judgment.

The “last trump” refers not to chronology in Revelation but to the final note of the trumpet call, just as in Israel the trumpets had distinct blasts for distinct purposes. The Rapture trumpet is the last call for the Church, not the last trumpet of judgment for the world.

The Rapture as Fulfillment of the Feast

Passover was fulfilled by Christ’s death. Unleavened Bread was fulfilled in His burial. Firstfruits was fulfilled in His resurrection. Pentecost was fulfilled in the Spirit’s coming. That leaves Trumpets as the next in line.

The Church has been living in the long summer between Pentecost and Trumpets. When Trumpets is fulfilled, the Rapture will take place, and the prophetic calendar will move into its final phase.

This is why many prophecy students see the Feast of Trumpets as a type of the Rapture. Not to set dates, but to see the pattern: God fulfills His feasts in order, on time.

The Trumpet as a Call to Readiness

The trumpet in Scripture is not just for gathering—it is also for warning. Amos 3:6 asks:

“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?”

The trumpet wakes sleepers, stirs soldiers, alerts the city. Likewise, the trumpet call of the Rapture is a wake-up call for us to be ready.

Paul warns in 1 Thessalonians 5:6:

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

The Feast of Trumpets is a rehearsal of readiness. Every year Israel heard the trumpets blast, and every year we are reminded: the trumpet will sound.

Trumpets and the Days of Awe

In Jewish tradition, the Feast of Trumpets begins the **Ten Days of Awe** leading up to the Day of Atonement. These days are seen as a time of repentance and preparation for judgment.

Prophetically, this fits the pattern: the Rapture (Trumpets) is followed by the Tribulation (Days of Awe), climaxing in Israel’s repentance (Day of Atonement). The feasts are not random—they outline God’s plan.

Trumpets and the King

In Israel, trumpets announced the coronation of a king (1 Kings 1:34). The Rapture trumpet announces the coronation of Christ in heaven. Revelation 11:15 declares:

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

The trumpet calls not only the Church but also proclaims the King.

The Mystery of the Two Trumpets

Numbers 10 describes two silver trumpets used to call the assembly. Some see in this a picture of two aspects of the Rapture:

- One trumpet for the dead in Christ (raised first).
- One trumpet for the living in Christ (caught up after).

Together, they complete the assembly before the Lord.

Personal Application: Living for the Trumpet

The Feast of Trumpets reminds us that the trumpet could sound at any time. We are not given the day or hour, but we are given the promise.

So how should we live?

- **Watching** – expecting His coming daily.
- **Working** – serving faithfully until He comes.
- **Witnessing** – warning others before it is too late.

The trumpet is both a comfort and a commission.

Prophetic Outlook

When the trumpet sounds, the Church is caught up, the restrainer is removed (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and the world plunges into Tribulation. The Feast of Trumpets, then, marks the transition from the age of grace to the day of the Lord.

The order of the feasts is clear:

- **Trumpets** – The Rapture, God's people gathered.
- **Days of Awe** – The Tribulation, the world judged.
- **Day of Atonement** – Israel repents and is restored.
- **Tabernacles** – Christ dwells with His people in the Kingdom.

The calendar is God's, and He keeps it.

Conclusion: Listening for the Sound

The Feast of Trumpets is more than ancient Israel's memorial. It is the prophecy of the Rapture. The trumpet will sound, the dead will rise, the living will be caught up, and the King will be proclaimed.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the trumpet of God will one day call His people home. It could be today. It could be tomorrow. But it will come, right on God's schedule.

So we listen. We watch. We wait. And when the trumpet sounds, we will rise to meet Him in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

7 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Days of Awe and Tribulation

Introduction: Ten Days Between Two Feasts

In the Jewish calendar, the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) begins the seventh month with a blast of trumpets. But the celebration does not end there. From Trumpets to the Day of Atonement stretches a solemn period of ten days, known in Jewish tradition as the **Ten Days of Awe** (*Yamim Noraim*).

During these days, Israel is called to repentance, self-examination, and preparation for the most solemn day of the year—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. In the synagogue liturgy, the books of life and death are said to be opened, and each person's fate is considered. The shofar's blasts echo warnings: repent, return, prepare.

Prophetically, these ten days foreshadow something far greater: the coming **Tribulation period**, the time of Jacob's trouble, when the world will face divine judgment and Israel will be brought to repentance before the return of Messiah.

This essay will explore the Days of Awe as both a Jewish tradition and a prophetic picture:

1. Their place between Trumpets and Atonement.
2. Their symbolism as a period of repentance and judgment.
3. Their prophetic fulfillment in the Tribulation.
4. Their warning and application for us today.

The Ten Days in Israel's Calendar

Leviticus 23 does not spell out the Ten Days of Awe by name, but the sequence is clear:

- **Day 1** – Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24).
- **Day 10** – Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27).

The intervening days were naturally seen as a time of solemn preparation. Later Jewish tradition emphasized them as days when the heavenly court sits in judgment, weighing each soul. The shofar blasts of Trumpets were understood as a wake-up call: “Awake, you sleepers, and return to God!”

Thus, the Ten Days of Awe became a time of repentance, fasting, prayer, and reconciliation—ten days to prepare for the verdict of the Day of Atonement.

The Awe of God’s Holiness

The word *awe* captures the spirit of these days. It is a time of reverence, fear, and recognition of God’s holiness. Psalm 33:8 says:

“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.”

This awe is not casual reverence but trembling awareness that God is Judge. In Israel, the Days of Awe served as a vivid reminder: sin cannot be ignored, and every soul must give account.

Trumpets, Awe, and Atonement

The sequence of the feasts paints a prophetic picture:

- **Trumpets** – The Rapture of the Church.
- **Days of Awe** – The Tribulation, a time of judgment and repentance.
- **Day of Atonement** – Israel’s national turning to Christ at His return.

The Days of Awe bridge Trumpets and Atonement, just as the Tribulation bridges the Rapture and the Second Coming. This is no coincidence—it is God’s calendar in shadow form.

The Tribulation as Days of Awe

Prophetically, the Ten Days of Awe foreshadow the **seven-year Tribulation** described in Daniel and Revelation. Though not literally ten days, the symbolism is clear: a set period of time between the trumpet call (Rapture) and the final atonement (Israel’s repentance).

Jeremiah 30:7 describes this period as:

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”

Jesus called it “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). Revelation describes it as a time of seals, trumpets, and bowls of wrath poured out on the earth.

The purpose of the Tribulation is twofold:

1. To judge a rebellious world.
2. To bring Israel to repentance and restoration.

This fits perfectly with the Days of Awe: a time of judgment, repentance, and preparation for atonement.

The Opening of the Books

In Jewish tradition, the Days of Awe are when the books of life and death are opened, and the verdict is sealed on Yom Kippur. While not explicitly biblical, the imagery resonates with Revelation:

Revelation 20:12 says:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened...”

During the Tribulation, the world will be judged according to its works, and names not written in the Lamb’s book of life will face eternal death. The Days of Awe foreshadow this ultimate reckoning.

The Sound of the Shofar

Throughout the Days of Awe, the shofar is blown as a continual reminder. Its sound is a call to repentance, a warning of coming judgment.

Isaiah 58:1 says:

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

In the Tribulation, the trumpet judgments of Revelation serve as just that—blasts of warning and judgment, each escalating in severity. The shofar of the Days of Awe anticipates the trumpets of Revelation.

Repentance Under Pressure

The Days of Awe emphasize repentance. In Jewish liturgy, prayers for forgiveness and restoration dominate. In the Tribulation, repentance will also be central—but often under severe pressure.

Revelation 9:20–21 describes how, despite plagues, many refused to repent of their sins. Yet Revelation 7 shows a great multitude from every nation coming to faith during the Tribulation, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Thus, the Days of Awe point to both realities: some will harden, others will repent. Judgment will separate the repentant from the rebellious.

Israel's Refining

The Tribulation is called the “time of Jacob’s trouble” because it is especially for Israel’s refining. Zechariah 13:9 says:

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”

The Days of Awe, with their focus on Israel’s repentance, foreshadow this refining process. They are a rehearsal for the national repentance that will climax on the Day of Atonement when Israel looks upon the One they pierced.

