

Theory #5

God's Prophetic Calendar

Besides embedding within the Genesis 1 creation account an illustration of His ultimate purpose, God has given several other prophetic clues to His planned agenda for mankind. For example, one can study the story of redemption as it is hidden in the constellations. Psalm 19 tells us: "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard (speaking of the stars). (But) their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world."

Here is another version: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Psalm 19:1-4

In other words, you don't need to be able to read and write or have money to buy books to know the story of redemption. It is written in the stars and has been known among the ancients for thousands of years. References to these accounts are noted in Matthew 2, for example, when the magi came from the East searching for the promised Messiah based on seeing His sign in the stars. This was not the raving of primitive, superstitious or necessarily pagan astrologers, but the genuine response of learned men to information that was gleaned from the wise men and astronomers of Babylon, probably conveyed to them originally by the prophet Daniel during his captivity in the 6th century BC. Ancient believers were familiar with the fact that God had placed His story in the stars and they passed this information on to subsequent generations.

The constellations of the Zodiac¹ move and interact with one another, telling this story for all those who have eyes to see. The names of these constellations were known from the earliest days, as some of them are recorded in the book of Job, believed to be the earliest book of the Bible. Genesis 1 tells us that the lights that God placed in the expanse of the heavens were to not only separate the day from the night, but to function as signs (and to mark seasons, days and years.) I believe the reference to God setting the stars in place in Gen.1:14 is a reference to the constellations through which God would tell His redemptive story, as signs to those on earth who would take these verses literally.² These signs transcend mere storytelling however. They are sign-posts, literally written in the stars, telling of events that are about to happen in real time. Like astronomical prophets, sentries standing as mute heralds of impending events, they forecast the immediate future. The juxtaposition of constellations sometimes produces rare spectacles. Here is one of them:

Chapter 12 of the book of the Revelation says, “And a *great sign appeared in heaven*: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth, he might devour her child....And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

As I understand it, there are literally conjunctions in the stars that, at a certain point in history, tell this story. The constellation called Bethulah, the Hebrew word for “virgin,” represents this woman (more commonly known as Virgo, but representing Israel) and one called Draco represents the dragon, and

¹ The Zodiac, just like everything else, has been counterfeited by Satan for his own deceptive and dark purposes. Hence, the “science” of astrology.

² Meaning that this may not be concurrent with the creation of the universe as a whole and all of its galaxies, but that Genesis is describing the refurbishing of the earth for man’s habitation. So the stars placed in v.14 are those that would be meaningful to mankind as signs. The sun and the moon were placed as indicators of seasons and years and to control weather.

another one represents the child. The woman in the constellation appears to stand on the moon and has twelve stars clustered around her head, another constellation. The dragon constellation actually appears to be cast down to earth in its movement across the night sky. The woman is “clothed with the sun” because at the point where this constellation tells its story, the sun is below the horizon, thereby allowing the constellation to be seen. Astronomers who study these verses can predict when these alignments will take place.

The prophetic signs in the stars are a fascinating study and one that brings infinitely greater richness to some of these enigmatic passages in Scripture.³ Even the names of these constellations, preserved from antiquity, and the individual stars comprising them indicate their relevance to the redemptive story: one star is called The Branch (Jesus is called a branch from the stem of Jesse and My Servant the Branch); Coma (The Woman and Child); Victima (The Victim Slain); Crux (The Cross); Serpens (The Serpent); Orion (The Coming Light). Other stars are named Arm of the Lord, Chief Shepherd, Desired of All Nations, Governor, Great Shepherd of the Sheep, King, Lamb, Light, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Prince, Redeemer, Scepter, Wounded One, Bruised. The Bible says that God calls the stars by name. Early Jewish historian Josephus says they were named by Seth, the third son of Adam. Whatever the case, the stars clearly declare the glory of God and the plan of salvation, in detail. (Ps. 19:1) From the earliest days, before the Bible was written, mankind has been able to know the redemptive story through the witness God has placed in the heavens.

