

Arise in Glory

PATHWAYS TO ZION



PATHWAYS TO ZION

Interactive Devotional



DISCIPLESHIP | BIBLE STUDY | SPIRITUAL GROWTH

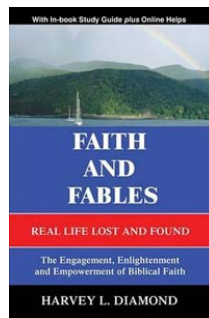
The Lord's feasts, as Paul relates in Colossians 2:17, are *"a shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah."* Discover God's blueprint! Gain a perspective of the rich way God designed for us to relate with Him.

On the Arise in Glory website (www.ariseinglory.org) this guide is provided as an interactive online tool. Each section links to a pop-up box providing the same brief description, questions for reflection, Scripture references, and pages in our companion books providing greater insight and understanding.

Books

These books act as companion books to the Pathways to Zion Interactive Devotional. They provide amplification, additional insight and inspirational testimonies.

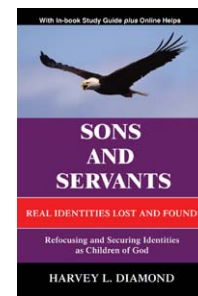
Each also includes Study Guides that facilitate individual or group reflection and discussion. The books are available at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, iUniverse.com or through your favorite bookseller.



FAITH AND FABLES **Real Life Lost and Found**

By Harvey L. Diamond

Expand your faith and quality of life through fresh insights and perspectives of God's covenant and promises from Biblical truths and inspiring testimonies!



SONS AND SERVANTS **Real Identities Lost and Found**

By Harvey L. Diamond

Invigorate your walk with God! Take your relationship with God to new heights by expanding the scope of your engagement with Him!



Connect Heart-to-Heart with God Deepen Your Walk According to His Designed Plan of Engagement

God established seven types of appointed times in His covenant grouped into three feast seasons to mark special ways in which the children of Israel were to engage and interact with Him.

On the surface one might wonder about the relevance of the feasts. Even today, the feasts are no longer celebrated as God's originally prescribed, since the primary components included animal sacrifice and other agricultural practices.

While the original outward aspects of the feasts may have been lost, seeing God's BIGGER PICTURE and the underlying purpose of the feasts opens you up to the reality of a dynamic dimension of life God intended for His children to experience!

Truth is, you will discover God's love and grace, apprehend God's covenant promises, understand His way of redemption, and learn how to discern God's will for your life by relating and interacting with Him through His Word and Spirit in a very real and dynamic way. How, you may ask?

The apostle Paul communicated in Colossians 2:17 that the Lord's feasts are "*a shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah.*" As shadows rich in symbolism, they point forward to the one casting the shadow—Messiah—and serve as a reflection of a blueprint illustrating God's divine plan of engagement revealed through Messiah!

Psalm 85:13 relates how His footsteps are our pathway. The PATHWAYS TO ZION grid, therefore, serves to illuminate ways to relate to God and engage with Him in a real and refreshing way. In fact, Lamentations 1:4 reflects the heart of God yearning for God's people to follow such a course: "The roads to Zion mourn because no one comes to the set feasts."

How to follow the path? We are all wired differently. There are certainly many routes along the spiritual journey. To accommodate our different needs and styles, God will, therefore, lead each of us through a variety of processes.

We all have our own questions for God, and issues to address with Him. The Bible does have the answers! The Holy Spirit is our guide and teacher. The PATHWAYS TO ZION guide, therefore, marks a multi-dimensional path of engagement with God, facilitating a path of study, reflection, and spiritual growth according to God's overall plan and pattern.

Catch the Broad Vision

Begin with the [Overview](#). See how the Feasts of the Lord parallel and connect with God's process of Creation, Revelation and Redemption. See Messiah throughout the feasts, especially in the seven "I AM" statements He made in the book of John! See how Joshua and the children of Israel triumphed and inherited the Promised Land after 40 years in the wilderness!

May the Holy Spirit enlighten you and open the eyes of your heart to gain a broad view of the different ways God desires to relate and interact with you.

Choose the Way PATHWAYS TO ZION Works Best for You

The PATHWAYS TO ZION guide provides the flexibility of tailoring Bible study and a way of engaging with God. Consider the following study tracks:

Horizontal Approach

Choose from any of the 7 horizontal tracks
moving across the grid focusing on one topic at a time

Vertical Approach

Do an in-depth study across the 7 vertical tracks
moving through the grid at your own pace








Spirit-led Approach

Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your study and refresh you with His living waters
as He leads you along your journey of life,
and as specific topics become of particular interest and relevance to you








PATHWAYS TO ZION

Expand the scope of your engagement with God!
Apprehend God's vision · See Messiah's blueprint

See how the Feasts of the Lord are a
shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah.

FEAST SEASONS	FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD			FEAST OF HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST	FEAST OF BOOTHS/TABERNACLES		
THE FEASTS OF THE LORD	 PASSOVER Pesach	 UNLEAVENED BREAD Hag Ha Matzah	 FIRST-FRUITS Yom HaBikkurim COUNTING the OMER Sefirat Ha'omer	 HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST Shavuot	 TRUMPETS Rosh Hashanah Yom Teruah	 ATONEMENT Yom Kippur	 BOOTHS INGATHERING TABERNACLES Sukkot
GOD'S WORK	CREATION OUTWORKING OF GOD'S CREATIVE & REDEMPTIVE WORKS			REVELATION GOD'S WORD & SPIRIT	REDEMPTION REST · REFLECTION · RESTORATION · RELATIONSHIP · REVIVAL		
DATES FESTIVAL MO. CIVIL MO.	Nissan 14 1 7	Nissan 15-21 1 7	Sunday after Passover 1 7	50 days after First-Fruits 3 9	Tishri 1 7 1	Tishri 10 7 1	Tishri 15-21 7 1
SIGNIFICANCE	Justification	Sanctification	Dedication	Jubilation	Reconciliation	Redemption	Restoration
TRADITIONAL PRACTICE	Passover Seder Sacrificial Lamb	Remove Leaven from the Home	Dedicate the Harvest	Fullness of the Harvest Revelation of Torah God's Covenant	Sound the Trumpets	Afflict the Soul Confession	Build Booths Rest and Relate
MESSIAH'S FULFILLMENT	Crucifixion	Burial	Resurrection	Glorification	Triumph	Substitution	Peace
BELIEVER'S RESPONSE	New Birth	Water Immersion	Affirmation Transition Redirection	Indwelling and Infilling of the Holy Spirit	Preparation	Law of the Spirit vs. Law of Sin and Death	Fellowship
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCE	Release	Clarity	Vision Purpose	Independence in God Dependence on God	Transformation	Discipline in the Spirit	Fruitfulness
COVENANT VALUES	Connection	Communion	Consecration	Consolation Communication Confirmation Conformation	Conquest	Conviction	Contentment Community Completion
REAL LIFE IN MESSIAH	I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE	I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP	I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD	I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE	I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH THE LIFE	I AM THE TRUE VINE

OVERVIEW

FEAST SEASONS	FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD			FEAST OF HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST	FEAST OF BOOTHS/TABERNACLES		
THE FEASTS OF THE LORD	 PASSOVER Pesach	 UNLEAVENED BREAD Hag Ha Matzah	 FIRST-FRUITS Yom HaBikkurim COUNTING the OMER Sefirat Ha'omer	 HARVEST/WEEKS PENTECOST Shavuot	 TRUMPETS Rosh Hashanah Yom Teruah	 ATONEMENT Yom Kippur	 BOOTHS INGATHERING TABERNACLES Sukkot
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Getting in Sync with God's Covenant Way

God operates and engages with mankind through an order and framework of a kind of relationship He calls covenant. He has made and recorded in the Scriptures several progressive covenants with mankind through various individuals. He established a covenant with Noah, an everlasting one with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and a covenant and a law with Moses. He made an everlasting covenant with David, and as the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel proclaimed, God said He would make a new kind of covenant written on peoples' hearts.

Through Isaiah, God specifically defined the two key components characterizing His covenant: His words and Spirit.

"As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore." (Isaiah 59:21 NKJV)

An important aspect of God's covenant relates to the Feasts of the LORD. The Bible marks these feasts as *appointed times and seasons*. They serve as a cycle of ways God desires to engage with His people. He didn't appoint these encounters to be legalistic rituals, but real ways to relate and interact with Him in a refreshing and dynamic way! Truly, God designed these events to be *perpetual* ways of engaging with Him in very real and relevant ways. They are *His feasts—the Feasts of the Lord*.

God established seven particular feasts grouped into three feast seasons. Through these feasts, we see God's overall pattern of Creation, Revelation and Redemption. It is a pattern He continuously works through. It is the pattern of His cadence—His rhythm. It is the way He designed for us to be *in sync* with Him!

God's Way and Cadence: Creation → Revelation → Redemption

In his Star of Redemption demonstration, Rosenzweig viewed God's people as "*carriers of revelation.*" He specifically saw in the feasts:

Unleavened Bread: Liberation as an experience of Creation; the outworking of God's creative process

Weeks or Harvest: Revelation of Torah; God's law and instruction

Booths or Tabernacles: Rest, Messianic deliverance, Settlement, Destiny, Certainty of Redemption

God is always creating new things for His glory. His works find destiny in redemption. The first way, in fact, God revealed Himself was as Creator. He is *the* Creator. God is always creating new things. He spoke to Isaiah several times (chapters 42:9, 43:19 and 48:6) about the new things He creates. Through the cycle of feast seasons, we see the outworking of God's process of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

Through Unleavened Bread, we see God initiating His creative and redemptive process. He separates light from darkness, truth from lies, righteousness from sin—and people from bondage. God creates new things by speaking His Word and breathing His Spirit. The first fruits of what God creates serve as His testimonies and demonstration of His creative acts. In Unleavened Bread, God draws us unto Himself, reveals His plan of peace, and provides for a way to transition and grow a step closer to God.

Through the Feast of Weeks or Harvest—and evidenced in Pentecost—we see God's Word and Spirit revealing and manifesting the knowledge of God, His truth, His power and His glory. We also see God preparing us for a deeper and more meaningful experience with Him.

Through Tabernacles, we see God's process come to a state of rest and completion. We see His kingdom order established. We see trials come to a resolution in Messiah's victory. We value God's presence in a fresh way, and come to a place and state of rest, reflection, redemption and restoration.

Through the feast seasons, we see God connecting heaven with earth; His will being accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. We see God's purposes work through the process of time, and Messiah's kingdom manifesting and revealing itself. We see a way that brings alignment and unification between man and God—our Creator. We see a path leading towards destiny.

Finally, we see Messiah in the feasts—in a multitude of ways! May *you* see the light of Messiah in the feasts, and your relationship with God grow in a real, dynamic and refreshing way.

A beautiful parallel and picture of this process of Creation → Revelation → Redemption through the Feasts can be seen through the story of how Joshua and the children of Israel were led by God across the Jordan into the Promised Land. Follow it and be blessed!

The Testimony of Joshua and the Children of Israel Crossing and Settling into the Promised Land

The book of Joshua begins a new dispensation of time for the children of Israel. The long 40-year journey in the wilderness has come to an end. It is time to *cross over into a new place*, and experience a *new kind of life*; a life of faith—a life experiencing a dynamic relationship with the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and participating in the fullness of God’s glorious benefits. That was God’s plan.

See how the story begins. See the promises God outlines.

¹ *Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them -- the children of Israel...*⁵ *No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.* ⁶ Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, *that you may prosper wherever you go.* ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, *that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.* (Joshua 1:2-8 NKJV)

Immediately after this exhortation, Joshua issues more instructions revealing God’s plan.