The Ten Days and the Ten Plagues

Some teachers also note a parallel between the Ten Days of Awe and the ten plagues on Egypt. Both are periods of escalating judgment, leading to deliverance through blood. Just as the plagues prepared Israel for the first Passover, the judgments of the Tribulation prepare Israel for the final redemption.

Living in the Light of Awe

What do the Days of Awe mean for us today? We are not in the Tribulation yet, but we can live in light of its lessons:

- **Sobriety** – Life is serious; judgment is real.
- **Urgency** – The trumpet could sound at any time.
- **Repentance** – Sin must be confessed and forsaken.
- **Witness** – Others need the warning before it's too late.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:11:

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

The Days of Awe remind us that time is short and eternity is real.

The Comfort for Believers

For the Church, the Days of Awe foreshadow judgment we will not face. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 assures us:

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We will be caught up at the trumpet (Rapture) before the Tribulation begins. But we are still called to walk in awe, to live soberly, and to warn the world.

Conclusion: Awe Before Atonement

The Days of Awe stand between Trumpets and Atonement, between the trumpet blast and the covering of sin. Prophetically, they foreshadow the Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, when the world will be judged and Israel refined.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the solemn days of repentance in Israel's calendar point to the most solemn period in human history. But just as the Days of Awe culminate in atonement, so the Tribulation will culminate in Christ's return, Israel's repentance, and the establishment of His Kingdom.

For us today, the lesson is clear: live in awe of God, ready for the trumpet, urgent in witness, confident in Christ. The trumpet will sound, the Days of Awe will come, and the King will return.

8 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Day of Atonement and Israel’s Redemption

Introduction: The Most Solemn Day

Of all the feasts in Israel’s calendar, none carried the weight of the **Day of Atonement**, known in Hebrew as *Yom Kippur*. It was the holiest day of the year, the day when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the people. It was a day of affliction, fasting, and repentance.

Leviticus 23:27 calls it plainly:

“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

For Israel, this day was about cleansing, forgiveness, and survival before a holy God. But prophetically, Yom Kippur points to something much greater—the **national redemption of Israel at the Second Coming of Christ**. Just as the high priest once entered the Most Holy Place with blood for the people, so Christ will return to His people, and they will look upon Him whom they pierced, and repent.

This essay will walk through:

1. The Old Testament ritual of Yom Kippur.
2. The fulfillment in Christ’s atonement on the cross.
3. The prophetic future redemption of Israel.
4. The lessons for us today.

The Ritual of Yom Kippur

The details of the Day of Atonement are given in Leviticus 16. Once a year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest was to perform the following:

1. **Preparation** – He bathed and put on holy linen garments (Leviticus 16:4).
2. **Sin offering for himself** – He sacrificed a bull for his own sins and his household (16:6).

3. **Two goats for the people** – One goat was slain, and its blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies (16:15). The other goat, the scapegoat, had the sins of the people confessed over it and was sent into the wilderness (16:21–22).
4. **Sprinkling of blood** – The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, symbolizing atonement.
5. **Affliction of souls** – The people fasted and humbled themselves (23:27).

This ritual emphasized several truths:

- Sin is serious and requires blood atonement.
- Even the high priest is sinful and needs covering.
- Substitution is required—one dies so others may live.
- Forgiveness comes through God’s appointed way, not man’s invention.

The Scapegoat: Sin Removed

One of the most striking features of Yom Kippur was the scapegoat (*Azazel*). After the blood of the first goat was offered, the high priest laid hands on the live goat, confessing the sins of Israel. The goat was then sent away into the wilderness, symbolizing the removal of sin.

Leviticus 16:22 says:

“And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

This foreshadowed Christ, who not only shed His blood for forgiveness but also bore away our sins. Psalm 103:12 echoes this:

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

The Seriousness of the Day

Unlike other feasts marked by joy, Yom Kippur was marked by affliction. Israel was commanded to fast and humble themselves. Anyone who refused was cut off (Leviticus 23:29). It was life or death—atonement or judgment.

This sets it apart as the most solemn day of the year. It was not about feasting but about forgiveness. Not about joy but about judgment. Not about plenty but about purity.

Christ Our Atonement

Hebrews 9–10 explains how Christ fulfilled Yom Kippur.

- The high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year with blood.
- Christ, our great High Priest, entered once for all with His own blood.
- The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin.
- The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.

Hebrews 9:12 says:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

The cross was the true Day of Atonement. The veil was torn. The sacrifice was complete. The atonement was not temporary but eternal.

Already and Not Yet

For the believer, atonement is complete. Christ has died, risen, and entered heaven for us. We have redemption now. But prophetically, Yom Kippur looks forward to something still future—the national redemption of Israel.

Romans 11:26–27 says:

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

Just as the high priest emerged from the Holy of Holies to bless the people, so Christ will return to Israel, and they will repent.

Israel’s Future Day of Atonement

Zechariah 12:10 describes the moment:

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and

they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

At Christ’s second coming, Israel will recognize Him as their Messiah. They will mourn, repent, and be cleansed. Zechariah 13:1 says:

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

This is Israel’s true Day of Atonement. It will come after the Tribulation, after the Days of Awe, when the nation is humbled and prepared.

The Affliction of Tribulation

Prophetically, the affliction of Yom Kippur corresponds to the Tribulation. Just as Israel afflicted their souls in fasting, so they will be afflicted through persecution and judgment, driving them to repentance.

Daniel 12:1 says:

“And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered...”

The Tribulation is the world’s judgment but also Israel’s refining, preparing them for atonement.

The High Priest and the Return of Christ

On Yom Kippur, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with blood and then came out again to bless the people. Likewise, Christ has entered heaven with His blood and will one day come out again, returning to bless His people Israel.

Hebrews 9:28 says:

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

This is the pattern: entrance with blood, intercession inside, reappearance for blessing.

The Mystery of National Redemption

Unlike individual salvation, which is by grace through faith now, Israel's future redemption is national. As a people, they will repent and be restored. Ezekiel 37 pictures dry bones coming to life—a whole nation resurrected spiritually.

This does not negate personal faith; every Jew must believe personally. But it highlights God's covenant with Israel as a nation, which He will fulfill. The Day of Atonement points to this national turning.

Application for the Church

What does Yom Kippur mean for us today?

1. **Appreciation of Christ's sacrifice** – He is our once-for-all atonement. No more goats, no more blood, no more annual rituals—just His perfect blood.
2. **Call to holiness** – Just as Israel fasted and humbled themselves, we are called to live in humility, confession, and purity.
3. **Urgency in witness** – The world is heading toward judgment, and only Christ's blood saves.
4. **Confidence in God's promises** – If He keeps His covenant with Israel, He will keep His promises to us.

Living in Atonement

For the believer, the Day of Atonement is not about fasting one day a year—it is about living daily in the reality of forgiveness. 1 John 1:7 says:

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

We live in continual cleansing because His sacrifice is once for all.

The Coming Fulfillment

The sequence of the feasts makes the prophetic timeline clear:

- **Trumpets** – Rapture of the Church.
- **Days of Awe** – Tribulation.
- **Day of Atonement** – Israel's national redemption at Christ's return.

- **Tabernacles** – Christ’s kingdom on earth.

The feasts are God’s calendar. The Day of Atonement is still ahead for Israel, and it will be fulfilled precisely.

Conclusion: The Fountain Opened

The Day of Atonement is the most solemn feast because it deals directly with sin and forgiveness. For Israel, it was a yearly covering. For us, it is fulfilled in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice. For the future, it points to Israel’s national redemption when they look upon Him whom they pierced.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the blood shed long ago pointed to the blood of Christ, and the day of affliction points to the day of Israel’s restoration. It is solemn but hopeful, heavy but glorious.

One day soon, after the trumpet and the tribulation, Israel will finally find her atonement—not in bulls or goats, but in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And in that day, a fountain will be opened, and a nation will be born in a day.