For more on this subject, one could visit www.biblicalastronomy.com. Robert Scott Wadsworth has spent the greater part of his adult life studying these truths. His CD, “Biblical Astronomy: A Voice Crying in the Heavens” is worth watching for content. Another site, <http://www.philologos.org> carries the book, “The Witness of the Stars” by EW Bullinger, written in 1893. Or read “God’s Voice in the Stars: Zodiac Signs and Bible Truth” by Kenneth C. Fleming. Also “The Gospel in the Stars” by Joseph A. Seiss.

³ Some sites that specialize in these astronomical phenomena are: www.biblicalastronomy.com; [http://philologos.org/ eb-tws/default.htm](http://philologos.org/eb-tws/default.htm);

ECLIPSES

There are also certain solar and lunar eclipses that serve as messages to mankind: particular lunar eclipses speak to the nation of Israel, and certain solar eclipses speak to the Gentiles. There have been interesting patterns of eclipses appearing on particular Jewish feast days that seem to be sending certain messages to the nation of Israel. The pattern is repeated when events of huge significance happen in Israel's history: the eviction of all Jews from Spain in the 15th century; the reestablishment of the state of Israel; and the recapture of Jerusalem all were heralded with a particular and very precise pattern of eclipses. We will share more about this (in Theory #13) in relation to the Rapture⁴ of the Church.

THE FEASTS of ISRAEL

Another device God has built into His prophetic calendar comprises the seven annual Feasts of Israel. Each feast commemorates a major historical event in Israel's past but is also a type representing an actual future event on the prophetic calendar. To make it even more phenomenal, each future prophetic event typified by the feasts has been or will be fulfilled on the very day of the feast that represents it!

There are four spring feasts and three fall feasts. The prophetic events represented by the four spring feasts have already been fulfilled, which we detail below. The three fall feasts begin in the Hebrew month of Tishri (corresponding to our September /October and the seventh month of the Hebrew religious calendar) and are yet to be fulfilled, but there is every reason to believe that they will be fulfilled literally on the very day each feast occurs, just as the spring feasts have been, and probably all in the same year as well.

Let's look at these seven feasts and what they signify in more detail.

THE SPRING FEASTS

The spring feasts occur during a season called the "Early Rains," beginning in the month of Nisan (in Hebrew called Abib and corresponding most closely to our March), the first month in the Jewish religious

⁴ The sudden "catching-away" of believers to heaven.

calendar.⁵ The term “early rains” has prophetic significance. Joel 2:23 says: “So rejoice, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the Lord your God; for He has given you *the early rain for your vindication*. And He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before.”

The “early rain for your vindication” appears to be a prophetic hint that during the early or spring rains (coincident with the spring feasts), sin would be wiped away and “Israel” (comprising all true believers) would be vindicated or justified. Hosea says in 6:3: “So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, *like the spring rain watering the earth*.” Jesus indeed came in the spring,⁶ at the start of the barley harvest. (The term “latter rain” also has prophetic significance which we shall see shortly.)

The four spring feasts are:

- 1) Passover
- 2) Feast of Unleavened Bread
- 3) Feast of First Fruits
- 4) Feast of Weeks

Let’s look at them one by one.

#1: Passover is the feast that was instituted during the days of Israel’s captivity in Egypt. Israel had gone into Egypt originally because there was severe famine in the land of Canaan. Eventually, after Joseph⁷ died, they became slaves there and for 400 years labored under the oppression of tyranny. Finally God raised up Moses to deliver them out of slavery and back into the Promised Land of milk and honey that

⁵ Nisan corresponds roughly to our March or April. Its inception is determined by the first new moon following the vernal equinox.

⁶ We are not saying here that Jesus was born in the spring, or that He began His public ministry in the spring. We are saying that He “came” to deliver Israel from their sins in the spring.