¹¹ Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, '*Prepare provisions* for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to *possess the land* which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" ¹² And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, ¹³ "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is *giving you rest and is giving you this land.*'"








See how Joshua outlines God’s process in three simple phrases pointing to His way of Creation → Revelation → Redemption

Prepare provisions: Get ready! God is preparing you for a new redeeming work of His **Creation!**
Possess the land: Receive the **Revelation, Realization, and Reality of God’s Promise!**
The LORD is giving you rest and this land: Experience the fullness of God’s **Redemption!**

What is amazing about the whole story—the exodus from Egypt to the entering of the Promised Land—is that BOTH occur at Passover! The children of Israel celebrated the first Passover upon leaving Egypt—and again 40 years later upon arriving in the Promised Land. It’s a beautiful picture! God’s timing and cadence is awesome. He has made the way for us to participate in it.

Be encouraged and inspired in the awesome way God designed to relate and interact with us as you read the story. Then, allow Messiah and His Spirit to relate and interact with *you* as you continue your life along His pathways to ZION!

The Parallel of the Feasts in the Testimony of Joshua and the Settlement in the Promised Land

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SIGNIFICANCE	Justification	Sanctification	Dedication	Jubilation	Reconciliation	Redemption	Restoration
SCRIPTURE	JOSHUA 2:24	JOSHUA 3:5	JOSHUA 3:11-13	JOSHUA 3:10-4:24	JOSHUA 5:13-6:21	JOSHUA 7 and 8	JOSHUA 11:23
SCRIPTURE TEXT	"Truly <i>the LORD has delivered</i> all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."	" <i>Sanctify yourselves</i> , for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."	"Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is <i>crossing over before you</i> ...And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off"	"By this <i>you shall know that the living God is among you</i> ..." "... that all the peoples of the earth may <i>know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty</i> , that you may fear the LORD your God forever."	"...as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come..." "...And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, " <i>What does my Lord say to His servant?</i> "	"But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things..." "...And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings..." "...And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings..."	"So <i>Joshua took the whole land</i> , according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. <i>Then the land rested from war.</i> "
MAIN POINT	The LORD had gone before them to prepare, provide and preserve a place. They were justified in inheriting the promise.	God requires us to be a holy: a sanctified, grateful people who worship and honor the LORD for His love, divine providence and intervention; and walk in His light.	The ark represents Messiah, <i>the first fruit crossing over and entering into— and also risen unto— eternal life</i> . The priests represent the first fruit offering in faith of the people who will cross over.	God reveals and demonstrates His glory: the realization of His Word and Spirit manifested in and by His presence and power, leading us to all truth, goodness and peace.	<i>The King arrives!</i> His message: <i>Marching Orders. Encircle the enemy's stronghold; blow the trumpets, calling the army of the LORD to battle; behold and preview the new kind of life of triumph!</i>	After experiencing the miraculous victory, sin and treachery prevented continued success. Upon confession, the LORD reversed judgment; and the people re-committed to His way, truth and life.	Simply amazing! God performed many miracles. The people defeated their enemies and won the spoils of war. <i>They learned God's way of working out their salvation</i> . They enjoyed <i>God's rest</i> .

Justification

Summary

The Passover Feast was inaugurated to mark and remember Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. God heard the cries of the people, and determined that it was time to do a creative, redemptive act, and bring the people unto Him.

And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them. 4 I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have *remembered* My covenant. 6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will *bring you out from under the burdens* of the Egyptians, I will *rescue* you from their bondage, and I will *redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:2-7 NKJV)

A lamb without blemish was sacrificed, and its blood was washed over the doorposts of the home, marking the house "off limits" for the angel of death that struck the first-born of Egypt.

In a similar fashion, Messiah led a sinless life, and was crucified the same day the Passover was celebrated. He served as our permanent substitute for the lamb, justifying our standing before God and redeeming our life from the bondage of iniquity—our sinful tendencies.

Life Application Questions

Messiah taught us to pray, "May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven." (Matthew 6:10 JNT)
In what areas do you need to see God's redemption, or deliverance from a particular type of bondage?

This could be anything; an addiction, bad habit, besetting sin, form of oppression, state of mind, bad situation, etc. Take your case to God in prayer. Let God's Ruach HaKodesh—the Holy Spirit lead you in His Word. Let it work in your heart. Receive the saving and sanctifying grace of Messiah's deliverance in faith. Continue to talk to God about the issue.

As He helps you through, He will bring you to a level of peace and understanding. Messiah is your deliverer! The Holy Spirit is your teacher and source of real empowerment and life of liberty.

One final note: as it relates to eternal life, are you sure that you would be justified before God as righteous, and be eternally saved to everlasting life in heaven? I encourage you to read John 3:16-21 and Romans 10:6-10. Then read and meditate on John 14-16; and receive the prayer Messiah prayed for you in John 17.

Scripture References

Psalms 18; Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:1-5; Matthew 26:17-25; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 15-17; 29; 123-124
Sons and Servants: 11; 86

Sanctification

Summary

The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins the day after Passover, and is kept for seven days. Special care is taken to remove all leaven (yeast) from the house. God had a lot to say about the leaven: anyone eating any leaven would be cut off from the congregation of Israel (Exodus 12:15), *whether a stranger or native*; it shall not be seen among you (13:7); "You shall not offer the *blood of My sacrifice* with leaven" (Exodus 34:25 NKJV). Even in the New Covenant, Messiah specifically exhorted the people several times to beware of the leaven of the religious leaders as well as Herod.

What is the issue with leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is good and otherwise pure.

Messiah fulfilled this celebration, being sinless. He was pure, filled with a full measure of the Holy Spirit, and demonstrated a lifestyle free from sin. He has once and for all fulfilled the requirement of this law. All in Messiah are not only justified before God, but *sanctified (cleansed from sin) in His name*.

So, why was this feast prescribed for seven days, whereas Passover is a single-day event? While we are redeemed by Messiah's single sacrifice of His blood, we are to appropriate His sacrifice and pursue a life-long process of *being continuously sanctified and purified (washed)*, growing into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah. (Ephesians 4:13) This entails:

- Studying and meditating on God's Word, allowing it to breathe life and change our attitudes and behaviors
- Engaging with God in prayer, receiving the Holy Spirit's inward conviction, instruction and guidance
- Responding appropriately, turning from *leaven-like* influences, and changing our mindsets and motivations

This was what the apostle, Paul, also had in mind as he made the point of teaching the disciples to, "keep working out your deliverance with fear and trembling, for God is the one working among you both the willing and the working for what pleases him." (Philippians 2:12-13 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Do you genuinely feel *clean before God*? Are there ways you find yourself justifying your righteousness, or standing before God? Do you ever feel condemned by others, and/or the need to defend your works or self-worth to others?

If so, there may be some areas God wants to cleanse in your life. You can't vindicate yourself and have peace. Only God can give you true peace. Allow the Holy Spirit—God's Comforter—to minister God's love and continue to accomplish Messiah's cleansing work in you.

Are there known areas of sin in your life? Earnestly ask God to show them to you. He will be faithful to reveal to you—as your heart remains inclined toward Him, and is prepared to receive His truth in His love. For, with *His love*—which is unconditional—comes His mercy.

Embrace David's prayer in Psalm 51:1-3.

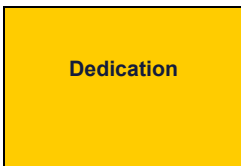
Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.

Scripture References

Exodus 12:15-20; Leviticus 23:6-8; Psalm 24; 26:8-12; 119:1-40; Romans 3:21-5:20; Galatians 2:11-3:25; James 2:14-26; John 17:17-19; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 10:5-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Colossians 1:21-23

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-22; 57; 94; 98; 169
Sons and Servants: p. 71



Summary

God instructed the children of Israel to celebrate First-fruits after coming into the Promised Land and reaping the benefits of its harvest. On the one hand, First-fruits marks a way to dedicate the harvest, or fruits of our efforts to God. It represents gratefulness to God, and provides for a special way to express devotion and loyalty to Him.

On this day, God also directed the children of Israel to begin counting 50 days to offering a new grain offering. This commemorates the 50 day journey from the deliverance of the bondage of Egypt to the receiving of God's 10 Commandments and revelation of His covenant at Sinai. It serves to remind us that redemption was not truly complete until receiving God's Torah—or instruction of His Word—His covenant. Taking the time to count each day and meditate on the reality of God prepares our heart and mind to truly receive fullness of truth and revelation of the knowledge of God.

Messiah lived as a man, taking on our human nature. He dedicated His life in devotion and obedience to the Father, saving ours from spiritual death. In His resurrection, He, therefore, became the first fruits of the human race to experience the resurrection of the new life.

Those born again in Messiah follow in His footsteps. We also celebrate this feast on an ongoing basis in faith as we dedicate our lives—our hearts and minds first—and service and duty to glorify God; and as a result, reap the fruits and benefits of His harvest.

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you express your gratefulness to Messiah for dedicating His life to save yours? In what ways do you allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in studying God's Word and preparing your heart and mind to receive God's truths?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23: 9-14; Proverbs 3:9; 1 Corinthians 15:20

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-22; 72

Sons and Servants: p. 23; 29; 83-84; 128; 137

Jubilation

Summary

Shavuot—the Feast of Weeks or Harvest (Pentecost) is unique in that it has double significance:

- It marked the end of the barley harvest, and beginning of the wheat harvest—or “fullness” of the harvest;
- It marked the day the Torah, or covenant law was given to Moses.

Celebrated 50 days after Passover, this feast has special significance. This time served to link the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt to the giving of the Torah, or God’s covenant law. It, therefore, serves as a reminder that the redemption from bondage was not fully complete until God’s people had received the fullness of God’s covenant word and order, or law.

Since 50 also signifies a time of jubilee according to the covenant (legal cancellation of debts, indentured relationships and restoration of land), this feast represents the shadow of a special time of jubilee.

Following Messiah’s resurrection, the disciples had been spending time with one another in prayers and devotion. While they were celebrating this feast, a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind came and filled the whole house where they were. The disciples were “filled with the Spirit,” as recorded in Acts 2.

On Shavuot—Pentecost—their lives were transformed by the Holy Spirit! In their devotions and celebration, God’s Word connected with His Spirit and brought completion—or fullness—to the revelation of God’s covenant. It therefore, brought fulfillment to Isaiah’s prophecy expressing the *fullness of God’s covenant*. (Isaiah 59:21)

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you celebrate—and express gratefulness—for the covenant gifts God has given you—His Word *and* Spirit?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:15-22; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Exodus 19; Acts 2

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 22-24; 52; 58-59; 81; 101-103
Sons and Servants: p. 3; 11; 14; 24-26; 39-40; 44-46

Reconciliation

Summary

The primary purpose of the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) is to call us to prepare our hearts for the coming solemn Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It begins a period of reconciliation with God; specifically “Ten Days of Repentance” or “Days of Awe” which culminate in Yom Kippur.

The trumpet (ram’s horn, or shofar) was also used to alarm the people and prepare them for battle. It is therefore a day to arise in spiritual awakening.

In addition, trumpets were used to proclaim the entry of a king. Therefore, on this high holiday, we also proclaim God King of the Universe, and honor His kingship and authority over all creation.

John the Immerser—or Baptist—came immersing people in water to “prepare the way of the Lord.” Messiah, therefore, fulfilled this feast by coming as King of kings. In His resurrection, He conquered the power of evil and spiritual death by defeating the enemy of our souls, Satan, the devil and spiritual adversary.