9 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Tabernacles and the Coming Kingdom

Introduction: The Feast of Joy

If Passover is the feast of deliverance, Unleavened Bread the feast of purity, Firstfruits the feast of resurrection, Pentecost the feast of power, Trumpets the feast of gathering, and the Day of Atonement the feast of repentance—then the **Feast of Tabernacles** (*Sukkot*) is the feast of **joy and fulfillment**.

Leviticus 23:34–36 describes it:

“The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you...”

Israel was commanded to live in booths (*sukkot*), temporary shelters made of branches, to remember their wilderness journey when God provided for them. It was a week-long celebration filled with joy, sacrifices, and rejoicing before the Lord.

But as with all the feasts, this was not just about history—it was about prophecy. Tabernacles points forward to the **coming Kingdom of Christ**, when God will once again dwell with His people, providing and protecting them forever.

Historical Foundation: Dwelling in Booths

For Israel, Tabernacles had a dual meaning:

1. **Remembrance** – It reminded them of their wilderness journey, when they lived in temporary shelters and God provided manna, water, and protection.
2. **Thanksgiving** – It marked the ingathering of the harvest, the completion of the agricultural year.

Deuteronomy 16:14–15 emphasizes the joy of the feast:

“And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast... Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God... because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.”

It was a time of thanksgiving, joy, and remembrance of God’s faithfulness.

The Eighth Day: The Great Day of the Feast

The feast lasted seven days, but on the eighth day there was a special assembly (*Shemini Atzeret*). This “great day of the feast” is mentioned in John 7:37, when Jesus stood and cried out:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

The eighth day speaks of new beginnings, eternity beyond the Millennium. Just as the week points to the Kingdom, the eighth day points to the eternal state.

The Rituals of Tabernacles

By the time of Christ, several rituals had become part of the celebration:

- **The water-drawing ceremony** – Priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam and pour it on the altar, symbolizing God’s provision of water in the wilderness.
- **The illumination ceremony** – Giant lampstands lit up the Temple courts, symbolizing God’s presence as a pillar of fire.

It was in this context that Jesus declared Himself to be the source of living water (John 7:37–39) and the light of the world (John 8:12). He was showing that He is the fulfillment of Tabernacles.

Prophetic Meaning: God Dwelling with Man

The heart of Tabernacles is the idea of **dwelling**. The Hebrew word *sukkot* means booths or tabernacles—temporary dwellings. The feast reminded Israel that God dwelt with them in the wilderness, in the pillar of cloud and fire, in the Tabernacle itself.

Prophetically, it points to the time when God will once again dwell with His people in fullness.

Zechariah 14:16–17 describes the Millennial fulfillment:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

In the Millennium, all nations will celebrate Tabernacles in Jerusalem, worshiping King Jesus. It will be the ultimate fulfillment of God dwelling with man.

From Wilderness to Kingdom

The wilderness booths were temporary, fragile, and imperfect. But the Kingdom dwelling will be permanent, glorious, and eternal.

Revelation 21:3 declares:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

This is the ultimate Tabernacles—the eternal dwelling of God with His people in the New Jerusalem.

Tabernacles and the Millennium

The Feast of Tabernacles specifically points to the Millennial reign of Christ. After the Tribulation and Israel's repentance (Day of Atonement), the Kingdom begins. Tabernacles pictures this:

- Joy after sorrow.
- Rest after wandering.
- Full harvest after labor.
- God dwelling with His people.

The Millennium will be a thousand years of peace, prosperity, and God's presence on earth (Revelation 20:4–6). Tabernacles is the rehearsal of that Kingdom.

Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles

Jesus fulfilled the symbols of the feast in His ministry:

- At the water-drawing ceremony, He declared Himself the giver of living water (John 7:37–39).
- At the lamp-lighting ceremony, He declared Himself the light of the world (John 8:12).
- As the Word made flesh, He “tabernacled” among us (John 1:14).

In His first coming, He gave a foretaste of Tabernacles. In His second coming, He will fulfill it completely.

The Ingathering of Nations

Tabernacles was also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16). It marked the completion of the harvest. Prophetically, it points to the ingathering of the nations into the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 2:2–3 says:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established... and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD...”

The Millennium will not only restore Israel but also gather the nations to worship the King in Jerusalem.

The Joy of Tabernacles

Unlike the solemn Day of Atonement, Tabernacles was marked by joy. It was the most joyous feast of the year. Prophetically, it reminds us that sorrow may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

The Kingdom will be a time of unparalleled joy, peace, and celebration. The weeping of the Tribulation will give way to the rejoicing of Tabernacles.

Application for Believers

What does Tabernacles mean for us today?

1. **God's Presence Now** – Christ has already tabernacled among us (John 1:14), and the Spirit dwells in us now.
2. **Pilgrim Mentality** – Like Israel in booths, we live in temporary dwellings, looking for a better country (Hebrews 11:13–16).
3. **Joyful Anticipation** – We look forward to the Kingdom, when God will dwell with us forever.
4. **Mission** – Just as Tabernacles pointed to ingathering, we are called to bring in the harvest of souls.

The Mystery of the Eighth Day

The eighth day of the feast (*Shemini Atzeret*) points to eternity beyond the Millennium. Just as seven days represent completion (a thousand years of Kingdom), the eighth day represents new beginnings—the eternal state where God dwells with us forever.

This is echoed in Revelation 21–22, where the new heaven and new earth are described. Tabernacles flows seamlessly into eternity.

Conclusion: Dwelling Forever with God

The Feast of Tabernacles is the feast of joy, fulfillment, and dwelling. It remembers God's provision in the past, celebrates His blessing in the present, and anticipates His presence in the future.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the temporary booths of Israel point to the eternal dwelling of God with His people. The harvest celebration points to the final ingathering of nations. The joy of the feast points to the joy of the Kingdom.

One day soon, after the trumpet sounds and the atonement is realized, the King will reign, and Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Millennium and beyond. God will tabernacle with His people forever.

10 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Sabbath Rest in Christ

Introduction: The Rest That Remains

Before Israel celebrated Passover, before they waved Firstfruits, before they built booths for Tabernacles, God gave them the **Sabbath**. It was the first feast listed in Leviticus 23, even before the annual cycle of feasts:

“Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.” (Leviticus 23:3)

The Sabbath (*Shabbat*) was a weekly reminder that God is Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It was a day of rest, but not simply for physical refreshment—it was a prophetic shadow of a greater rest yet to come.

Hebrews 4:9 proclaims:

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

That rest is fulfilled in Christ, who is Himself our Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath was a shadow; Christ is the substance. This essay explores the Sabbath as both feast and prophecy:

1. The Sabbath in Israel's life.
2. The fulfillment of the Sabbath in Christ.

3. The prophetic rest of the Millennium and eternity.
4. The practical rest believers enjoy today.

The Sabbath in Israel's Calendar

From the beginning, the Sabbath was woven into creation. Genesis 2:2–3 records:

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it...”

This rest was not because God was tired, but because His work was finished. The Sabbath was then given to Israel as a sign of their covenant with Him (Exodus 31:16–17).

For Israel, the Sabbath meant:

- Ceasing from labor.
- Remembering God as Creator.
- Recalling deliverance from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15).
- Trusting God's provision, especially when manna ceased on the seventh day.

Breaking the Sabbath carried severe penalties, because it was a sign between God and Israel.

The Shadow of Rest

Yet even in the Old Testament, the Sabbath was more than a day. It was a shadow pointing forward. Colossians 2:16–17 says:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

The Sabbath foreshadowed Christ, who would provide true rest.

Christ the Lord of the Sabbath

When Jesus walked the earth, He continually confronted the Pharisees over their Sabbath traditions. In Matthew 12:8 He declared:

“For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.”

He healed on the Sabbath, showing that the Sabbath was not about legalistic restriction but about life and restoration. He declared in Matthew 11:28–29:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

This was no accident. He was pointing to Himself as the true Sabbath. The weekly day was only a shadow; the substance was standing in their midst.