⁷ The story of Israel’s sojourn and captivity in Egypt begins in Genesis 37. If you remember, Jacob had 12 sons. Joseph, the second to youngest, was a favorite of his father and thus was despised by his older brothers. They eventually sold him to Midianite traders who took him to Egypt. Joseph later distinguished himself in service to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer and captain of the bodyguard, and eventually became second to Pharaoh in authority. Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt in search of food many years later not knowing that Joseph had risen to such a position of power. Eventually they reconciled and the whole family including Jacob himself came to Egypt and settled there. Later, when the Pharaoh that knew Joseph died, the Israelites were placed into slavery in the land. Finally, 400 years later God raised up Moses to lead His chosen people out of captivity into the Promised Land.

God had bequeathed to Abraham so many centuries before.⁸ If you remember, there were 10 plagues that God brought on the Egyptians before Pharaoh would let the people go.⁹ The last plague was the death of every first-born of man and beast in all the land of Egypt. The Hebrews were spared from this plague by killing an unblemished lamb and sprinkling its blood on the lintel and doorposts of their dwellings. This sign identified them as followers of Almighty God and the death angel “passed over” their houses during the night and they were spared; thus the name “Passover.”

Amazingly, Jesus was slain as Israel’s prophesied Passover Lamb on the very day of Passover, most probably in 30 AD, thus fulfilling this feast day.¹⁰ Not only was He slain on the very day, but died at the very hour when the evening sacrifice was offered (3 pm).¹¹ Passover is the feast that represents **Faith** (the Israelites had to trust God’s word that they would be spared if they followed His instructions) and also **Salvation** or **Redemption**. It is detailed in Lev.23:5 and Ex.12:5.

There is much symbolism in this literal event from antiquity.

- Egypt represents Satan’s kingdom, and bondage to sin.
- Pharaoh represents Satan who holds us as captive slaves.
- The houses of the Israelites represent our souls that are saved from death (hell) by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, our Savior.
- Moses represents Jesus, our heavenly Deliverer.
- The Red Sea represents separation, being “set apart,” that crossing over from death to life that starts us on our journey of sanctification.¹²
- The wilderness wandering represents the subsequent trials, tests and tribulations of the sanctification process after we are saved out of Satan’s kingdom.¹³ It is during this period that

⁸ Gen. 15:18

⁹ Exodus 7–12: Ten plagues: Waters turned to blood, swarms of frogs, gnats, insects, pestilence on livestock, boils, hail, locusts, thick darkness, death of the first born.

¹⁰ See Passover Chart following this chapter for details on the fulfillment of this feast.

¹¹ Interestingly, He was bound to the cross according to John’s gospel at the time of the morning sacrifice (9am) when the lambs were bound to the horns of the altar. He died concurrent with the slaughter of the lambs for the evening sacrifice.

¹² Remember Pharaoh pursued them to the Red Sea, and his army was drowned when the waters returned to their normal flow.

God's camp is purged of false brethren. (Sin in the camp is unacceptable.) The tests are designed to reveal those who are only interested in what they can get out of God, but do not really love Him.

- The Law represents the righteousness that God expects of His children but which we cannot achieve without the Holy Spirit. (The Law was given on Pentecost.)
- The Jordan River represents the transition to true mature faith after we have been sorely tested. Those who are disobedient and faithless do not make this transition. (Heb. 3:8-19)
- The giants in the Land represent demonic obstacles to abundant life and the battles we must fight in order to learn how to be co-laborers with Christ as He reclaims His Kingdom. (Testing, discipline, purification and warfare precede our accession into glory and peace. We must fight the good fight of faith in order to be victorious.)
- The Promised Land represents the peaceful fruit of righteousness, the Kingdom of Heaven and the Millennium, abundant life and sanctified living.

#2: Unleavened Bread was a seven-day feast that started the day after Passover.¹⁴ (Seven is the number of perfection and completion.) All leaven was to be removed from the house prior to the commencement of this feast. Anyone who violated this edict was to be cut off from the people. Leaven (or yeast) puffs up, and pride (or a puffed-up heart) is the sin that predisposes mankind to rebellion. Getting rid of leaven is akin to getting rid of our pride and admitting our need for a Savior. This feast symbolizes the identification and admission of our guilt and removal of sin from our hearts by repentance. We must recognize our sin and surrender it to God if we are to be saved. We must evict it from our lives and not indulge it or we will lose fellowship with God and His Church. (1 Cor.6:9,10) This seven-day feast also symbolizes the 7000-year redemptive plan of God and deliverance from the kingdom of Satan, where we are held captive to do his will. In our natural state, we are slaves to sin and full of leaven. Jesus is the unleavened "Bread of Life." He was born in Bethlehem, which translates "house of bread." He is the