Paul was diligent to remind the community of faith that we fight a very real spiritual battle, and to therefore, continue to “fight the good fight of the faith.” (1Timothy 6:12 JNT) We, therefore, continuously celebrate the inherent meaning of Trumpets as we allow the Holy Spirit to convict our hearts, confess revealed sins, and prepare our heart to wage spiritual warfare; fighting against temptations to sin, standing on God’s Word in faith, and receiving Messiah’s victory over the power of sin and death.

Life Application Questions

Our worship prepares the way for Messiah to minister to our heart through God’s Word and Holy Spirit. How do you prepare your heart to receive God’s truth and love? In what ways do you prepare your heart and mind for spiritual battles?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:23-25; Joel 2:1; Matthew 3:3

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 27-29; 178-179

Sons and Servants: p. 23-26; 33-37; 45-47; 71-75; 145-148

Redemption

Summary

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is celebrated as a day of confession to cleanse the soul from sin. “For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.” (Leviticus 16:30-32 NKJV)

It was the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice over the Mercy Seat. From within the cloud of God’s glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man’s atonement of sin; reversing His judgment, and transforming it to one of mercy.

Messiah came as our High Priest! His blood was poured out as a sacrifice forever reversing God’s judgment of sin for everyone who calls upon His name, believes in the heart, and receives His redemption.

But when the Messiah appeared as *cohen gadol* (high priest) of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world),¹² he entered the Holiest Place once and for all. And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever.¹³ For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity;¹⁴ then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God!¹⁵ It is because of this death that he is mediator of a new covenant [or will]. Because a death has occurred which sets people free from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:11-15 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How do you apply God’s Word and prepare your heart to appropriate the victory over sin and death that Messiah has won for you?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:26-31; Psalm 51; Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Romans 5; Hebrews 2:14-3:6

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 29-30; 85-94; 178-80
Sons and Servants: p. 71-76; 105-109

Restoration

Summary

The Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) is the most joyous feast celebration, lasting a whole week. It marks a time of rest, remembrance and reflection on God's divine sovereignty and providence, His goodness and power. It is celebrated at the end of the harvest season.

The feast has a dual significance: historical and agricultural. Historically, it commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, living in temporary shelters, or booths. Agriculturally, it is a harvest festival, and is sometimes referred to as the Festival of Ingathering.

As the Pilgrims who came to America were looking for a way to express their gratitude towards God for their survival and for the harvest, it was this feast described in the Scriptures that inspired their celebration—what has become the American tradition of Thanksgiving.

Messiah satisfied the debt for our sins. He redeemed us from dead works. He lifted the burden of guilt and condemnation. He invited all who believe to be joined with Him, and receive His peace. "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How much rest time do you devote to remembering and reflecting upon all that Messiah has accomplished for you, and all the ways God has blessed you? In what ways do you apply Messiah's yoke and truly rest in the Lord?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:33-44; Psalm 63:6; 77:6-12; 119; Hebrews 3:7-4:13

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 30-32; 52-53; 133-134

Sons and Servants: p. 9-10; 52-57; 99-104

Passover Seder
Sacrificial Lamb

Summary

In Bible times, during the Passover feast, a lamb without blemish was sacrificed to represent redemption from sin. God instructed us in Scripture to celebrate His deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and tell the story of all He did. We do this at Passover, celebrating the Passover meal—or Seder. Messiah celebrated this feast at what is referred to as “the last supper.” He surprised His disciples by adding a new element to the celebration.

While they were eating, Yeshua took a piece of *matzah*, made the *b'rakhah*, (blessing) broke it, gave it to the *talmidim* (disciples) and said, “Take! Eat! This is my body!”²⁷ Also he took a cup of wine, made the *b'rakhah*, and gave it to them, saying, “All of you, drink from it!”²⁸ For this is my blood, which ratifies the New Covenant, my blood shed on behalf of many, so that they may have their sins forgiven. (Matthew 26:26-28 JNT)

Messiah became *the* Passover sacrifice. He sacrificed His life that we may have everlasting life. We participate in His sacrifice and resurrection by not only partaking in this celebration, but experiencing the joy of walking in His liberty and love—where our focus shifts from our self-centered interests to caring about the interests of others.

Paul, therefore, declared, “Do nothing out of rivalry or vanity; but, in humility, regard each other as better than yourselves —⁴ look out for each other’s interests and not just for your own.” (Philippians 2:3-4 JNT)

This principle was also in view in exhorting believers to, “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2 NKJV)

Life Application Questions

How do you look for ways to express the love of Messiah, and live in a sacrificial manner, looking out for the interests of others?

Scripture References

1 John 3:16-24; Ephesians 5:1-2; Titus 2:6; 3:14; James 3:13-18

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 44-46; 98-100

Sons and Servants: p. 11-12; 20-22; 33-38; 82-83; 111-115; 120-122



Remove Leaven
from the Home

Summary

In celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread, all leaven was to be removed from the home. Why leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is good and otherwise pure.

Messiah's blood erased our slate from the handwriting of God's judgment, "cleaning" our account from the debt of sin. We celebrate His cleaning of our "spiritual house," our bodies, by keeping our hearts and minds clean, meditating on His words and noble and righteous thoughts, and resisting the temptations of the world—vain desires, pride and pulls of the world.

Beyond the external things that can destroy our physical bodies, we can allow our spiritual condition to deteriorate from the inside—by harboring destructive attitudes, like bitterness and judgment; and maintaining selfish motivations and pursuing self-centered interests and agendas. That's why Messiah declared, "There is nothing outside a person which, by going into him, can make him unclean. Rather, it is the things that come out of a person which make a person unclean!" (Mark 7:15 JNT)

Paul taught how our body is the temple of God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19) It, therefore, behooves us to keep ourselves clean on the inside by reading, meditating, and digesting God's Word, communing with Him by the Holy Spirit, and confessing and turning (or repenting) from revealed sins.

Life Application Questions

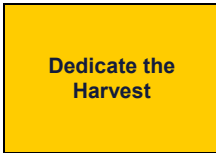
In what ways do you endeavor to keep your heart clean before God? In what ways may you fight against Messiah's sanctifying work by harboring wrong attitudes of the heart? Are there any things you do on a regular basis that may cause harmful attitudes to persist?

Scripture References

Psalms 19:7-14; 24; 51; 119: 1-40; Matthew 5:8; 21-29; 12:33-37; 13:18-23; Mark 7:17-23; Ephesians 4:17-32

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-21; 82-83; 88-94; 115-132
Sons and Servants: p. 11-12; 24-26; 99-104; 151-155



Summary

The Feast of First-fruits marks the expression of gratefulness to God for the first crops harvested. David truly had a heart of gratefulness. He acknowledged God as sovereign, and therefore, His source and sufficiency. In Psalm 24, he declares, "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness." (Psalm 24:1 NKJV)

On First-fruits we also dedicate ourselves to focusing on preparing our hearts and minds to receive new things of God and the fullness of the measure of new revelation God would offer us by His word and Spirit this season.

Peter further affirmed that God has given to us "everything we need for life and godliness, through our knowing the One who called us to his own glory and goodness." (2 Peter 1:3 JNT) For this reason, Messiah taught about the blessings of giving to others from a heart of gratefulness; and in faith, believing that God would multiply whatever you give. "Give, and you will receive gifts — the full measure, compacted, shaken together and overflowing, will be put right in your lap. For the measure with which you measure out will be used to measure back to you!" (Luke 6:38 JNT)

Giving to others truly prepares the heart to receive back from God. Out of gratefulness and in faith, we therefore, dedicate a portion of the first fruits of what God has given to us back to Him; not in mere duty or obligation, but in love.

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you freely give back to God a portion of the first fruits of what He has given to you?

Scripture References

Matthew 19:21; 25:37; Luke 3:11; Acts 20:35

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-22; 38-39

Sons and Servants: p. 92-94; 161-162

Fullness of the Harvest

Revelation of Torah

God's Covenant

Summary

Shavuot—the Feast of Weeks or Harvest (Pentecost in the Greek) was originally celebrated to mark the fullness of the harvest. It also has become the celebration of the giving of God's Word, for Moses was given the law during this time. As he read to the people, they declared, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." (Exodus 24:7 NKJV) They, therefore, rededicated themselves to following God's Word, and renewed their faith in God.

It was during this feast that the disciples were first filled with the Holy Spirit. As much as Messiah fulfilled the Feast of First-fruits by being the first fruits of those resurrected in the newness of life redeemed by His sacrificial blood, the infilling of the Holy Spirit represented the fullness of God's new covenant revealed; and also marked the rededication of the believer's life from a walk under the *law of sin and death* to a walk of the Spirit—under the *law of the Spirit*. (Romans 8:2)

For this reason, Paul declared, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." (Galatians 5:18 NKJV) In other words, you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting God's law into legalism.

In order to maintain the vitality of the Spirit, Paul further exhorted the disciples to be continually filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18) This is accomplished by regular reading and meditation of God's Word, and communing with God, praying in the Holy Spirit. It also involves reaching and releasing outward towards others—giving away what God has given to you, so He can refill His reservoirs within you with more of His substance!

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you continuously renew and rededicate yourself to God? How open are you to new revelations of truth God would offer you?

Scripture References

Joshua 1:8; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 84; 151-161

Sons and Servants: p. 49-52; 72-76; 90-91; 99-102; 122-123

Sound the Trumpets

Summary

In celebrating the Feast of Trumpets (celebrated as Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) the ram's horn (shofar) is blown to call us to alarm, arise in spiritual awakening, and raise the level of our consciousness to self-examination, in preparation for the coming Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur. It begins "Ten Days of Repentance" or "Days of Awe" which culminate in Yom Kippur.

In addition, trumpets were used to proclaim the entry of a king. Therefore, on this high-holiday, we also proclaim God King of the Universe, and honor His kingship and authority over all creation.

David kept a soft heart before God, and maintained a practice of self-examination to stay right with God. "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart." (Psalm 26:2 NKJV)

For this same reason, Paul admonishes us to examine ourselves before participating in the Lord's communion. "So let a person examine himself first, and then he may eat of the bread and drink from the cup; ²⁹ for a person who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28-29 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How do you maintain the discipline of self-examination? Do you allow the Holy Spirit to convict your heart? Do you let the Holy Spirit change your inner attitudes, and comply by changing outward behaviors?

Scripture References

Psalm 51:7-10; Galatians 6:4; James 4:7-8

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 83; 88-89; 100-102; 121-122; 133-134
Sons and Servants: p. 156-159

Afflict the Soul

Summary

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is celebrated by afflicting one's soul by fasting, confessing sins, and repenting before God. This provides for making amends with God, and reconciling one's standing before God.

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ, became our atonement. He is the atonement. We receive the grace of His redemption by appropriating His atonement. Paul provides instruction on this subject.

In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God, by your union with the Messiah Yeshua.¹² Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires;¹³ and do not offer any part of yourselves to sin as an instrument for wickedness. On the contrary, offer yourselves to God as people alive from the dead, and your various parts to God as instruments for righteousness.¹⁴ For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14 JNT)

Messiah's atonement is settled forever! He has wiped away all the spiritual and legal requirements and charges that were—and could ever be—set against us. In union with Him, we are free from all traces of guilt and condemnation!

Also it was in union with him that you were circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands, but accomplished by stripping away the old nature's control over the body. In this circumcision done by the Messiah,¹² you were buried along with him by being immersed; and in union with him, you were also raised up along with him by God's faithfulness that worked when he raised Yeshua from the dead.¹³ You were dead because of your sins, that is, because of your "foreskin," your old nature. But God made you alive along with the Messiah by forgiving you all your sins.¹⁴ He wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake (cross). (Colossians 2:11-14 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How do you appropriate Messiah's atonement in your life? Do you know in your heart that Messiah has performed total atonement for you?