The Cross and the Finished Work

Just as God rested when creation was finished, Christ rested when redemption was finished. On the cross He cried, **“It is finished”** (John 19:30). He then rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and rose on the first day of the week, opening a new covenant.

The Sabbath pointed to this finished work. Just as Israel ceased from labor, so salvation is not by our works but by resting in His work. Ephesians 2:8–9 makes it plain: salvation is by grace, not works.

The Rest That Remains

Hebrews 4 develops this truth powerfully. Israel failed to enter God’s rest in the wilderness because of unbelief. But the writer says:

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” (Hebrews 4:9–10)

This rest is Christ Himself. By faith, we cease from trying to earn salvation and rest in His finished work. The Sabbath is not a day but a Person.

The Millennium as Sabbath

Prophetically, the Sabbath points beyond personal salvation to God’s plan for the ages. Just as God created in six days and rested on the seventh, so history is divided into six “days”

(six thousand years) of labor followed by a seventh “day” (a thousand-year Millennium) of rest.

2 Peter 3:8 reminds us that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years. The pattern of six and one runs through Scripture:

- Six days of labor, one of rest.
- Six years of sowing, one sabbatical year (Leviticus 25:4).
- Seven sabbatical cycles leading to Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8–10).

All point to the ultimate Sabbath rest of the Millennial Kingdom, when Christ reigns on earth and creation is restored. Isaiah 11 describes that Kingdom rest vividly—peace, harmony, no more war or destruction.

The Eternal Sabbath

Even the Millennium is not the end. The Sabbath points beyond time to eternity, when God’s people will dwell in His rest forever. Revelation 21–22 describe this ultimate fulfillment: no more curse, no more labor, no more night, only the eternal presence of God.

If the Sabbath at creation pointed to God’s finished work of creation, and the cross pointed to Christ’s finished work of redemption, then eternity will display the finished work of consummation.

The Legalism Trap

Throughout history, many have stumbled by making the Sabbath a legalistic requirement. But Paul makes it clear in Romans 14:5:

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

We are not under the Law but under grace. The Sabbath was a shadow. Christ is the reality. To cling to the shadow when the substance has come is to miss the point.

The Sabbath Rest for Believers Today

Though we are not under the Law, the Sabbath principle still applies spiritually:

1. **Rest in Christ** – Salvation by grace, not works.
2. **Rest from Anxiety** – Trusting God’s provision.
3. **Rest in Worship** – Setting aside time to remember Him.
4. **Rest in Hope** – Looking forward to the ultimate rest in His Kingdom.

We live in restless times. People are weary with work, worry, and sin. The Sabbath reminds us that true rest is not found in vacations, weekends, or sleep, but in Christ.

The Mystery of Sabbath Cycles

The Sabbath principle also reveals prophetic mysteries in Israel’s history. The seventy years of Babylonian captivity corresponded to the seventy sabbatical years Israel had neglected (2 Chronicles 36:21). Daniel’s prophecy of seventy weeks (Daniel 9:24) is built on sabbatical cycles.

God’s calendar is woven with Sabbaths, pointing to His sovereign control of history. The Sabbath is not just about a day of the week—it is about God’s plan for the ages.

Christ Our Resting Place

Isaiah 11:10 speaks of Christ as a resting place:

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”

The Sabbath is not found in regulations but in relationship. To know Christ is to know rest. To abide in Him is to experience peace that passes understanding.

A Call to Rest

The Sabbath calls us to stop striving, stop laboring in our own strength, and rest in Him. This does not mean inactivity but Spirit-filled activity—working from rest, not for rest.

Jesus modeled this when He often withdrew to pray, showing that rest and communion with God are essential to fruitful ministry.

Conclusion: Rest for the People of God

The Sabbath was the first feast listed because it undergirds them all. Without rest, there is no true worship, no true joy, no true life. The Sabbath points to Christ, who finished redemption. It points to the Millennium, when the earth will rest under His reign. It points to eternity, when God will dwell with His people forever.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the weekly Sabbath was only a shadow of the greater rest in Christ. The day was temporary, but the Person is eternal. The rest remains, and it is found in Him.

11 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Purim and Hidden Providence

Introduction: A Feast Born of Survival

Unlike Passover, Tabernacles, or Pentecost, the Feast of **Purim** was not commanded in Leviticus 23. It arose later in Israel's history, after the Jews' deliverance from annihilation in the days of Esther. Yet Purim became one of the most joyous feasts of the Jewish year, a celebration of survival, reversal, and God's hidden hand.

Purim is named for the *pur*—the lot—that wicked Haman cast to determine the day to destroy the Jews (Esther 3:7). Instead, God turned the lot into laughter, the decree into deliverance. Purim celebrates the truth that though God's name is hidden in the book of Esther, His providence is everywhere.

This feast is deeply prophetic. It foreshadows how God preserves His people against impossible odds, how He reverses the plans of the enemy, and how He works even when His face seems hidden. For the Church, Purim reminds us of God's providence in our trials and His power to deliver at the appointed time.

This essay will explore:

1. The historical foundation of Purim in Esther.
2. The mystery of God's hidden name and providence.
3. The prophetic implications for Israel's survival and future redemption.
4. The personal application of Purim's message for believers.

The Story Behind the Feast

The book of Esther tells the dramatic story behind Purim. Set in Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), it records how Haman, the king's advisor, plotted to annihilate the Jews. He persuaded the king to issue a decree that all Jews should be destroyed on a chosen day.

But God raised up Esther, a Jewish girl who had become queen, and her cousin Mordecai. Through their courage and God's providence, the plot was overturned: Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, and the Jews were granted the right to defend themselves.

The victory was so decisive that Esther and Mordecai established the feast of Purim to commemorate it:

“Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur... The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed... that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation.” (Esther 9:26–28)

Thus Purim was born, a feast of joy, gladness, sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

God's Name Hidden

A striking feature of Esther is that the name of God never appears in the book. Not once is He directly mentioned. To some, this seems odd. But it is deliberate: God is hidden, yet His hand is everywhere.

- Esther “happens” to be chosen queen.
- Mordecai “happens” to overhear a plot against the king.
- The king “happens” to have insomnia the night before Esther's petition and asks for the chronicles to be read, leading to Mordecai's honor.

These are not coincidences; they are providences. God is hidden, but He is in control. Purim reminds us that even when God's name is veiled, His power is not absent.

Providence Defined

Providence means God's sovereign guidance of all things, even through human choices and apparent chance. Proverbs 16:33 says:

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.”

Haman cast lots to destroy the Jews, but God disposed the outcome. That is providence. Purim celebrates the providence of God to preserve His people against overwhelming odds.

The Great Reversal

The theme of Purim is reversal.

- Haman planned to destroy the Jews, but he was destroyed instead.
- Mordecai was to be hanged, but he was honored.
- The Jews were to be slaughtered, but they triumphed.

Esther 9:1 sums it up:

“On the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary,) that the Jews had rule over them that hated them.”

This reversal foreshadows the ultimate reversal in prophecy: the nations that seek to destroy Israel will themselves be destroyed when Messiah returns.

Purim and Israel’s Preservation

Purim reminds us of God’s promise to preserve Israel. Despite centuries of persecution, pogroms, and plots, the Jewish people remain. Why? Because God promised they would never be utterly destroyed (Jeremiah 31:35–37).

Every attempt to wipe them out—whether by Pharaoh, Haman, Hitler, or modern enemies—has failed. Purim celebrates this ongoing providence. It is not just history; it is prophecy in motion. God will preserve His people until the end, when they will look upon their true Deliverer.

The Prophetic Future

Purim foreshadows the Great Tribulation, when Israel will again face annihilation. Revelation 12 pictures the dragon seeking to destroy the woman (Israel), but God preserving her in the wilderness. Just as God preserved the Jews in Esther’s day, He will preserve them in the end.

Zechariah 12–14 show the climax: the nations will surround Jerusalem, but the Lord Himself will intervene. The greatest Purim is yet to come, when Israel is delivered not by Esther but by the returning King.

Esther as a Type of Christ

While Esther is not a perfect type, she foreshadows Christ in key ways:

- She risked her life to intercede for her people.
- She identified with her people in their peril.
- Through her, deliverance came.