¹³ Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years. Forty is the number of testing. We struggle with the allure of the old life and our old sin patterns during this testing period and some actually fall back into them. Some Israelites did fall in the wilderness and were not able to enter the Promised Land because of disobedience. This is a good indication that faith and obedience are required if we want to enter heaven. Heb. 3:17-19

¹⁴ Lev.23:6. The term "Unleavened Bread" was later used to refer to the entire complex of feasts associated with Passover. It actually begins at sundown on the evening of Passover.

house of unleavened bread. Jesus paid the penalty for all human sin and thus made it possible for sin to be removed from our “houses” (our bodies are to be temples of the Holy Spirit). Thus this feast represents **Repentance** from the bondage of sin and **Sanctification** or **Purification**.

Jesus fulfilled this feast also, being buried at the very onset of this feast day, and as His body lay in the grave for three days and three nights, His spirit descended into hell and “took captivity captive.” Suffice it to say, He removed the leaven of sin from mankind’s shoulders by paying for it in His own blood.

#3: Feast of First Fruits was held on the day after the first regular Sabbath following Passover, thus always on a Sunday. (Lev. 23:11) Israel was required to offer a wave offering from the fruit of the ground at the onset of the spring barley harvest. The grain offered was still green and was called the first fruits. Jesus rose from the grave at the very beginning of the feast of First Fruits (Saturday after sundown, which in Jewish reckoning is the start of Sunday), three days and three nights after He was laid to rest in the grave (which occurred on Wednesday just at sundown¹⁵), thus fulfilling this feast literally also on the very day it occurred. He was “the First Fruits of our redemption.”¹⁶ We will all follow Him in resurrection if we continue in faith. Scripture says that we are “a new creation. Old things have passed away. New things have come.” Perhaps that is the reason for the waving of the *green* barley sheaf. We are to be new, childlike, tender plants before the Lord. This feast, then, represents **Hope** in our eventual **Resurrection** as the Bride of Christ. It may also be the very same feast day on which the Church will be resurrected into glory (the Rapture).¹⁷ Paul tells us: “For since by a man (Adam) came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.”¹⁸ (1Cor.15:21-23)

The term “Passover” eventually came to signify the entire week of festivities comprising Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. The Feast of Unleavened Bread itself was simply called “the Feast.” Interestingly, God also instituted a makeup Passover 30 days after the regular Passover for those who

¹⁵ See Passover Chart following this chapter for details on the timing of the crucifixion and resurrection.

¹⁶ 1 Cor.15:20

¹⁷ Or the Rapture may occur on the Feast of Trumpets.

were defiled on the regular Passover (i.e., those who had recently touched a dead body or something unclean) or who were on a long journey. Thus the makeup Passover would be on Iyyar 14, Unleavened Bread on Iyyar 15, and the makeup First Fruits on Iyyar 17. It is conceivable that the “dead in Christ” will be raptured on this makeup feast of First Fruits, since they are defiled by death. (You can read about this in Numbers 9.)

#4: The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was the fourth feast of the year and was held 50 days after the first regular Sabbath following Passover. Seven Sabbaths were counted, and the next day was celebrated as Pentecost or Shavuot. The Feast of Weeks therefore is always on a Sunday also. You can read about it in Lev.23:15-21. (The Jews have changed the way they calculate these feasts so as to disassociate them from Christ. They no longer follow the biblical formula.)