Scripture References

Psalm 119:57-176; Romans 1-6

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 29-30; 88-90; 95-110; 123-132

Sons and Servants: p. 33-38; 119-126; 156-159

Build Booths

Rest and Relate

Summary

The Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) is the most joyful celebration, lasting a whole week. It commemorates the children of Israel dwelling in booths—small temporary shelters—during the low state of their wilderness journey.

It marks a time of rest from the work of gathering in the harvest—toils of our labor. It also marks a time to relate to one another about God's goodness, and reflect upon His grace and mercy. At the same time, Tabernacles serves to remind us that our earthly life is just temporary. A permanent life with God will be our eternal Promised Land. We should, therefore, guard ourselves from materialism and maintain a life of balance.

Those who have received Messiah's redemption have entered into His permanent and eternal rest—peace with God! For, He has redeemed us from the curse of dead works that cannot justify us before God. The blood of Messiah has accomplished that. We, therefore, celebrate His fulfillment of this feast by gathering in fellowship with other believers, reflecting on His amazing grace, and relating with one another the testimonies of His interaction in our lives. We also look forward to a time of celebrating fellowship with Messiah at His return; and permanently in heaven at His banquet table.

Life Application Questions

How do you celebrate your peace with God? With whom do you rest and reflect on God's goodness, His grace and mercy, and share testimonies of His interaction in the lives of fellow believers?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:33-44; Acts 2:46, Colossians 2-3

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 29-34; 54-60; 82-83; 90-93; 133-135; 183-187
Sons and Servants: p. 38; 99-104; 156-161



Crucifixion

Summary

Messiah was crucified the same day the Passover lamb was slaughtered. He became the permanent sacrificial substitute to redeem mankind from the curse of the law, heal us from the effects of our tendency to sin, and reconcile us back to a right-standing relationship with God.

In this, He fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 53:5. “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”

In receiving the work of His crucifixion, we appropriate the punishment He suffered for our sins, which separated us spiritually from God. As we personally identify with the crucified Messiah, we also identify with the new life He lives in us by the Holy Spirit, which is the source of our grace in Him.

In that grace, we are no longer under the power of the curse of the law.

When the Messiah was executed on the stake as a criminal, I was too; so that my proud ego no longer lives. But the Messiah lives in me, and the life I now live in my body I live by the same trusting faithfulness that the Son of God had, who loved me and gave himself up for me.²¹ I do not reject God’s gracious gift; for if the way in which one attains righteousness is through legalism, then the Messiah’s death was pointless. (Galatians 2:20-21 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Have you fully identified with Messiah’s crucifixion, receiving His total grace for the forgiveness of your sins? Are there any areas in which you still condemn yourself, and have not fully received His grace?

Scripture References

Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:24

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 16-17; 24-25

Sons and Servants: p. 24-26; 78-79; 110-114



Burial

Summary

Messiah was buried after being crucified, but something miraculous was going on during the three days His body lay in the tomb. Ephesians 4:7-11 discusses how He descended (into hell), then ascended to lead “captivity captive.”

His spirit, therefore, descended into hell where he battled with the devil, and led the forces of darkness which had held mankind into captivity into their own captivity. In addition, as Revelation 1:18 records, He took the keys of hell and death—Satan’s authority, away from him; therefore absolving him from his authority over mankind. As Scripture says, “He wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake. ¹⁵ Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the stake.” (Colossians 2:14-15 JNT)

Satan had won a position of spiritual authority over mankind when Adam and Eve believed the lie of the serpent (the devil personified) and disobeyed God’s command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Messiah won back that authority. Believers in Messiah, therefore, benefit from His authority over the power of sin and death.

Those who have not put their faith in Messiah have not appropriated His authority over the devil, leaving them under the jurisdiction of the powers of darkness.

Life Application Questions

Do you understand how Messiah defeated the devil, and made a way of escape from the bondage of hell for you? Have you fully received Messiah’s redemption in faith and His power over sin and death?

Scripture References

Colossians 2:8-23; Romans 8:2

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-21

Sons and Servants: p. 9-10; 27-29; 46-47; 65-66

Resurrection

Summary

The feast of First-fruits marks a time of giving back to God in gratefulness—and in faith—for His bountiful provision. It also marks a time to examine the first fruits of our labors to test the quality of the harvest. If the first crops are good—and therefore blessed—the following fruits are likewise blessed.

Interestingly enough, Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ was also “inspected” by the religious leaders to test His claim to be the Messiah. Many false Messiah’s have attempted to claim Messiahship. His point was made and His claim proved, however, after His resurrection from the dead!

The feast of First-fruits is, therefore, a shadow pointing forward to Messiah’s resurrection as the first soul arisen in the newness of eternal life.

But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. ²² For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming; ²⁴ then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power.
(1 Corinthians 15:20-24 JNT)

Through immersion into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his.
(Romans 6:4-5 JNT)

In identifying with Messiah’s death and resurrection, we resist the temptations of sin, and walk in His grace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Life Application Questions

How would you appear to someone inspecting your life? In what ways can you see yourself changing to be more Messiah-like? None of us will ever be perfect in our mortal frames. We are just asked to seek first His kingdom, and earnestly allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, and conform us—into His image until He is revealed in us.

Scripture References

Romans 6; Philippians 3:7-16; 1 Peter 1:3-9

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-22; 44-46

Sons and Servants: p. 29-32; 77-78; 110-115; 119-136

Glorification

Summary

Shavuot—the Feast of Weeks or Harvest (Pentecost) was originally celebrated to mark the fullness of the harvest. It also has become the celebration of the giving of God’s Word, for Moses was given the law during this time.

On the day the disciples were celebrating this feast, they experienced the glorification of Messiah in a new way—through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In His final great prayer, Messiah declared to the Father, “I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify me alongside yourself. Give me the same glory I had with you before the world existed.” (John 17:4-5 JNT)

He knew His resurrection would glorify the Father. Even more, He knew the release of the power of the Holy Spirit would glorify the Father. For, He declared to the disciples, “Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in me will also do the works I do! Indeed, he will do greater ones, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ In fact, whatever you ask for in my name, I will do; so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me for something in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:12-14 JNT)

Over the course of time, believers have collectively done more. The LORD still desires for His servants to do greater works in His name by the power of His Spirit.

Life Application Questions

How do you glorify God and reflect Messiah’s character? How do you reflect the gift of God’s word and Holy Spirit in your life?

Scripture References

John 15-17; Acts 2-4; Romans 8; 1 Peter 4

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 22-24

Sons and Servants: p. 24-26; 45-47; 99-173



Summary

In celebrating the Feast of Trumpets (celebrated as Rosh Hashana; Head of the Year), the ram's horn was blown to call the people to alarm, and raise the level of one's consciousness to self-examination, in preparation for the coming Day of Atonement. Trumpets were also sounded to call the people to battle.

On one notable occasion, the Angel of the LORD instructed Joshua to have the priests sound the trumpets seven times—which would call the army of the Lord to fight the spiritual battle which would result in the walls of Jericho falling.

Messiah was crucified, taking our sin upon Himself. He was buried and resurrected from the dead—arising with the keys of hell and death—to serve as our High Priest and triumphant King of Glory—who always goes before us and leads us into His victory! “But thanks be to God, who in the Messiah constantly leads us in a triumphal procession and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of what it means to know him!” (2 Corinthians 2:14 JNT)

We celebrate His glorious triumph with genuine heartfelt praise and worship expressed from a truly grateful heart. We also celebrate His victory when we walk in the grace of His liberty, having been delivered from the power of sin and death. We affirm over and over His triumph as we believe in our heart and are fully convinced of His eternal victory.

“No, in all these things we are superconquerors, through the one who has loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers, neither what exists nor what is coming,³⁹ neither powers above nor powers below, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39 JNT)

Furthermore, we celebrate His triumph as we walk as free children of God exhibiting the fruits and gifts of the Spirit in serving one another in love and in His name.

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:13-18 NKJV)

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you actively celebrate the LORD's triumph? Are there additional ways you believe you can celebrate His triumph?

Scripture References

Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 1 John 5:1-5; Revelation 12:11; Revelation 15:2

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 27-29; 57-58; 85-110; 174-187
Sons and Servants: p. 30-31; 55-57; 84-85

Substitution

Summary

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was established as a sacred day to afflict the soul and confess sins before God. It was the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice over the Mercy Seat. From within the cloud of God's glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man's atonement of sin; reversing His judgment, and transforming it to one of mercy.

It has become apparent, however, that the daily, weekly, and monthly animal sacrifices made to atone for sin were insufficient to satisfy God's wrath and judgment of sin and establish one's right standing before Him.

Therefore, this feast points forward to the human sacrifice of Messiah, who became the permanent substitute sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

The writer of Hebrews in 10:5-7, therefore, quoted Psalm 40:6-8, which speaks prophetically about the Messiah's sacrifice:

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come --In the volume of the book it is written of Me --To do Your will, O God.'

This feast, therefore, served as a shadow pointing forward to Messiah's eternal atonement for sin.

Life Application Questions

Have you settled the issue in your heart that Messiah's single sacrifice has permanently established your position of right-standing, or justification before God?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11; Hebrews 10:1-10; Colossians 2:13-17

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 29-30; 98-100; 142-147

Sons and Servants: p. 18-23



Summary

The week long Feast of Sukkot, Tabernacles, marks a special time for resting in God's peace. It was established to, "rejoice before the Lord for seven days." (Leviticus 29:40 NKJV)

It was a Sabbath's Sabbath! On the one hand, it marked the time to rest from enduring the work of gathering in the harvest. On the other hand, it served to remind the people of God's favor and care extended through the long wilderness journey before crossing into the Promised Land.

The feast also pointed forward to the permanent peace Messiah offered to those who would believe in Him, and accept the yoke of His righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. As He declared, "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

Paul further encouraged believers to be strengthened in faith, for it is by faith that we have access to the grace of Messiah's rest. "So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have *shalom* (peace) with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.² Also through him and on the ground of our trust, we have gained access to this grace in which we stand; so let us boast about the hope of experiencing God's glory." (Romans 5:1-2 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How do you celebrate the peace Messiah has settled for you and offered to you? Do you strive to find peace? Have you received His peace?

Scripture References

Leviticus 23:33-44; Hebrews 3-4; Luke 1:68-80; John 14:25-31; Romans 5:1-5

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 30-34; 51-53; 85-91; 133-135; 146-147
Sons and Servants: p. 52-57; 84-85; 129-130

New Birth

Summary

The Passover feast served to mark the transfer from the bondage of Egypt to freedom found in a life based on faith and trust in God. As the children of Israel prepared to leave Egypt, the blood of the sacrificial lamb was washed over the doorposts of the home to spare its inhabitants from the angel of death which would strike the first born of Egypt.

Upon crossing the Red Sea, the children of Israel had entered into a new relationship with God. God would begin the process of renewing and proving their heart. Through this process, God would reveal His presence, and demonstrate His awesome power, provision, and divine protection.

Through the 40 year journey, God would demonstrate His love and way to walk with Him in the new life, "that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV) Messiah, likewise, began His ministry by spending 40 days in the wilderness. At the end of that period, He quoted this very Scripture when tempted. When questioned by the Jewish leader, Nicodemus, Messiah uttered a profound statement:

Yes, indeed, I tell you that unless a person is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. ⁶ What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Stop being amazed at my telling you that you must be born again from above! ⁸ The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it's going. That's how it is with everyone who has been born from the Spirit. (John 3:5-8 JNT)

Being "born again" is a gift of God's grace. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, changing the disposition of one's soul, inclining the heart to God. The "new nature" of this renewed heart has a new set of values and motivations; but must be cultivated and nurtured by a deliberate choice to grow in this new life.