Likewise, Christ interceded for us, identified with us, and brought deliverance through His sacrifice. Mordecai, too, as the one exalted after suffering, foreshadows Christ's exaltation after the cross.

The Hidden Hand in Our Lives

Purim is not just about Israel—it is about us. How often has God's hand guided us when we didn't see it? How many "coincidences" have been providences?

Romans 8:28 says:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Purim is Romans 8:28 in story form. The lot may be cast, the decree may be signed, but God works it for good.

Personal Application: Living Purim Today

For believers, Purim teaches:

1. **God's Providence** – Even when He seems hidden, He is at work.
2. **Courage in Crisis** – Like Esther, we must be willing to risk for the sake of others.
3. **Victory over the Enemy** – The enemy's plots will always be overturned in Christ.

4. **Joy in Deliverance** – Purim was marked by joy; our lives should be marked by rejoicing in God’s salvation.

Purim and the Church

The Church, too, faces enemies and persecutions. Yet Christ promised, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Just as Israel was preserved in Esther’s day, so the Church will be preserved until the Rapture. Purim is a reminder that God’s people, whether Israel or the Church, are indestructible because God is faithful.

The Mystery of Hiddenness

One final lesson of Purim is the mystery of hiddenness. God’s name is hidden in Esther, just as His face is often hidden in our trials. But hidden does not mean absent.

Isaiah 45:15 says:

“Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”

Purim teaches us to trust the God we cannot see, to believe in His providence even when His presence seems veiled.

Conclusion: The Feast of Hidden Providence

Purim is a feast of survival, reversal, and hidden providence. It celebrates the God who keeps His promises, overturns the enemy’s plots, and preserves His people against impossible odds.

This is the mystery of the feast: that even when His name is hidden, His hand is everywhere. Esther never mentions God, but every page proclaims Him. Purim reminds us that in history, prophecy, and personal life, nothing is coincidence—everything is providence.

And just as God delivered Israel in Persia, He will deliver them in the future. Just as He preserved them then, He will preserve them until the end. Just as He worked unseen then, He works unseen now.

So let us rejoice, as the Jews rejoiced on Purim, sending gifts and celebrating victory. For our God is faithful, His providence is sure, and His deliverance is certain.

12 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Hanukkah and the True Light

Introduction: A Feast of Lights and Dedication

Hanukkah, also known as the Feast of Dedication or Festival of Lights, is unique among the Jewish feasts. It was not commanded in the Law of Moses but instituted centuries later during the intertestamental period. It commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C.

The story is recorded not in our Old Testament but in the books of the Maccabees and in Jewish tradition. Antiochus had defiled the Temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and forbidding Jewish practices. The Maccabees rose up, fought bravely, and reclaimed the Temple. They cleansed it, rededicated it, and rekindled the lampstand. According to tradition, only one day's supply of consecrated oil remained, but it miraculously burned for eight days until more could be prepared.

Thus Hanukkah became an eight-day celebration of dedication, deliverance, and light. Though not one of the seven feasts of Leviticus, Hanukkah carries prophetic weight. It points to Christ, the true Light of the world, who brings dedication, cleansing, and victory over the enemy.

The Historical Foundation: Darkness and Defilement

To understand Hanukkah, we must grasp the historical backdrop. After Alexander the Great's empire was divided, Judea fell under the Seleucid dynasty. Antiochus IV Epiphanes sought to stamp out Jewish religion, enforcing Hellenization. He banned circumcision, burned copies of the Law, and desecrated the Temple with idols.

This was the "abomination of desolation" foreshadowed by Daniel (Daniel 11:31). It was a time of darkness, when it seemed the covenant people might be extinguished.

But God raised up the Maccabees—a small band of faithful Jews—who fought and miraculously defeated Antiochus's armies. They recaptured Jerusalem, purified the Temple, and reestablished worship. The lampstand (*menorah*) was relit, and Hanukkah was born.

The Feast of Dedication in the Bible

Though not commanded in the Torah, Hanukkah appears in the New Testament. John 10:22–23 says:

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch.”

Jesus Himself was present in the Temple during Hanukkah. This is significant—He did not dismiss it but used the occasion to reveal Himself as the true Shepherd and the Light of the world (John 10:25–30; John 8:12).

Thus Hanukkah is validated not as law but as prophetic picture. It is a feast that points to Christ.

The Miracle of the Oil

The traditional story of the oil burning eight days may not appear in the earliest sources, but it carries profound symbolism. The lampstand in the Temple symbolized God’s light among His people. Though the oil was insufficient, God multiplied it.

This mirrors the truth that God’s Spirit sustains His people even in impossible circumstances. Zechariah 4:6 connects the oil to the Spirit:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Hanukkah thus reminds us that God’s Spirit is sufficient to sustain His people and keep the light burning.

Prophetic Meaning: The Light of the World

The central symbol of Hanukkah is light. Lamps are lit for eight nights, each night growing brighter. This foreshadows Christ, who declared in John 8:12:

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

The world is dark with sin and oppression, just as Israel was under Antiochus. But Christ is the true Light, who shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5).

Hanukkah is not just about oil lamps; it is about the eternal Light that came into the world.

Dedication and Cleansing

The word *Hanukkah* means dedication. The Temple was cleansed and rededicated to God after defilement.

This foreshadows Christ cleansing the true temple—our hearts and lives. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 says:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you... For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Just as the Temple was rededicated, so our lives must be cleansed and dedicated to Christ.

Victory Over the Enemy

Hanukkah also celebrates victory against impossible odds. The Maccabees were outnumbered, yet God gave them victory. This points to the ultimate victory of Christ over the powers of darkness.

Colossians 2:15 says:

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Hanukkah reminds us that no matter how great the darkness or fierce the enemy, God gives victory.

Hanukkah and Prophecy of the End Times

Daniel’s prophecy of the abomination of desolation had a near fulfillment in Antiochus, but Jesus said it would have a future fulfillment as well (Matthew 24:15). Antiochus was a type of the Antichrist, who will desecrate the Temple in the Tribulation.

Thus Hanukkah not only looks back but forward. Just as God delivered Israel then, so He will deliver them again in the end. The true Light will return, cleanse the Temple, and establish His Kingdom.

Hanukkah and the Church

For the Church, Hanukkah holds spiritual lessons:

1. **Light in Darkness** – We are called to shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:15).

2. **Dedication** – Our lives must be consecrated as temples of the Spirit.
3. **Courage** – Like the Maccabees, we must stand against compromise and idolatry.
4. **Hope** – When resources seem insufficient, God multiplies them.

Hanukkah is not about tradition but about transformation.

The Mystery of Eight Days

Hanukkah lasts eight days, a number that often symbolizes new beginnings in Scripture. The eighth day is the day beyond completion, pointing to eternity.

The light burning eight days speaks of the eternal light of Christ, which never goes out.

Revelation 22:5 says:

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Hanukkah is thus a preview of the eternal state, when God Himself will be our light.

Jesus at Hanukkah: The True Light and Shepherd

In John 10, during Hanukkah, Jesus declared:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”
(John 10:27–28)

This was no accident. In a feast about light and dedication, Jesus revealed Himself as the true Light and Shepherd. Hanukkah became His platform for proclaiming eternal security and divine sonship.

Application for Today

Hanukkah challenges us to:

- **Cleanse the Temple** – Remove idols and sins from our hearts.
- **Dedicate Ourselves** – Live fully consecrated to Christ.
- **Shine the Light** – Reflect His light in a dark world.

- **Trust God's Providence** – Believe that He can sustain us even when resources seem insufficient.

Like the Jews in Esther's day (Purim) and in the Maccabees' day (Hanukkah), we face dark times. But like them, we can trust the hidden yet powerful hand of God.

Conclusion: The Light That Never Goes Out

Hanukkah is the Feast of Dedication, the Festival of Lights, the celebration of survival and providence. But beyond its history lies its mystery: it points to Christ, the true Light of the world, who cleanses the temple, gives victory over the enemy, and sustains His people forever.