Pentecost (meaning 50) was also a symbol of the Jubilee. Jubilees were instituted by God and were mandated to occur every 50 years in Israel. Though Israel failed to carry out these instructions, they were supposed to free all Jewish slaves or indentured servants and forgive all debts every seven years (called a sabbatical year). After seven sabbatical years, on the fiftieth year, all land was to revert to its original owner as well. Jews were also not supposed to charge interest on their loans either. This was God’s way of keeping capitalism from getting out of hand and made certain that the rich didn’t just keep getting richer and the poor poorer. It also prevented anyone from accumulating large tracts of land and becoming a feudal landlord. The tribes could, by this means, retain their original allotment of territory and one tribe didn’t have the opportunity to take over the entire inheritance. And it gave those who had fallen on hard times an opportunity to regain their footing and start over. It was supposed to be a joyful time and Pentecost perfectly reflects that. And as the Jewish believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on that very day in 30 AD, their slavery to Satan was abolished, their sin-debt was paid, and they were returned to their rightful owner, God the Father. It is a time of renewal of purpose, hope, celebration, and rejoicing in God’s calling.

On this feast two leavened loaves are waved before the Lord, representing both Jewish and Gentiles believers (who are sinners). Only Jesus was sinless. Jesus was the first fruit of the harvest of saints comprising both Jews and Gentiles.

Historically, this feast is also believed to memorialize the day that the Law was given to Israel on Mt. Sinai, inaugurating the Old Covenant with the nation of Israel, which occurred 50 days after they left Egypt. Three thousand died that day for worshipping the golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the 10 commandments.¹⁹ This feast was *fulfilled* when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the fledgling Church at Pentecost in 30 AD, inaugurating the *New Covenant*. The disciples were transformed that day from fearful followers to bold witnesses and they turned Jerusalem upside down. Three thousand souls were given *new* life that same day as they repented, were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. This feast then could be said to represent **Freedom** from sin and **Empowerment**, the entrance of the Holy Spirit and the Church Age. The Church was empowered at Pentecost to carry out Christ's commands and to be His hands and feet. The Church comprises both Jewish and Gentile believers. (The Jewish believers are the rootstock of the olive tree, and the Gentiles are the wild olive branch that is grafted onto the Jewish root.)

There are some who believe, myself included, that, since the Church²⁰ began on Pentecost, it will also end on a feast day, very possibly a future Pentecost. See the Passover Chart following this chapter for a depiction of the various ways God fulfilled the spring feasts.

FOUR-MONTH INTERVAL

Roughly four months intervene between the spring feasts and the fall feasts. Four is the number of testing. The world, and the Jews, are being tested during the almost 2000-year interval²¹ between the

¹⁹ Exodus 32:28.

²⁰ The Church being those who have received Jesus personally, as their Lord, Savior and future Bridegroom.

²¹ Why *almost* 2000 years? Because God will "shorten the time" to prevent the annihilation of the human race. See Theory #6 for more on this.

fulfillment of the spring feasts and the fulfillment of the fall feasts.²² Will they accept their Messiah? Time is running out.

This four-month interval also symbolizes the time of testing, purging and sanctification that the Church will undergo before she is caught up to glory. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 4:12-19: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed but in that name let him glorify God. For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.” This is the heritage of the Church during this age.

THE FALL FEASTS

James says, speaking to believers in James 5:7: “Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil (the harvest), being patient about it, until it gets the early and the late rains.” This is a hint that the spiritual harvest will conclude with “the latter rains” fulfillment of the fall feast cycle. Let’s look at these three fall feasts in more detail.

The Feast of Trumpets²³ is the first feast in the fall cycle. It occurs on the first day of the month of Tishri (falling sometime during our September/October).²⁴ Tishri is the seventh month of the religious calendar

²² Hosea says, “Come let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days (2000 years); He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him.”

²³ Lev.23:24

²⁴ Trumpets is believed by some to be the day that the city of Jericho fell. Israel had walked around the city once a day for six days and on the seventh day they walked around the city seven times, blew their trumpets and shouted and the walls of the city fell down flat and they took the city. I don’t know of any biblical evidence for this theory.

for Israel and the first month of the civil calendar. It is also called Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. (Seven is the number of completion and with this feast, the Church is completed and enters its 1000-year Sabbath rest; and with the fulfillment of these three final feasts, the redemptive plan of God is finished.)