Effective spiritual growth is accomplished through Bible study, prayer, meditation on God's Word, active fellowship, faithfulness, a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit, and a heart inclined to worshiping God in spirit and truth.

Life Application Questions

How are you going about cultivating and nurturing your new nature as a born again believer? What kind of fellowship do you participate in? How are you ordering your time to include God in the equation of your life?

Scripture References

John 3:5-8; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 15-17, 85-87; 101-103
Sons and Servants: p. 8-9; 45-46; 132



Water Immersion

Summary

The Feast of Unleavened Bread serves as a reminder of the old life of bondage, and value of leaving it behind. The family was to engage in a process of thoroughly removing all the leaven from the home, and cleansing it. What is the issue with leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is good and otherwise pure.

This feast, in essence, acts as a shadow pointing forward to Messiah's ongoing process of cleansing by the Holy Spirit; from the effects of sin and the corrupting and contaminating influences of the world, and establishing in us a pure heart and cleansed life before God.

In another sense, it is a reflection of the outward practice of water immersion, or baptism, which expresses what God has already done in the heart by burying the "old nature of the flesh."

Messiah fulfilled all righteousness by allowing John the Immerser, or Baptist, to baptize Him in the Jordan. As He came up from the water, a dove descended upon Him.

This marked Him as the bearer of the Holy Spirit, and identified Him as the Servant Isaiah prophesied of. "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him..." (Isaiah 42:1 NKJV) John declared Messiah would thereafter baptize believers, "with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11)

Paul, therefore, affirmed that once immersed, or baptized, the believer should walk in Messiah's grace, expressing this new nature. "Through immersion into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:4-5 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Have you been baptized to reflect the inward change that has taken place in your heart? How does your life reflect your "new nature" in Messiah?

Scripture References

Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 3:11; John 1:26-34; Romans 6

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-21; 84; 86-87
Sons and Servants: p. 10-11

Affirmation
Transition
Redirection

Summary

Inspecting the first fruits of the harvest provided for affirming that if the first fruits were good so would be the rest. The Feast of First-fruits, therefore, is a shadow pointing forward to Messiah's resurrection as the first soul arisen in the newness of His eternal life. "But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. ²² For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:20-22 JNT)

This new nature is appropriated with a conscious decision to affirm Messiah as LORD, coming under His headship, and allowing the Holy Spirit to have dominion. This should produce a change in attitudes and behavior.

Paul, therefore, exhorted believers to, "strip off your old nature, because your old nature is thoroughly rotted by its deceptive desires; ²³ and you must let your spirits and minds keep being renewed, ²⁴ and clothe yourselves with the new nature created to be godly, which expresses itself in the righteousness and holiness that flow from the truth." (Ephesians 4:22-24 JNT)

With this fresh focus and openness to new things God may be doing, it becomes easy to receive new truth and revelation by the Holy Spirit. As God reveals truth, the Holy Spirit works change in your heart and renews your mindset. The more the eyes of your heart open, the wider your perspectives become—clearing the way for God to bring you through transition and redirection.

This is how the Holy Spirit leads you through the outworking of God's creative and redemptive process; and this is what "counting the omer" is about! As you take time to engage with God these 50 days over the early harvest of new things He is doing—the *first fruits*—and allow His Word and Spirit to minister to you, He progressively expands revelation and truth to the point of climax at Shavuot—Pentecost! As you continue to engage with God over time, He will truly take you *from faith-to-faith and glory-to-glory!* (Romans 1:17 and 2 Corinthians 3:18)

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you affirm and permit Messiah to be LORD, and the Holy Spirit to reveal new truth? How is your new nature reflected in your life?

Scripture References

Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-22

Sons and Servants: p. 119-123



Indwelling and
Infilling of the
Holy Spirit

Summary

Shavuot—the Feast of Harvest or Weeks (Pentecost) is a celebration of the fullness of the harvest. It also represents the fullness of God’s covenant—His Word and Spirit.

As the disciples were celebrating this feast 50 days after Messiah’s ascension, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Immerser, or Baptist, said that Messiah would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Upon receiving Messiah in your heart, you receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul admonishes believers to understand what the will of the Lord is and, therefore, “*keep on being filled with the Spirit.*” (Ephesians 5:17 JNT)

How is this accomplished? Paul adds in Colossians 3:16-17, “let the Word of the Messiah, in all its richness, live in you, as you teach and counsel each other in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude to God in your hearts.” (Colossians 3:16-17 JNT)

You are, therefore, continuously filled with the Spirit by filling yourself with God’s Word, communing with God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in you by yielding to Him in faith and obedience. It’s like driving your car. Upon filling your tank, you move forward, go places, and eventually need to replenish your tank! Such a repeated infilling should result in character growth that reflects the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)

It should also open up your heart and mind to God’s continuous enlightenment, a passion for the revelation of His truth, and the manifestation of various gifts of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12)

Life Application Questions

In what ways do you seek God’s continuous infilling of the Holy Spirit? How has your life been a reflection of this infilling?

Scripture References

Romans 12; Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:1-4

Book References

Faith and Fables: p.22-24; 151-172

Sons and Servants: p. 127-138; 161-162

Preparation

Summary

The primary purpose of the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) is to call us to prepare our hearts for the coming solemn Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It begins a period of reconciliation with God; specifically “Ten Days of Repentance” or “Days of Awe” which culminate in Yom Kippur.

Trumpets were also blown to acknowledge the presence of a king; and as a military practice, to send an alarm to the troops to prepare for battle. Our Messiah-King certainly deserves the honor of our high praises! “With trumpets and the sound of a horn; Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.” (Psalm 98:6 NKJV)

In Daniel 10:10-21, Scripture reveals an element of spiritual warfare. An angel was sent to Daniel as an answer to his prayer. He told Daniel about a war in the heavenly places that was being waged, and how it related to earthly events.

Messiah took this reality to a new level. In Luke 10 we see how the 70 disciples who had been sent out came back with this report, “Lord,” they said, “with your power, even the demons submit to us!” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Remember, I have given you authority; so you can trample down snakes and scorpions, indeed, all the Enemy’s forces; and you will remain completely unharmed. ²⁰ Nevertheless, don’t be glad that the spirits submit to you; be glad that your names have been recorded in heaven.” (Acts 10:18-20 JNT)

Paul taught the disciples more about waging spiritual warfare. He proclaimed, “For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; ⁴ because the weapons we use to wage war are not worldly. On the contrary, they have God’s power for demolishing strongholds. We demolish arguments ⁵ and every arrogance that raises itself up against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey the Messiah.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 JNT)

What are spiritual strongholds? They are spiritual fortresses founded on lies. They give place to demonic opposition of God’s truth and kingdom purposes. We, therefore, confess lies we have believed, renounce them, and pull our minds and thoughts into compliance with God’s truth, obeying His Word in faith.

Peter spoke more about the issue of demonic opposition, and provided this exhortation. “Stay sober, stay alert! Your enemy, the Adversary, stalks about like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand against him, firm in your trust, knowing that your brothers throughout the world are going through the same kinds of suffering.” (1 Peter 5:8-9 JNT)

James added more on the subject. “Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Clean your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded people!” (James 4:8 JNT)

Messiah defeated Satan and the authority of the powers of darkness on Calvary’s Cross. Satan, and his host of demons, however, are sore losers! They regain limited power as people agree with and subscribe to lies against the knowledge of God’s truth by maintaining prideful attitudes, pursuing lustful desires, and exalting vain images—the worship of idols.

Revelation 12:11-12 addresses the issue and final outcome. “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Life Application Questions

How have you positioned yourself to wage spiritual warfare? Do you wear your “armor” daily in humility and faith? See Ephesians 6:10-18. Do you have prayer and accountability partners to support you in fighting spiritual battles?

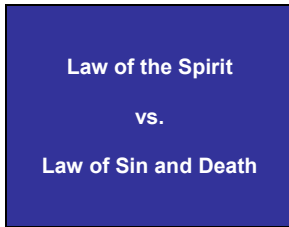
Scripture References

Daniel 10:10-21; Luke 10; Matthew 16:17-19; 2 Corinthians 10:2-6; 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7-8; Ephesians 6:10-18

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 95-110

Sons and Servants: p. 65-70



Summary

Messiah became the atonement for our sins; and is the atonement. We appropriate His atonement by receiving His sacrificial blood for the remission of our sins. We then come under the law of grace, and receive the operative power of the Holy Spirit; thus living in the freedom of the law of the Spirit.

Our natural fleshly tendencies, however, are inclined towards satisfying carnal desires, and therefore subject to the sway of sin. Giving into sin—lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life—brings guilt upon us, and puts us under the operative power and consequences of the law of sin; which leads to spiritual death. Repentance—the active turning back towards God—and receiving the mercy of Messiah’s forgiveness, restores the operative powers of the law of grace—the liberty of God’s Spirit.

Life Application Questions

Review Paul’s monologue in Romans 7. How do you relate to what he is describing? Then read Romans 8. Meditate about what Paul is relating. Compare the benefits and values of life as a child of God vs. life under the sway of sin.

Scripture References

Romans 7-8; Galatians 3:21-29; 5:16-26

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 22-27; 165-173

Sons and Servants: p. 9-12; 15-18; 33-35; 65-66; 80-81

Fellowship

Summary

Sukkot, Tabernacles, is the most joyous of the feasts. Scripture prescribes seven days for gathering in small booths, resting and remembering God's testimonies. It is a special time to be grateful for God's faithfulness in keeping His promises and sustaining our lives.

After Messiah had ascended to heaven, the disciples remained in a state of worship and fellowship, meeting often in an upper room. "These all devoted themselves single-mindedly to prayer." (Acts 1:14 JNT) Scripture also reports in Acts 2:44-45 the magnitude of their cooperation with one another. *They became "their brother's keeper."* (Genesis 4:9) They continued living faithfully towards God and one another with singleness of purpose, in a state reflecting the genuine love of Messiah.

The context of Scripture truly has in view a spirit of real covenant love; intimacy, mutual affection, care, and concern for one another. They shared what they had. They supported one another. They lived with a genuine sense of community. The glimpse we have from their engagement, in essence, is a real knitting of hearts: between God and man; and one another.

Life Application Questions

What kind of fellowship do you maintain with other believers? Are you part of a small group that prays for one another, supports one another—emotionally and physically, and fellowships in Messiah—in the Word and His Spirit?

Scripture References

Acts 1-2; 5:42; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 2

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 25-26; 32-33; 177-185
Sons and Servants: p. 114-115; 147-172



Release

Summary

The Passover feast is more than a mere celebration of freedom from bondage. It marks a total discharge—a genuine release and relief from the heavy burdens of sin. Passover also reveals the beginning of God’s creative process. He separates light from darkness, truth from error and lies, and people from the weight and burden of bondage.

Messiah bore our sins, thoroughly releasing us from the burden of the effects of sinful tendencies. The Holy Spirit, He said, would come to be our comforter; providing real relief from stress, anxiety, fear, depression, and every evil thing. The gospel, therefore, provides a real assurance and hope of spiritual freedom.

Messiah truly is our hope of glory. The Holy Spirit fills us with a real peace and joy the world cannot comprehend!