This is the mystery of the feast: that the lamps of Hanukkah foreshadow the eternal Light, that the rededication of the Temple foreshadows the cleansing of our hearts, and that the victory of the Maccabees foreshadows the victory of Christ over Antichrist.

The oil burned for eight days, but Christ's light burns forever. The Temple was rededicated once, but our lives are dedicated eternally. The darkness of Antiochus passed, and the darkness of this world will also pass when the Light of the world returns.

13 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Gedaliah's Fast and Collapse

Introduction: A Fast Born of Tragedy

Among the Jewish fast days commemorating the destruction of the Temple and Israel's exile, one stands out for its soberness: the **Fast of Gedaliah**. Observed on the third day of the seventh month (the day after Trumpets, according to tradition), this fast remembers the assassination of **Gedaliah son of Ahikam**, the governor appointed over Judah after Jerusalem's destruction in 586 B.C.

Though not commanded in the Law of Moses, this fast became part of Israel's liturgical calendar, referenced in **Zechariah 7:5** and **8:19** among the "fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months."

It commemorates not just the death of one man but the collapse of Judah's last hope. With Gedaliah's assassination, the remnant left in the land scattered, and the destruction of Jerusalem was complete.

But as with all the feasts and fasts, Gedaliah's Fast carries deeper meaning. It is not just about a fallen governor—it is about the collapse of leadership, the consequences of sin, and the longing for the true King who will never fail.

The Historical Background

After Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, Nebuchadnezzar appointed **Gedaliah son of Ahikam** as governor over the remaining people in Judah (2 Kings 25:22–24; Jeremiah 40).

Gedaliah encouraged the remnant to serve Babylon peacefully and rebuild their lives. His leadership offered a fragile glimmer of stability after catastrophe. Many Jews who had fled began to return, harvesting vineyards and gathering supplies.

But this hope was short-lived. Ishmael son of Nethaniah, of royal blood, assassinated Gedaliah in Mizpah, along with many Jews and Babylonian officials (Jeremiah 41:2–3). Fear spread, and the remnant fled to Egypt, against Jeremiah's warnings. Judah was left desolate.

The murder of Gedaliah marked the final collapse of Jewish self-governance after the exile. The fast remembers this tragic turning point.

The Prophetic Significance of Leadership Collapse

Gedaliah's death is more than a historical footnote—it is a prophetic warning. When leadership collapses, the people scatter. Zechariah 13:7 says:

“Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”

This verse was applied to Christ, the ultimate Shepherd, but it also illustrates the pattern: when leaders fall, nations collapse, families crumble, and chaos follows.

The Fast of Gedaliah reminds us of the consequences of fallen leadership—whether political, spiritual, or moral.

The Four Fast Days of Mourning

Zechariah 8:19 mentions four fasts:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.”

The **fast of the seventh month** refers to Gedaliah’s Fast. Together, these fasts commemorate stages of Jerusalem’s fall:

- Fourth month: breach of Jerusalem’s walls.
- Fifth month: burning of the Temple.
- Seventh month: assassination of Gedaliah.
- Tenth month: beginning of the siege.

Gedaliah’s Fast is thus part of a larger cycle of mourning, each marking a step in Judah’s downfall.

Lessons from Gedaliah’s Fall

1. **Compromise Brings Collapse** – Gedaliah tried to maintain peace by compromise, but he underestimated the rebellion within.
2. **Failure to Heed Warning** – Johanan warned Gedaliah about Ishmael’s plot, but Gedaliah dismissed it (Jeremiah 40:13–16). His refusal to act cost him his life.
3. **The Danger of Pride and Ambition** – Ishmael’s ambition and pride destroyed the fragile remnant. One man’s lust for power devastated a nation.
4. **The Consequence of Sin** – Ultimately, Gedaliah’s death was part of God’s judgment for Judah’s long rebellion against Him.

Gedaliah’s Fast and Israel’s Mourning

For centuries, Jews have fasted on the third of Tishri to remember this collapse. The fast is a symbol of mourning not only for Gedaliah but for all leadership failures that led to exile.

But Zechariah 8:19 promises that one day these fasts will be turned into feasts of joy when Messiah restores Israel. Gedaliah’s Fast points forward to that hope.

Prophetic Application: The Antichrist and False Leadership

Just as Gedaliah's assassination marked the collapse of Judah's hope, so the coming of Antichrist will mark the world's ultimate deception. False leadership always ends in destruction.

But just as Israel's mourning will turn to joy in the Kingdom, so Christ will return to overthrow Antichrist and establish righteous leadership forever.

Christ the True Shepherd

Gedaliah's fall points us to the need for a greater leader. All human leaders are fragile, fallible, and temporary. But Christ is the true Shepherd who cannot be assassinated, cannot be deceived, and cannot fail.

John 10:11 says:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Where Gedaliah's death scattered the people, Christ's death gathers His people. Where Gedaliah's leadership collapsed, Christ's reign will stand forever.

The Fast as Warning and Hope

Gedaliah's Fast is both warning and hope:

- **Warning** – of the consequences of sin, rebellion, and failed leadership.
- **Hope** – of the future feast, when God will turn mourning into joy.

Zechariah 8:19 assures us that one day this fast will become celebration in the Messianic Kingdom.

Application for Believers

For us today, Gedaliah's Fast teaches:

1. **Beware of False Security** – Like Gedaliah, we can underestimate danger. Watchfulness is required.
2. **Heed God's Warnings** – Ignoring warnings can lead to collapse.

3. **Depend on Christ Alone** – Human leaders will fail, but Christ never does.
4. **Live in Hope** – Mourning will one day turn into joy when Christ reigns.

The Mystery of Collapse and Redemption

Why does God allow such collapses? Because in judgment He prepares for redemption. Gedaliah's death seemed like the end, but it pointed to Israel's need for the everlasting King.

The fast of collapse points to the feast of restoration. Out of destruction comes deliverance. Out of exile comes return. Out of mourning comes joy.

Conclusion: From Collapse to Kingdom

The Fast of Gedaliah is one of the lesser-known observances, yet it carries deep prophetic weight. It remembers the collapse of Judah's last remnant, the assassination of a governor, the scattering of a people. But beyond tragedy, it points to the greater truth: all human leadership fails, but Christ's reign endures.

This is the mystery of the feast: that mourning will one day be turned to joy, fasting to feasting, collapse to Kingdom. Gedaliah's Fast reminds us of the frailty of man and the faithfulness of God.

14 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – Tisha B'Av and Israel's Sorrows

Introduction: The Saddest Day

If Purim is the feast of joy and reversal, and Tabernacles is the feast of rejoicing and dwelling, then **Tisha B'Av** is the fast of sorrows. It is observed on the ninth day of the month of Av and is considered the darkest day in the Jewish year.

On this day, both the First and Second Temples were destroyed, centuries apart. On this day, Israel experienced calamity after calamity throughout history:

- The destruction of Solomon's Temple by Babylon (586 B.C.).

- The destruction of the Second Temple by Rome (A.D. 70).
- The crushing of the Bar Kokhba revolt (A.D. 135).
- The expulsion of Jews from England (1290).
- The expulsion of Jews from Spain (1492).
- Pogroms and persecutions often coinciding with this date.

Tisha B'Av has become the day of Israel's sorrows, the annual commemoration of exile, destruction, and loss. Yet, even this fast carries prophetic meaning. For in the midst of mourning lies the promise of redemption.

This essay will explore:

1. The historical tragedies of Tisha B'Av.
2. The theological meaning of Israel's sorrows.
3. The prophetic future hope of restoration.
4. The application for believers today.

The Destruction of the First Temple

The First Temple, built by Solomon, was the pride of Israel, the dwelling place of God's presence. But because of Judah's idolatry and rebellion, God allowed Babylon to destroy it. Jeremiah lamented in Lamentations 2:7:

"The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces..."

The walls fell, the Temple burned, the people exiled. This tragedy occurred on the ninth of Av, marking the beginning of centuries of sorrow.