This feast is to be a Sabbath, a holy convocation. No work is to be done. It is a day of rest, with blowing of trumpets. Some believe that this day will be fulfilled by the **Rapture** of the Church, seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ. Paul says in 1 Cor.15:51-55: "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Others do not believe it is fulfilled by the Rapture because they believe there is no way of knowing when the Rapture will happen. Some do not believe the "trumpet of God" mentioned by Paul in his description of the Rapture²⁵ is equivalent to the trumpets blown by men at the Feast of Trumpets, but is more akin to the trumpet blasts at the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. Those were clearly blasts from a "trumpet of God." (Exodus 19:16-19).

Whatever the case, this feast has *some* prophetic significance and will be fulfilled at the Second Coming. It may represent the Wedding of the Messiah or the gathering of His Elect from the four winds when He returns. No one knows for absolute certain. We could guess that in some way the Feast of Trumpets heralds the triumphant return of Christ for His own on that very day

²⁵ 1 Thess. 4:13: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout (perhaps "the Bridegroom Cometh!"--the traditional shout of the bridegroom's entourage as they process to the bride's home on the wedding day), with the voice of the archangel, and *with the trumpet of God*; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

The Feast of Atonement²⁶ (Yom Kippur) occurs on Tishri 10. It is a Sabbath, and a day of confession, of humbling one's soul before God and acknowledging one's sin. No work may be done. Scripture declares that any Jew who does not comply with this feast would be cut off from his people. This feast symbolizes the awakening of Israel to her sin of rejecting her Messiah and her need of confession and humiliation. Any Israelite who does not recognize this sin of unbelief when Jesus returns will be cut off from the believing remnant of Israel and assigned a place with the evildoers.

The Feast of Trumpets starts on the new moon and is the only feast to do so. It is celebrated for two days outside of Jerusalem because it took time for the message of the new moon's certification to reach the outlying areas. Counting from the start of Rosh Hashanah to the end of Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, there is a total of 10 days. If we only count the days *between* these two feasts, there are seven days, representing most likely the Tribulation when Israel is brought to her knees through desperate circumstances. These days are called "days of Awe." Yom Kippur is the most important annual fast-day for Israel, a time of repentance for sin and preparation for judgment.

In Matthew 23:37-39, Jesus says: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" At the Second Coming, Zechariah tells us that Israel will look on Him whom they have pierced (Jesus) and will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son: "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."²⁷ And the book of Revelation tells us: "Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him—even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen."²⁸ So we can safely say this feast represents Israel's **Grief**, and

²⁶ Lev. 23:27-32

²⁷ Zechariah 12:10 NASB

²⁸ Rev. 1:7 NLT

Repentance over her failure. It may also symbolize the **Return** of Jesus in power and glory, when every eye will see Him and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord over all the earth.

The Feast of Tabernacles²⁹ or Sukkot is held on the fifteenth day of Tishri. It, too, is a seven-day feast. The first day of the feast is a Sabbath. The day following the seventh day (the eighth day) is also a Sabbath. No work can be done on those two days. This feast commemorates the fact that God had Israel live in “booths” or tents during their sojourn in the wilderness. These were temporary dwellings and Israel was commanded to build temporary booths during the Feast of Tabernacles throughout their generations and live in them for seven days each year during this feast. It may also commemorate the birth of Christ in a stable in Bethlehem, although there is no scriptural reference to the date of Christ’s birth. But it was after the birth of Christ that God tabernacled or dwelt among men.