So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have *shalom* with God through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.² Also through him and on the ground of our trust, we have gained access to this grace in which we stand; so let us boast about the hope of experiencing God’s glory. (Romans 5:1-2 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Have you appropriated Messiah’s total discharge from the heavy burdens of sin? Are you experiencing real relief from anxiety, stress, fear, and depression? If not, place your burdens at the foot of the cross. Submit them to Messiah. Allow His blood to wash them away, and let the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your heart and mind through Messiah. (Philippians 4:6)

Scripture References

Romans 8:1-8

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-21; 58-59

Sons and Servants: p. 38; 80-81



Clarity

Summary

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the home was cleared from all traces of leaven. What is the issue with leaven? It is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It therefore, is used as a metaphor for sin. As it spreads, it compromises and destroys what is good and otherwise pure.

As we walk in this life, we are continuously bombarded with messages of this world that may seem good. The majority of them, however, are rooted in the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. They look good on the outside—but are *not rooted in God's truth or life of His Spirit*—and therefore, cannot bear the life, wisdom or fruit of His Spirit, and produce God's real peace and joy.

God wants us to eat of the *tree of life!* He wants us to discern between what is of Him and what is of the world. He wants to bring us from *confusion to clarity*. That is accomplished by seeking God's wisdom and peace through His Word and Spirit; and comes from receiving the true *light of the world*—Messiah .

Messiah's sacrifice, therefore, not only released you from the burdens of the effects of sin, but accomplished what the Law of Moses could never permanently do: legally clear you of all possible charges of sin, removing all possible effects of guilt, condemnation and confusion found under the law of sin and death!

His last words proclaimed on the cross were, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) Paul, therefore, endeavored to clear the disciples' conscience from all traces of guilt proclaiming, "Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua.² Why? Because the *Torah* of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has set me free from the "*Torah*" of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-3 JNT)

Free from guilt and condemnation, the believer can receive Messiah's mercy and truth. By receiving His mercy and truth, you walk with a new mindset and perspective on life—God's perspective! Such a mindset sets things clear to you so you see with God's kind of *open vision*. Truly, His open vision enables you to walk in the light of His wisdom and truth.

Life Application Questions

Have you allowed Messiah to clear all the charges of guilt and condemnation from your conscience? Are there areas where you still come under guilt and condemnation? Have you received the full mercy of Messiah? Do you extend mercy to others—even those with whom you have difficulty? How about those who scorn, use, or mock you?

Do you judge anybody? Do you hold anybody in low esteem? Are you quick to condemn those who do you wrong?" This is a more critical issue than most of us like to believe. As Scripture says, "For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours." (Matthew 6:14-15 JNT)

Scripture References

Romans 8:1-3; Colossians 2:13-15; Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4; 23:34; 1 John 1:9

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 18-21; 55-59; 82; 139-141; 164-165; 178-180
Sons and Servants: p. 9-11; 74-46; 80-81



Summary

The Feast of First-fruits served as a shadow, pointing to the resurrection of the Messiah as the first soul arisen in the newness of eternal life. In identifying with Messiah's resurrection, the child of God is elevated to a new spiritual state; "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21 NKJV)

This new position acknowledges an intimate and genuine relationship with our Creator and Father God. It is by this real "Spirit of adoption" whereby the child of God receives the love of the Father, responding by crying out from the heart, "Abba, Father." Furthermore, as His children, we become "joint heirs with Messiah." (Romans 8:17 JNT)

This new standing opens up a new realm of vested legal rights to the child of God, as stated in John 1:12-13. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

To truly gain insight into what *right* the children of God who actively believe receive, the word used for *right* needs to be examined. The Greek word is *exousia*. Like many Greek (and Hebrew) words, it is an expansive word. It means: right, privilege, capacity, competency, strength, freedom, authority, power, and jurisdiction. It means a lot! So, those who believe and actively embrace Messiah from the heart, attain the full right, privilege, capacity, competency, strength, freedom, authority, power, and jurisdiction of covenant children of God!

Truly, God's children in Messiah have opportunity to apprehend a fresh, wide-range perspective of life! 1 Samuel 3:1 calls this type of vision, *open vision (chazone parats)*. With such type of *open vision* and the faith to see it materialize, you can truly come into the fullness of God's unique purposes for your life.

Life Application Questions

To what degree have you received the love of the Father? How has God revealed His Son the Messiah in you? To what extent have you received your "vesting" as a joint heir with Messiah? How have you been exercising your rights as heirs of grace, children of the King of Glory?

Scripture References

John 1; Romans 8; Galatians 1:16; Galatians 4; Hebrews 12

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 15-16; 168-173
Sons and Servants: the whole book!

Independence in God

Dependence on God

Summary

Shavuot—the Feast of Harvest or Weeks was originally established to be a celebration of the fullness of the harvest. On this day, Moses received the Law—God’s covenant. So it has become a celebration of Torah—or giving of God’s covenant word. It would be God’s word that would guide God’s people through a life of faith—dependent on God; and distinguished from the pagan nations of the world. Moses therefore reminded the people that God provided manna in the wilderness to prove an important point: “He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by *every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.*” (Deuteronomy 8:3-4) Messiah quoted this very scripture when tempted by Satan in the wilderness right before embarking on His ministry. (Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4)

As the disciples were celebrating Shavuot, the Holy Spirit fell upon them as recorded in Acts 2. God’s covenant Word connected with His Spirit and brought completion—or fullness—to the revelation of God’s covenant. It therefore, brought fulfillment to Isaiah’s prophecy expressing the *fullness of God’s covenant*: “this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth..” (Isaiah 59:21 NKJV)

So, *full independence in God* would be expressed by *depending on God’s Word breathed by His Spirit*—the Holy Spirit. This is what Messiah communicated towards the end of His ministry in the upper room.

¹²“I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. ¹³ However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because *he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you.* (John 16:12-14 JNT)

It is also what Paul had in mind in expressing what liberty in Messiah is about. “What the Messiah has freed us for is freedom! Therefore, stand firm, and don’t let yourselves be tied up again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1 JNT)

As Messiah has discharged us from the debt to the law of sin and fully acquitted us from the guilt of the effects of sin, we are truly fully empowered to walk in the Spirit of liberty! However, it’s one thing to know that you are free from the power of sin. It’s another thing to be able to *walk free from the dominion of sin*.

This happens as your heart and mind become regenerated by the Holy Spirit. It happens as your desire to rule over sin overpowers your desire to walk under the sway of sin: the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. Such desires abate, though we will continue to battle our fleshly nature.

This is what Messiah meant in declaring, “He who loves his life loses it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it safe right on into eternal life!” (John 12:25 JNT) He was referring to the life absorbed in serving the desires of the flesh. He was referring to a life where the nature and orientation of your heart undergoes a vital change. It changes from being more absorbed with satisfying its self-interests to satisfying and serving God’s interests.

This transformation occurs by the power of the Holy Spirit. For, the Spirit enlightens your mind to truth, sanctifies your heart and nature, and regenerates and transforms your life. It is truly liberating! It liberates you in Messiah. You become free and independent in Messiah; yet dependent on the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to resist the carnal nature of the flesh and be freed from its pulls.

Will you encounter temptations to satisfy selfish and fleshly interests and desires? Most certainly! Will you stumble? At times—probably yes. The key is setting your heart against the types of things you know you must resist; setting your mind against the weaknesses you know cause you to stumble; and praying daily for God’s grace to “lead you not into temptation.” And always, be humble and grateful for His mercy.

Life Application Questions

How conscious are you of the pulls of your carnal nature? How do you receive the conviction of sin from the Holy Spirit? Do you feel guilty and condemned when convicted; or set free by the power of repentance and gift of Messiah’s forgiveness and peace of the Spirit? Have you resolved to loathe the self-absorbed nature? Are you aware of God’s interests and desires as they relate to your life? Do you find joy in serving God’s interests?

Scripture References

John 12-17; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2; Galatians 5-6

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 23-27; 121-132; 140-141; 164-173
Sons and Servants: p. 9-11; 82-86

Transformation

Summary

The Feast of Trumpets serves as a shadow pointing forward to Messiah's triumph over the power of the law of sin and death. Messiah humbled Himself, and was obedient unto death. He sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, open us to God's righteousness, and administer God's judgment—releasing His mercy!

In surrendering to death on the cross, Messiah overcame the sinful tendency to uphold self-righteousness. He then recovered the spiritual authority that Adam had lost to Satan in giving in to the lie of the serpent and disobeying God. He, therefore, declared in Revelation 1:18-19, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

Peter was also humbled. Extremely self-confident and often quick to talk, He thought he could never deny his friend and Savior. How quickly he did, though, just as Messiah had predicted. However, he allowed the Holy Spirit to convict his heart. He was then given the grace of redemption, and the opportunity to three times declare his true love for the Lord.

After Messiah asked him three times, "do you love me," Peter replied, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." (John 21:17 NKJV)

Peter learned that Messiah really knew his heart. He surrendered to the conviction by the Holy Spirit. He allowed the Holy Spirit to fill the gap in His heart. That empowered a real change in temperament and attitude. He could, therefore, be entrusted with a large measure of authority and anointing of the Holy Spirit!

Life Application Questions

Have you noticed situations arising in your life where you have faced having to defend, justify, or prove yourself? In those situations, have you asked God for the strength to make it; or have you kicked in your heels, and fought to win on your own strength? Have you simply blamed the devil, taking no responsibility for your own actions? Have you noticed the Holy Spirit leading you to consider some issues, and settle whether or not you might be right or wrong about something? Have you pondered repenting for anything? Has the Holy Spirit been trying to convict you of any weaknesses or areas of sin?

Scripture References

1 Samuel 13:1-15; Psalm 51; Daniel 4; Matthew 16:24-27; Mark 8:35-38; Philippians 4:12

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-25; 73-76

Sons and Servants: p. 73-76; 110-140

Discipline in the Spirit

Summary

Messiah is our atonement for sin. His obedient death on the cross reconciled man back to God, restoring the fullness of the covenant relationship lost in the Garden of Eden due to sin, disobedience and assertion of independence from God. His sacrifice satisfied God's wrath.

As we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we have, likewise, been united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. We, therefore, have a new capacity to resist the tendencies to sin. We have the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. As a result, sin no longer has dominion over the believer, for we are under the law of grace. Therefore, it is up to us to walk in the newness of this new life in Messiah. If we stumble, we repent, and receive Messiah's forgiveness without retribution or condemnation.

Freedom from the guilt of sin, however, does not give us license to sin. In fact in Messiah, we have been raised to a higher standard of moral excellence and accountability. Therefore, we must "submit to God" and "resist the devil" by drawing near to God, purifying our heart, and apprehending the "mind of Messiah." (James 4:7 and Philippians 2:5) In addition, by reckoning to be dead to sin and alive to God, we can serve our fellow man in the "newness of the Spirit." (Romans 6:5-6 and 7:6)

In gratefulness for Messiah's love and precious promises, Peter, therefore, charges believers to cultivate character traits above and beyond basic faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

For if you have these qualities in abundance, they keep you from being barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. ⁹Indeed, whoever lacks them is blind, so shortsighted that he forgets that his past sins have been washed away. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, try even harder to make your being called and chosen a certainty. For if you keep doing this, you will never stumble. ¹¹Thus you will be generously supplied with everything you need to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah. (2 Peter 1:8-11 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Having received Messiah's atonement, how have you diligently pursued advancing your walk with Messiah to be a partaker of the divine nature? What fruits of the seven character traits do you regularly bear? Which of these character traits will you ask God to manifest in your life to a greater extent? In what ways can you see yourself growing further?