The Destruction of the Second Temple

Centuries later, in A.D. 70, Rome destroyed the Second Temple. Jesus Himself had foretold it:

"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
(Matthew 24:2)

On the ninth of Av, Titus's army burned the Temple, slaughtered thousands, and scattered the Jews across the world. The day of destruction repeated itself, embedding Tisha B'Av as a day of national mourning.

The Continuation of Sorrows

Through history, the ninth of Av became a recurring date of tragedy: expulsions, massacres, and persecution. Whether coincidence or providence, the pattern is undeniable. Tisha B'Av became the symbol of Israel's sorrows—the long exile and the tears of God's chosen people.

Theological Meaning: The Cost of Sin

Why such sorrows? The Bible is clear: disobedience brings judgment. Deuteronomy 28 warned Israel of blessings for obedience and curses for rebellion. Tisha B'Av is the lived-out curse of disobedience.

But it is also more than punishment—it is discipline, designed to bring repentance. Lamentations 3:32 says:

“But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”

Tisha B'Av is not only about wrath but also about mercy. The sorrow is real, but it is not the end.

Israel the Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53 describes the Messiah as “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” In many ways, Israel as a nation has shared that title. Scattered, persecuted, hated, and afflicted, they embody sorrow. But just as Messiah's sorrows led to glory, so Israel's sorrows will lead to restoration.

Prophetic Meaning: Mourning Turned to Joy

Zechariah 8:19 promises:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth [Tisha B’Av], and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.”

One day, Tisha B’Av will no longer be a day of mourning but of rejoicing, when Messiah restores Israel and the Temple is rebuilt. The day of sorrow will become a day of celebration.

Tisha B’Av and the Tribulation

Prophetically, Tisha B’Av foreshadows the coming Tribulation—the ultimate time of Jacob’s trouble. Just as the Temple was destroyed twice, so Jerusalem will again be attacked and desecrated. But just as God preserved a remnant before, He will preserve Israel through the Tribulation.

Jeremiah 30:7 says:

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”

Tisha B’Av is a rehearsal of the sorrow to come—but also of the salvation that follows.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah

The book of Lamentations, traditionally read on Tisha B’Av, expresses the grief of Jerusalem’s fall. It is a raw, poetic expression of sorrow—but also of hope:

“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22–23)

Even in the midst of destruction, hope remains. Tisha B’Av reminds us that God’s mercy outlasts our sorrows.

Christ and the Temple

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying:

“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” (Luke 19:42)

He lamented because He knew Tisha B'Av was coming—the day when the city and Temple would be destroyed. Yet He also pointed to Himself as the true Temple: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

The destruction of the Temple points us to Christ, the true dwelling place of God.

The Church and Tisha B'Av

Though the Church is not under these fasts, we can learn from them:

- The seriousness of sin and judgment.
- The reality of suffering and exile in a fallen world.
- The faithfulness of God to preserve His people.
- The hope of ultimate restoration in Christ.

For us, Tisha B'Av reminds us to grieve over sin but also to rejoice in salvation.

Personal Application

Tisha B'Av challenges us personally:

- Do we mourn over sin as Israel mourned over the Temple?
- Do we trust God's providence in times of loss?
- Do we find our dwelling place in Christ, the true Temple?
- Do we live in hope that our sorrows will be turned into joy?

The Mystery of Shared Sorrows

One striking truth is that Israel's sorrows mirror Christ's sorrows. Both the nation and the Messiah are rejected, despised, and afflicted. Yet both will be vindicated. The destruction of the Temple points to the cross, and the restoration of Israel points to the resurrection.

In Christ, sorrow and joy meet, death and life meet, exile and homecoming meet.

Conclusion: From Sorrows to Joy

Tisha B'Av is the darkest day of Israel's calendar—the day of destruction, exile, and tears. But it is also a prophetic day, pointing to the final redemption when mourning will be turned into dancing, fasting into feasting, sorrow into joy.

This is the mystery of the feast: that Israel's sorrows are not the end, but the prelude to glory. The fast of destruction will one day be the feast of restoration.

For us, Tisha B'Av teaches us to mourn over sin, to trust God in sorrow, and to rejoice in the hope of Christ. The Man of Sorrows has borne our griefs, and by His stripes we are healed.

One day soon, Israel's sorrows will end. The Temple will be restored, the King will reign, and Tisha B'Av will be remembered no more.

15 of 15: Mystery of the Feasts – From Shadows to Fulfillment

Introduction: The Divine Blueprint

The feasts of Israel are not random festivals tied to agriculture or national memory. They are **God's prophetic calendar**, designed to foreshadow the redemptive work of Christ and the ultimate plan of God for history.

Paul writes in **Colossians 2:16–17**:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

The feasts were **shadows**, but the **substance is Christ**. They reveal Him in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, Spirit outpouring, return, and reign. They reveal Israel's story of sorrow and redemption. They reveal the Church's hope of rapture and glory. They reveal the world's future of judgment and restoration.

This final essay gathers the threads of the previous fourteen and shows how every feast moves us from shadow to substance, from type to truth, from rehearsal to reality.

The Spring Feasts: Fulfilled in Christ's First Coming

The first four feasts—Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost—have been fulfilled with remarkable precision in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Passover – The Lamb Slain

Jesus died on Passover as the true Lamb of God (John 1:29). His blood is our covering, and through Him, judgment passes over us.

Unleavened Bread – The Sinless One Buried

Jesus' body, without corruption, lay in the grave. As bread without leaven, He was holy and sinless.

Firstfruits – The Risen One

On the day after the Sabbath following Passover, Christ rose from the dead, the firstfruits of resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Pentecost – The Spirit Poured Out

Fifty days later, on Pentecost, the Spirit descended and the Church was born. The two loaves waved before the Lord pictured Jew and Gentile in one body.

These four feasts show that God fulfilled His calendar precisely in Christ's first coming.

The Fall Feasts: To Be Fulfilled in His Second Coming

The last three feasts—Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles—await fulfillment in Christ's return.

Trumpets – The Rapture

The trumpet will sound, and the Church will be caught up to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). This fulfills the Feast of Trumpets.

Day of Atonement – Israel's Repentance

Israel will look upon the One they pierced and mourn (Zechariah 12:10). A fountain will be opened for cleansing (Zechariah 13:1). This fulfills the Day of Atonement.

Tabernacles – The Kingdom

Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years, dwelling with His people (Zechariah 14:16). The ultimate fulfillment is in the New Jerusalem, where the tabernacle of God is with men (Revelation 21:3).

These three feasts point to Christ's second coming, Israel's restoration, and the Kingdom of God.

The Other Feasts and Fasts

In addition to the seven in Leviticus 23, Israel added Purim, Hanukkah, the Fast of Gedaliah, and Tisha B'Av. These also carry prophetic meaning:

- **Purim** – God's hidden providence in preserving His people.
- **Hanukkah** – The true Light of the world.
- **Fast of Gedaliah** – The tragedy of fallen leadership and the need for the true King.
- **Tisha B'Av** – Israel's sorrows, pointing to ultimate redemption.

These feasts remind us that even outside the Mosaic calendar, Israel's history is prophetic, pointing to Christ and the end of the age.

Shadows and Substance

The feasts are **shadows**. They are real, but they are not the final reality. A shadow is cast when the real object is present. The feasts were shadows cast backward by the body of Christ.

- The lamb of Passover was a shadow of the Lamb of God.
- The bread of Unleavened Bread was a shadow of the sinless Christ.
- The wave sheaf was a shadow of the resurrection.
- The two loaves were a shadow of the Church.
- The trumpet blasts were a shadow of the Rapture.
- The blood on Atonement was a shadow of Israel's national repentance.
- The booths of Tabernacles were a shadow of God's eternal dwelling.

Christ is the body that casts every shadow.

The Mystery of the Calendar

God's feasts are also a calendar of history. The Spring feasts were fulfilled in the past. The Fall feasts await fulfillment. We live in the long summer between Pentecost and Trumpets—the Church Age. When the trumpet sounds, the calendar will resume.

This shows God's sovereignty over history. Nothing is random. The times and seasons are in His hand.