This is also called the **Feast of Ingathering** because it takes place at the final harvest of the year during “the latter rains.” This feast may represent the judgment of the unbelievers at Christ’s return (the grapes who are crushed) or the start of the **Millennial Reign**, when all believers will have been harvested from the earth, gathered into the Lord’s barn, the earth will have been threshed and the chaff burned. It is also when God Himself will “tabernacle” with men again and will live among us, ruling and reigning for 1000 years. The seven days may symbolize the 7000-year redemption effort and the completion of that effort in the Millennium. The eighth day of the feast, a Sabbath, may symbolize the start of the eternal state (following the Millennium), a time of rest, when the new heavens and new earth are created and the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. In the New Jerusalem there will be no Temple, for the Lord is its Temple. There will be no night because it is illumined by the glory of God. The city will be a light to all the earth. Nothing unclean will enter and there will be a river of living water coming from the throne of God to water the Trees of Life on either side of the river producing twelve kinds of fruit for the healing of the nations. John tells us in John 7:37-38: “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast (the eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles), Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of

²⁹ Lev. 23:34

living water.”” This feast then can be said to be fulfilled by the start of the **Millennial Reign** of Christ, the final **Harvest** of the gospel and ultimately the beginning of **Eternity**.

FEAST SUMMARY

The first three feasts were fulfilled by Jesus during His first coming.

The fourth feast was fulfilled with the coming of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church Age at Pentecost 49 days (seven weeks: seven is the number of completion) after Jesus rose from the dead. On this feast, the “purchased possession” is received back from Satan in Jubilee.

The end of the Church Age may come then with the fifth annual feast (the first fall feast), the Feast of Trumpets (or it may end on Pentecost, the same feast it started on).

The final three feasts are fulfilled during the Second Coming of Christ.

This is an amazing testimony to the truth of the Bible. No one could have concocted this perfect alignment of historical events, commemorative feast days and prophetic events except God Himself. Only God is sovereign over the universe and can bring events to pass on a perfect timetable. No one could have put the stars in their places and assigned them their circuits but the Creator of heaven and earth. So we look expectantly for the beginning of the fall feast cycle to be fulfilled in our day and for signs in the heavens as prophesied.

JEWISH WEDDING CUSTOM

Another way that we see the story of salvation demonstrated (for the Jewish seeker in particular) is embedded in the Jewish wedding customs. This is a fascinating illustration of God's redemptive program as well. Here's how the Jewish wedding custom works:

When a man finds a maiden he delights in, he must approach her father and ask for her hand in marriage. If he is a suitable candidate, the father asks the daughter if she consents to marry. If she does, the

prospective groom must supply “the bride price.” This is whatever the girl’s father demands.³⁰ The couple then shares a cup of wine³¹ and the betrothal is sealed. From this point on the couple is committed to the future marriage and it takes a divorce to nullify the agreement. Then the groom returns to his father’s house for up to two years³² and builds on an addition for his bride and himself.³³ When the groom’s father is satisfied that the bridal chamber is just perfect, he gives the son the go-ahead to procure his bride. The son then gathers his groomsmen and attendants and heads for the bride’s home at midnight. In the meantime, the bride has been preparing herself for the wedding.³⁴ Her white wedding clothes have been prepared.³⁵ Her skin, hair and nails have been burnished and oiled. She mends relationships, expresses gratitude to her family, and sanctifies her heart for marriage. The bride participates in a ritual bath,³⁶ a Mikveh, to prepare herself as a spotless bride. Her attendants are on notice, to be ready at any moment, because no one but the father of the groom knows when the wedding day will arrive.

Once that day comes, the father announces to the son that the chamber³⁷ is ready. The groom leaves his father’s house at midnight with his entourage and heads into the street, with his groomsmen ahead of him shouting, “The bridegroom cometh! The bridegroom cometh!” and blowing the shofar.³⁸ When they get within earshot of the bride’s home, she and her attendants hear the call of the bridegroom and immediately arise, don their white apparel and head out into the street to meet the groom. Together they return to the father’s house, where they consummate the marriage in the bridal chamber for seven days.³⁹ After the bridal week is completed, the groom brings the bride out of the chamber to the delight of the

³⁰ For example, Laban required Jacob to work for seven years for his daughter, Rachel. Of course, Laban tricked Jacob and gave him Leah, his unattractive elder daughter, and then required Jacob to work an additional seven years for Rachel. In Jesus case, the bride price was His own blood.

³¹ Symbolic of Communion, which Christ participated in with his apostles at the Last Supper, before He paid the bride price.

³² Symbolized by the Ascension and the intervening two millennia.