Scripture References

Romans 5-7; 2 Peter; Philippians 2:5-15; 2 Corinthians 4; 1 John

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 100-105
Sons and Servants: p. 65-73; 122-123



Fruitfulness

Summary

Sukkot, Tabernacles, is the most joyous of the feasts. It is celebrated over a week-long period, and is designed to facilitate active times of celebration and relating with God and one another.

It, in essence, served as a shadow pointing forward to the type of life and dynamic fellowship experienced by the early believers as recorded in Acts. They had simple hearts, childlike faith, and walked in childlike obedience to God.

They pursued an active, passionate relationship with God, and strong dynamic, covenant relationships with one another. The high level of engagement they maintained with God and one another further points forward to the great wedding feast of Messiah and His Bride—the marriage supper of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:9)

As a result of the active engagement with the Holy Spirit, the prophecy in Isaiah 61 began to be fulfilled: good tidings were preached, many broken-hearted and lame were healed, those in captivity to sin were set free—God was glorified!

God's covenant community, therefore, grew by leaps and bounds. People were certainly witnessing His wonders. Revival broke loose. God still seeks such vibrant, active communities of believers glorifying His name and accomplishing His purposes in the earth.

Life Application Questions

How are you maintaining an active engagement with God? In what kind of dynamic fellowship do you participate? How is your personal spiritual life growing? How is your covenant community growing? In what ways are you witnessing the power of God in your midst? Are you seeing souls being set free of bondages? Are you seeing people committing their lives to Messiah?

Scripture References

The book of Acts

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 151-187

Sons and Servants: p. 145-172

Connection

Summary

God desires to build and maintain quality spiritual connections with His children. His heart, therefore, is focused on restoring, renewing and regenerating active relationships with Him. His goal, therefore, is to bring your relationship with Him to a flourishing state of oneness with Him—a true solid union. This was the core desire of Messiah's heart, as expressed in His prayer recorded in John 17.

The blood of the sacrificial Passover lamb was sprinkled over the doorposts to mark the home that was spared from the plague of death. The blood, therefore, connected every family to God's covenant of life. Any individual who did not participate in the feast would be cut off from the congregation of Israel. God's word says this feast should be celebrated, "throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:17) The Passover feast was inaugurated as the first of a cycle of covenant feasts of the LORD, marking deliverance from bondage. John the Immerser, Baptist, introduced Messiah as, "God's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 JNT)

Messiah came to Jerusalem on the very day the Passover lamb was traditionally set aside for inspection. Likewise, He endured five days of questioning and "inspection" from the Jewish leaders. He was crucified on the same day, at the same time the lamb was to be killed. He, therefore, became the sacrificial lamb, obtaining eternal redemption, "setting people free forever." (Hebrews 9:12 JNT) His blood was shed to, "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (v. 14) It was shed, "that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (v.15)

The precious blood of Messiah, therefore, was shed to set your conscience free from the anguish and guilt felt from performing worthless and vain works that cannot earn salvation, liberate your weary and bound soul, connect you to God's Spirit, and guarantee you eternal peace with God! His salvation is a gift of His grace.

Our union with Him is also to be dynamic and full of life. Such a union lives in a free state of communion and communication. God, therefore, desires to connect and engage with you in bi-directional conversation. As Messiah said, "My sheep listen to my voice, I recognize them, they follow me, ²⁸ and I give them eternal life." (John 10:27 JNT)

Life Application Questions

How real and strong is your connection to God? Is your communion and communication with Him bi-directional? Do you know His Holy Spirit intimately? Can you recognize His voice speaking to you?

Scripture References

Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 30:11-14; Psalm 86:11; James 2:23; John 14:15-24

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 15-17; 87-88

Sons and Servants: p. 8-26; 38; 41; 45; 103; 111-112; 114

Communion

Summary

The second feast immediately after Passover is the feast of Unleavened Bread. Whereas Passover lasts for a day, Unleavened Bread lasts for a week. The feast serves as a reminder of past bondage, and value of leaving it behind.

While Unleavened Bread stands for a process of removing leaven from the home, this process in essence acts as a shadow reflecting the reality and value of engaging in an ongoing process of removing revealed sin and contaminating and corrupting influences from our life, purifying our heart—and walk—before God. In another sense, it also points to the outward sign of water immersion, or baptism; which affirms the inward cleansing work of the Holy Spirit.

In valuing this reality, we have the opportunity to submit our fleshly desires to Messiah. We then place our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to help us resist those appealing, but unprofitable temptations. Paul referred to this process as, *sanctification by the Spirit* or a “holiness that has its origin in the Spirit and the faithfulness that has its origin in the truth.” (2 Thessalonians 2:13 JNT)

By doing so, we trade the harmful influences of the world for the grace of Messiah’s dominion, or headship. We also allow the power of His resurrection to become a personal reality, and work a progressive cleansing work in our life.

For this reason, Paul exhorted the disciples to, “abound more and more,” walking through life pleasing God. *“For, this is the will of God, your sanctification.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 NKJV)

Therefore, in being alive in the newness of Messiah, we need to understand that, as much as grace and sanctification work together, vibrant communion with Messiah cannot coexist with idols in our heart. For, idols are images we place greater value upon, than that of our relationship with God. It, therefore, behooves us to honestly assess our values, and truly discern the things in life that may take on the form of idols.

Life Application Questions

How do you examine your standing—or health of your relationship with God? Are there crevices in your heart that the Holy Spirit may be shedding light upon to bring your heart into a greater degree of sanctification, and unity with God?

Scripture References

2 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:1-3; James 4; Ephesians 1:15-21

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 12-15; 83; 173

Sons and Servants: p. 45-47; 74-76; 91; 114; 145-150

Consecration

Summary

The Feast of First-fruits marks a time of expressing gratefulness to God for one's harvest by dedicating the first fruits of the crop to God. It, therefore, acknowledges God's headship over mankind; and man's stewardship before God. It also serves as a shadow, pointing to Messiah's resurrection as the first soul arisen in the newness of eternal life.

But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. ²² For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming; ²⁴ then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power.
(1 Corinthians 15:20-24 JNT)

In identifying with His resurrection, the child of God is, therefore, elevated to a new spiritual state; "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21 NKJV)

In addition to valuing God's grace in the harvest, First-fruits gave the individual the opportunity to examine the first fruits of the crop to test the quality of the harvest. If the first fruits were good—and therefore blessed—the rest would likewise be blessed.

Here too, Messiah has become an example of the type of character we should value. The Holy Spirit, however, is the real enabler. He is the Comforter who, if allowed, will transform your mind and heart, bringing it to conformity with the character of Messiah.

Scripture References

Psalms 26; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4; Hebrews 4; 12:14-15; Matthew 7:21; 1 John 3:1-3; Galatians 5:22

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 21-22; 139-140

Sons and Servants: p. 72-73

Consolation

Communication

Confirmation

Conformation

Summary

The Feast of Weeks or Harvest—Shavuot (Pentecost) is a feast of jubilee—a celebration of the glory of God. It marks the time God’s law was given to Moses. As the disciples were celebrating this feast, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as Messiah had promised. It truly marked the glorification of Messiah, and glory of the power of God.

Messiah called the Holy Spirit the Comforter. The same Greek word is used for comforter and consolation. The disciples learned quickly that it was by the power and comfort of the Holy Spirit that the community of believers grew and maintained its vitality.

In appreciating the value of the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, Paul endeavored to help believers understand the nature of the Holy Spirit, and how He communicates with us. He, therefore, shed light on Isaiah’s comment in 64:4—“Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You”—by explaining...

“It is to us, however, that God has revealed these things. How? Through the Spirit. For the Spirit probes all things, even the profoundest depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows the inner workings of a person except the person’s own spirit inside him? So too no one knows the inner workings of God except God’s Spirit. ¹² Now we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God, so that we might understand the things God has so freely given us. ¹³ These are the things we are talking about when we avoid the manner of speaking that human wisdom would dictate and instead use a manner of speaking taught by the Spirit, by which we explain things of the Spirit to people who have the Spirit. ¹⁴ Now the natural man does not receive the things from the Spirit of God — to him they are nonsense! Moreover, he is unable to grasp them, because they are evaluated through the Spirit. ¹⁵ But the person who has the Spirit can evaluate everything, while no one is in a position to evaluate him. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of *Adona*? Who will counsel him? But we have the mind of the Messiah!” (1 Corinthians 2:10-14 JNT)

Messiah said the Holy Spirit “will guide you into all truth.” The Holy Spirit, therefore, is our greatly valued covenant partner, expressing Himself through “various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit” to confirm God’s truths. “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Hebrews 2:1-4 NKJV)

Scripture reveals how the gifts of the Holy Spirit flow within the context of a humble, reverent and orderly group of believers gathered together in faith to edify one another, and confirm His word of truth.

“What is our conclusion, brothers? Whenever you come together, let everyone be ready with a psalm or a teaching or a revelation, or ready to use his gift of tongues or give an interpretation; but let everything be for edification. ²⁷ If the gift of tongues is exercised, let it be by two or at most three, and each in turn; and let someone interpret. ²⁸ And if there is no one present who can interpret, let the people who speak in tongues keep silent when the congregation meets — they can speak to themselves and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, while the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ And if something is revealed to a prophet who is sitting down, let the first one be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, with the result that all will learn something and all will be encouraged. ³² Also, the prophets’ spirits are under the prophets’ control; ³³ for God is not a God of unruliness but of *shalom*.” (1 Corinthians 14:26 JNT)

Disciples are afforded the opportunity to grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah, or Lord's "standard of maturity." (Ephesians 4:13 JNT) Such a measure, or standard, carries real value; "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Corinthians 4:17 NKJV) If we truly value such a measure, we will respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, transforming our minds, and conforming our attitudes and character to that of Messiah's.

Such a transformation happens over time. It truly requires disciplined submission to the Holy Spirit. "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NKJV)

The result of the process yields good fruits. The more we submit to the Spirit, the more we reflect the fruits of the Spirit. We must, therefore, allow the Holy Spirit to discipline our flesh through patient submission, humility and love. "Moreover, those who belong to the Messiah Yeshua have put their old nature to death on the stake, along with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since it is through the Spirit that we have Life, let it also be through the Spirit that we order our lives day by day." (Galatians 5:24-25 JNT)

Life Application Questions

In what ways have you valued the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life? How do you recognize the comfort of the Holy Spirit? How does He speak to you? How do you confirm what the Holy Spirit reveals to you? How are you being transformed, and conformed into the fullness of Messiah?

Scripture References

John 14-16; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18; Galatians 5; Romans 14

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 22-27; 58-59; 81; 115-122; 139-140; 164-165

Sons and Servants: p. 29-30; 44-46; 79-81; 90-91; 108-115; 119-123

Conquest

Summary

The primary purpose of the Feast of Trumpets was to call the people to prepare to do battle against the enemy of the soul—sin—on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

Messiah has become the eternal “horn of salvation.” He overcame the devil first when tempted in the wilderness; and finally through His death on the cross and resurrection, conquered all authority over evil, sin, and death. “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Colossians 2:13-16 NKJV)

Paul, like David, experienced the full spectrum of pain and joy. He knew suffering and shame, yet also knew the sweet taste of victory. He knew that experiencing victory and defeat worked to build character. For, he knew that in Messiah—either way—he lived in victory! “I know what it is to be in want, and I know what it is to have more than enough — in everything and in every way I have learned the secret of being full and being hungry, of having abundance and being in need.”¹³ I can do all things through him who gives me power.” (Philippians. 4:12-13 JNT)

Embrace his exhortation regarding our triumph in Messiah. “No, in all these things we are superconquerors, through the one who has loved us.”³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers, neither what exists nor what is coming,³⁹ neither powers above nor powers below, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39 JNT)

Life Application Questions

In what areas of your life have you appropriated Messiah’s victory in a real way? Generally speaking, do you feel that you are living a victorious life, or is life overcoming you? In what additional ways do you need to receive His victory? Have you asked God what it will take for you to gain victory in the areas you need victory?