Israel's Story in the Feasts

The feasts also tell Israel's story:

- Delivered from Egypt (Passover).
- Separated from sin (Unleavened Bread).
- Given new life (Firstfruits).
- Empowered for mission (Pentecost).
- Scattered in sorrow (Trumpets as call yet unheeded).
- Afflicted in judgment (Days of Awe / Atonement).
- Restored in Kingdom joy (Tabernacles).

Even Israel's fasts (Gedaliah, Tisha B'Av) show their sorrows and point to future joy (Zechariah 8:19).

The Church's Story in the Feasts

For the Church, the feasts speak too:

- Redeemed by the Lamb (Passover).
- Sanctified in Him (Unleavened Bread).
- Raised with Christ (Firstfruits).
- Indwelt by the Spirit (Pentecost).
- Awaiting the trumpet (Trumpets).
- Secure in atonement (fulfilled in Christ already).
- Longing for the tabernacle of God (Tabernacles).

The Church finds its entire story embedded in Israel's feasts because the Head of the Church is the Messiah of Israel.

The Prophetic Flow: From Cross to Crown

The feasts show the entire prophetic flow:

1. **Cross** (Passover).
2. **Tomb** (Unleavened Bread).
3. **Resurrection** (Firstfruits).
4. **Spirit** (Pentecost).
5. **Trumpet** (Rapture).
6. **Judgment and Repentance** (Atonement).
7. **Kingdom Glory** (Tabernacles).

From cross to crown, the feasts outline redemption, restoration, and reign.

Fulfillment in Christ

Every feast finds its "yes" in Christ. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:20:

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

- He is the Lamb of Passover.
- He is the Bread of Unleavened Bread.
- He is the Firstfruits of Resurrection.
- He is the Baptizer of Pentecost.
- He is the Trumpet of the Rapture.
- He is the High Priest of Atonement.
- He is the King of Tabernacles.

He is the substance of every shadow.

Practical Application: Living in Fulfillment

The feasts are not just theology—they are practical. They teach us to:

- Rest in Christ's finished work (Passover & Unleavened Bread).
- Walk in resurrection power (Firstfruits).
- Live in Spirit-filled mission (Pentecost).
- Watch for His return (Trumpets).
- Walk in holiness and repentance (Atonement).
- Rejoice in His presence (Tabernacles).

For the believer, every day is a feast fulfilled in Christ.

From Fasting to Feasting

The prophets promise that Israel's fasts will one day be turned into feasts (Zechariah 8:19). Mourning will become dancing, ashes will become beauty.

The shadow of fasting points to the substance of feasting. In the Kingdom, sorrow will be swallowed up in joy. Every Tisha B'Av will give way to Tabernacles. Every Gedaliah's Fast will give way to righteous leadership. Every shadow will yield to the light.

Conclusion: Christ the Fulfillment

The feasts of the Lord are mysteries unveiled in Christ. They are shadows pointing to Him, rehearsals of His work, previews of His glory. They show us God's calendar, Israel's story, the Church's hope, and the world's destiny.

This is the mystery of the feasts: that in them all, from Passover to Tabernacles, from Purim to Tisha B'Av, the shadows speak of Christ, and the substance is found in Him.

The Lamb has been slain. The Bread has been broken. The Firstfruits has risen. The Spirit has come. The Trumpet will sound. The Atonement will be complete. The Tabernacle will descend.

From shadows to fulfillment, the story is Christ.

Conclusion to *Mystery of the Feasts* – From Shadows to Substance, From Calendar to Crown

Looking Back: What We Have Learned

We have walked through the feasts of the Lord—fifteen studies unfolding God’s calendar of redemption. We have seen how every festival, fast, and appointed time in Israel’s history points to Jesus Christ. We have traced the line from Passover’s lamb to Tabernacles’ King, from Purim’s hidden hand to Hanukkah’s true Light, from Gedaliah’s collapse to Tisha B’Av’s sorrows.

Each feast, whether joyous or sorrowful, whispered of Christ. Each shadow was cast by His body. Each cycle of Israel’s worship rehearsed God’s eternal drama.

- In **the Spring feasts**, we saw His first coming: the Lamb slain, the sinless Bread, the risen Firstfruits, and the Spirit poured out.
- In **the Fall feasts**, we beheld His second coming: the Trumpet’s call, the Day of Atonement’s national redemption, the joy of Tabernacles fulfilled in His Kingdom.
- In **the fasts and later feasts**, we saw God’s hidden providence, His sustaining Light, the tragedy of fallen leadership, and the depths of Israel’s sorrows—yet always pointing forward to redemption.
- In the **Sabbath**, we saw the rhythm of rest that culminates in Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, our eternal rest.

This journey has revealed that God wastes nothing. Every date, every ritual, every fast, every feast was designed to foreshadow His Son.

The Mystery Resolved: Christ Is All in All

Paul said it best:

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”
(2 Corinthians 1:20)

The feasts are promises. Christ is the “yes.” The lamb, the bread, the sheaf, the trumpet, the booth, the oil, the light—they all resolve in Him.

The feasts are not just history lessons. They are **prophecies fulfilled and prophecies yet to be fulfilled**. They prove the reliability of God's Word. If Christ fulfilled the first feasts with exact precision, we can be absolutely certain He will fulfill the rest in the same way.

The Direction Forward: Watching and Waiting

Where do we go from here? The feasts not only explain the past; they chart the future.

- **For Israel:** The calendar assures their survival and restoration. Though they mourn in fasts, though they wander in exile, the day will come when their mourning is turned to joy, when they look upon Him whom they pierced and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."
- **For the Church:** The trumpet is next. We live between Pentecost and Trumpets, in the long summer of the Church Age. But the trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise, and we who remain will be caught up. Our calendar points upward.
- **For the World:** The feasts declare that judgment is coming. The Days of Awe foreshadow the Tribulation. The Day of Atonement foreshadows Christ's return in glory. The Tabernacles foreshadows His reign of peace. The world must be warned, for the calendar is marching forward.

The direction is clear: we must live ready for the trumpet, confident in Christ's finished work, and urgent in our witness.

From Shadow to Substance

The feasts were shadows. The substance is Christ. But even more, the feasts remind us that the story is not finished. The shadow has become substance in part, and will become substance in full when Christ returns.

Passover was fulfilled at the cross. Pentecost was fulfilled at the Spirit's coming. Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles await the King. The fasts will turn to feasts. The shadows will give way to the Kingdom.

Living the Feasts Every Day

Though we do not keep the feasts as Israel did, we live their truths every day:

- Every day is **Passover**, because we live under the Lamb's blood.

- Every day is **Unleavened Bread**, because we walk in holiness.
- Every day is **Firstfruits**, because we live in resurrection power.
- Every day is **Pentecost**, because the Spirit indwells us.
- Every day we wait for **Trumpets**, listening for His call.
- Every day we live in light of **Atonement**, assured of cleansing in His blood.
- Every day is a foretaste of **Tabernacles**, as He dwells in us now and will dwell with us forever.

The feasts are not past—they are present in Christ and future in glory.

The Call of the Hour

What do we do with all this knowledge? We turn it into worship, watchfulness, and witness.

- **Worship** – Marveling at God’s wisdom, praising Him for His perfect plan.
- **Watchfulness** – Living ready for the trumpet, the Rapture, the King.
- **Witness** – Sharing the gospel with urgency, for the calendar is advancing.

The feasts are not only for study but for transformation. They remind us that history is not random. The world is not adrift. God has set the times, and His Son will fulfill them.

Conclusion: From Calendar to Crown

The feasts began as agricultural cycles in Israel’s land. They became memorials of Israel’s history. They became prophetic shadows of Christ’s work. And they will culminate in His eternal reign.

This is the mystery of the feasts: **from shadows to fulfillment, from fasting to feasting, from exile to homecoming, from cross to crown.**

We end this series not with sorrow but with anticipation. The trumpet will sound. The King will return. The fasts will be turned into feasts. The tabernacle of God will be with men.

Until then, we live in awe, walk in faith, and long for His appearing.