³³ “I go to prepare a place for you.”

³⁴ Symbolic of sanctification.

³⁵ Symbolic of the righteous acts of the saints.

³⁶ Symbolic of baptism.

³⁷ Symbolic of the New Jerusalem.

³⁸ Symbolic of the Rapture.

³⁹ See Genesis 29:27: “Complete the bridal week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years. And Jacob did so and completed her week, and he (Laban) gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.”

assembled guests. The happy couple, treated as king and queen, then enjoy a sumptuous feast with their guests.⁴⁰

This portrays for us the plan of God to procure His own bride: Jesus, the Groom, delights in the Bride, the Church. He pays the bride-price with His own blood. Then He returns to His Father's house in heaven (which he did at the Ascension) for up to 2000 years (symbolized by the two years) and prepares a place for her, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21). Jesus said to his apostles: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)

When the Father determines that the dwelling is ready, He sends the Son to fetch His bride.⁴¹ This is a picture of the Rapture of the Church. We are to "wait for His Son from heaven... who delivers us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. 1:10) Then we return to the Father's house (heaven) with the Son, our Groom, where the wedding is consummated. A cup of wine, symbolized by Communion, is shared between the Bride and Groom at the wedding ceremony signifying acceptance of the new covenant of marriage. At the Last Supper, "[Jesus] took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'" (Matt. 26:27-29) When the apostles shared this cup with Jesus, it symbolized this marriage covenant.

The wedding is consummated⁴² in heaven for seven years, after which the Bride is brought forth from the wedding chamber and presented to the assembled guests, presumably those who will have survived the

⁴⁰ Symbolic of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

⁴¹ Jesus said, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but Father alone." (Matthew 24:35-37) Jesus with His entourage will "descend from heaven with a shout (possibly "The Bridegroom cometh!), the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (symbolized by the street), and so we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thess.4:15-17)

⁴² What that means in literal terms is unknown.

Tribulation and judgment of the sheep and goat nations on earth, ⁴³ who then celebrate with the Bride and Groom (King and Queen) at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. During that seven years in the bridal chamber, the Tribulation⁴⁴ is taking place on the earth, but the Bride is safely ensconced in her Husband's kingdom, far from the devil's reach. After the seven years are completed, the Bride will accompany the Groom to the earth as He vanquishes the opposition, refurbishes the earth and establishes a new Eden-like Kingdom where He will rule and reign for 1000 years. Together they will enforce righteousness and peace on a tranquil planet, one many believe will be restored to its Edenic state after near total destruction (at least in the area of the Kingdom boundaries given in Genesis 15⁴⁵). Each man will sit under his own fig tree with none to make them afraid and the wolf and lamb will graze together "in all My holy mountain."

As you can see, this is a portrait of the Rapture and the Wedding Feast prophesied in Scripture. It is one more evidence that this intricate and multilayered plan will unfold just as God has shown us. Now is the time for all of us to decide where our loyalty and love lie.

⁴³ We speculate as to the identity of the assembled guests, who may comprise Old Testament saints who died in fellowship with God, but did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit (or they may actually be part of the Bride), those who treated Jews and Christians with compassion during the Tribulation, those who did not take the mark of the Beast or worship him, and perhaps also the Tribulation saints who are beheaded for their testimony.

⁴⁴ The Tribulation is a prophesied seven-year period in which unbelieving Israel and the unbelieving world will suffer God's judgment for rejecting the only means of salvation available to them. Satan will also take full control of the world after the Holy Spirit and the Church are removed as there will be nothing to restrain him, making this time doubly tribulational. See Theory #13 for more on this subject.

⁴⁵ Why do we make this qualification? Because we are told that God will withhold rain for three years from those kingdoms that do not send representatives to Jerusalem at certain feasts during the Millennial reign. In Eden, a mist used to rise from the ground and water the whole surface of the ground, as no rain had yet fallen (before the Flood). Withholding rain indicates that 1) the entire earth has not yet returned to a full Edenic state, and 2) some nations will experience painful judgments that preclude Edenic conditions during the Millennium.