Scripture References

Romans 8:18-39; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 9:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 John 5:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 2:18-21; 3:13-17; Colossians 2:13-16; Exodus 17:8-16; Psalm 16; 98; 108; 129

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 27-29; 58; 95-110
Sons and Servants: p. 106-108; 145-147; 149-150; 160-161

Conviction

Summary

The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, remembers the one day of the year when the high priest would go into the tabernacle, behind the veil, into the Holy of Holies to atone for the sin of the people. On the Mercy Seat covering the Ark of the Covenant, the priest would sprinkle the blood of the covenant sacrifice. From within the cloud of God's glory over the ark, God would see the sacrificial blood as evidence of man's atonement of sin, reversing God's judgment, transforming it to mercy.

The sacrificial blood of Messiah was poured out once and for all reversing God's judgment of sin. As much as we need to allow the Holy Spirit to convict our heart of sin, we also need to allow our heart to receive with conviction the Father's love and the grace of Messiah's mercy. As we receive God's forgiveness purchased with Messiah's blood, we can forgive others. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matthew 6:14)

As we value Messiah's sacrifice and His forgiveness, we are able to cast off condemnation, allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and refresh our heart. Such liberty enables us to walk free from guilt; and empowers us to set others free from our judgment. In a similar sense, as we take the "log" out of our eye (Matthew 7:4) and stop judging others, God cleans our eye, and clears our vision—so that we can see with His *open vision*.

Living free from the guilt of sin and judgment truly transfers us into a new realm. For, when you receive the liberty of the Spirit, you are transferred from the realm of the guilt and condemnation of sin to the realm of freedom in the Spirit.

We often find it difficult to shake off guilt. Therefore, we need to embrace Paul's exhortation. "Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua. ² Why? Because the *Torah* of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has set me free from the "*Torah*" of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2 JNT)

Life Application Questions

Have you fully received the love of the Father? Do you know the mercy of Messiah? Have you fully received the Holy Spirit's comfort? How easily do you freely extend Messiah's love to others—even difficult people? How do you extend mercy and grace to others?

Scripture References

1 John 4:16; Psalm 19:7-14; 27; 136; Hebrews 6:13-20

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 29-30; 39-41; 135-139
Sons and Servants: p. 74-76; 90-94; 114-118

Contentment

Community

Completion

Summary

Sukkot, Tabernacles, marks the time of completing the cycle of covenant feasts. Having gathered in the fruits of the harvest, Tabernacles was a time to express gratefulness to God for His provision and increase. It was a time to rest in contentment, reflect on God's goodness, and celebrate with joyful hearts.

Messiah satisfied the debt for our sins. He redeemed us from dead works. He lifted the burden of guilt and condemnation. He invited all who believe to be joined with Him, and receive His peace. "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 JNT)

The peace of Messiah is very precious, and most valuable. It is the true antidote for anxiety. To some, real inner peace and God's *shalom* may be hard to comprehend. But, it is real. It is available to experience.

How to find it? "Don't worry about anything; on the contrary, make your requests known to God by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving.⁷ Then God's *shalom* (peace), passing all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with the Messiah Yeshua.⁸ In conclusion, brothers, focus your thoughts on what is true, noble, righteous, pure, lovable or admirable, on some virtue or on something praiseworthy." (Philippians 4:6-8 JNT)

Through his labor and trials, Paul learned how to have contentment in Messiah. He confessed that, "I have learned to be content regardless of circumstances.¹² I know what it is to be in want, and I know what it is to have more than enough — in everything and in every way I have learned the secret of being full and being hungry, of having abundance and being in need.¹³ I can do all things through him who gives me power." (Philippians 4:11-12 JNT)

In a world that finds it hard to find satisfaction with the simple things of life, contentment in Messiah is to be greatly valued. For this reason, the writer of Hebrews reminded believers that Messiah was their source of sufficiency and peace. Even in the face of the threats and pressures of life, we are exhorted to find our confidence and faith in Messiah, whose presence is always with us. "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5 NKJV)

The early community of believers valued the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit. They also valued studying God's Word and maintaining fellowship with one another in the Spirit. They valued enjoining and engaging with one another in rich communication, and earnestly cared for one another.

Such dynamic fellowship enabled them to truly experience the fullness of the Spirit of Messiah. These believers were convicted in their hearts that they needed one another, and needed to support one another through the trials and toil of life. They valued the different gifts, skills, and resources that God had given to them, and in turn, actively engaged in the practice of generously sharing and caring for one another.

Their sense of community was real because the presence of the Holy Spirit was real to them. That presence gave them a sense of confidence and peace. Although external trials abounded, they were exhorted to rest internally in that state of completion in Messiah. "For in him, bodily, lives the fullness of all that God is.¹⁰ And it is in union with him that you have been made full — he is the head of every rule and authority." (Colossians 2:8-10 JNT)

Furthermore, they learned that prayer and patience work together to see God's will and purposes accomplished.

Life Application Questions

Is God's peace and contentment real to you? What blockages could be preventing you from experiencing God's presence and peace? Do you find peace from God's Word, and by spending time with Him in prayer? What kind of Messiah-centered fellowship do you have with other believers? How do you engage with God through the Holy Spirit in a real way?

Scripture References

Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 13:4-6; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Acts 2:42-47; Colossians 2:8-10; James 1:3-8

Book References

Faith and Fables: p. 30-34; 58-59; 65-66; 87-93; 133-140; 142-147

Sons and Servants: p. 52-57; 99-104

I AM
THE BREAD
OF LIFE

The Feast of **Passover** was approaching. Messiah had just performed the miracle of multiplying five barley loaves and two small fish into enough to feed a crowd of 5,000. The next day the people searched for Him; and after finding Him, engaged in conversation. What He shared was astounding! Parts of His conversation included these statements:

"I am the bread which is life! Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever trusts in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ I told you that you have seen but still don't trust. ³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will certainly not turn away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of the One who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of the One who sent me: that I should not lose any of all those he has given me but should raise them up on the Last Day. ⁴⁰ Yes, this is the will of my Father: that all who see the Son and trust in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise them up on the Last Day." (John 6:35-40 JNT)

"Yes, indeed! I tell you that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life — that is, I will raise him up on the Last Day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, so also whoever eats me will live through me." (John 6:53-57 JNT)

As He continued to share about the kingdom of God, many came to understanding and believed in Him. Yet there were also many who could not comprehend. It became apparent that some could see with spiritual eyes, and therefore, trust—believe; while those who could not see through eyes of faith were bewildered and frustrated. What was He really communicating? Isaiah had spoken something important about God's covenant that helps us understand!

As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore." (Isaiah 59:21NKJV)

God's Word breathed by His Spirit bears LIFE. It is the LIFE of His covenant—and LIFE of Messiah. As we receive Messiah's words with open hearts by faith, God's Spirit breaths LIFE within us, watering the seeds of truth that His words bear. In such a way, His Words and Spirit IN US manifest God's presence in us, causing us to live IN HIM—in UNION with Him. In John 17, Messiah prayed this would become reality!

"I pray not only for these, but also for those who will trust in me because of their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are united with me and I with you, I pray that they may be united with us, so that the world may believe that you sent me. ²² The glory which you have given to me, I have given to them; so that they may be one, just as we are one —²³ I united with them and you with me, so that they may be completely one, and the world thus realize that you sent me, and that you have loved them just as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23 JNT)

In Messiah, we truly see El Shaddai, The All-Sufficient God who is the strength of our sustenance—and true bread of life.

I AM
THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD

Messiah was teaching in the temple. A group of religious leaders brought to Him a woman caught in adultery, a sin worthy of death. They tested Him by asking what He thought. He replied to her accusers, “The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:7 JNT) Her accusers, convicted by their own conscience, left. He said He did not condemn her, and that she should sin no more. He then shared something that brought peace and strength to her as well as others hearing.

“I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life.”

The *light* of Messiah reveals *truth*. Receiving His Words breathed by His Spirit bears the life of God’s truth. For, His words cut through the darkness of lies that condemn. His words and Spirit bear truth that sets people free. Messiah revealed this later in His conversation.

“If you obey what I say, then you are really my *talmidim*, (disciples)³² you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Light, separating truth from lies, in essence is what the Feast of **Unleavened Bread** is about. Why does Torah prescribe removing leaven from the home? Leaven is a fermenting substance; a turbulent form of bacterium that is permeating and pervasive in nature. It spreads like a cancer or virus, contaminating, polluting and corrupting what it touches. It is what sin and bad influences do to our life.

As we actively receive and embrace Messiah and the light of God’s truth by His Word, His Spirit sanctifies us. This is what the apostle Paul related as, “sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.” (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV)

In Messiah, we have a living revelation of El Emet—The God of Truth. (Psalm 31:5)

I AM
THE DOOR
OF THE SHEEP

The prophet, Joel, was speaking of Messiah when he proclaimed, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” (Joel 3:5 MT; v. 2:32 others)

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ came proclaiming that He was the way to eternal salvation, the gateway—or door—of heaven.

“Yes, indeed! I tell you that I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All those who have come before me have been thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate; if someone enters through me, he will be safe and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure.” (John 10:7-10 JNT)

This word was truly fulfilled at the moment His fleshly life expired, as the veil to the Holy Place in the Temple was ripped in two from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51) The very entrance to the place representing the throne room of God, where access had been restricted, became *open*.

Paul expanded on what this truly meant for those placing their faith in Messiah by explaining, “through him and on the ground of our trust, *we have gained access to this grace* in which we stand.” (Romans 5:2 JNT)

This grace is the fullness of Messiah’s salvation—eternal life with eternal access to God’s presence in heaven—and open access to God, “in earth as it is in heaven” while still on earth, through the presence of the Holy Spirit! Paul further explained how believers in Messiah follow after Him as true children of God bound for eternal life, in proclaiming that, “the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died.” (1 Corinthians 15:20 JNT)

Messiah came as a man to be the **first fruit** to ascend unto eternal life after substituting His sacrificial blood for the remission of sins. No longer would animal sacrifices be acceptable to God. He opened the door to eternal life! He lives eternally in heaven, as do those who have put their faith in Messiah, and follow Him.

In Messiah, we truly see El Hashamayim—The God of the Heavens. (Psalm 136:26)



Messiah came to bear revelation of God's covenant and truth—His Word and Spirit. He came fulfilling all **Shavuot** represents.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning... ¹⁴ The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his *Sh'khinah* (*glory*), the *Sh'khinah* of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth... ³² Then Yochanan (John) gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and remaining on him. ³³ I myself did not know who he was, but the one who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, this is the one who immerses in the *Ruach HaKodesh*.' (Holy Spirit) ³⁴ And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:1-34 JNT)

The prophet, Ezekiel, expressed God's displeasure with the leaders who were self-indulgent, neglecting God's people.

The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost... So they were scattered because there was no shepherd... (Ezekiel 34:4-6 NKJV)

God, therefore, proclaimed that a day was coming when He would Himself search for His sheep.

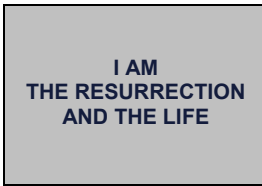
For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered... I will feed them in good pasture... I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick... (Ezekiel 34:11-16 NKJV)

Messiah is not only the way to heaven; He is the Good Shepherd of God's flock. He came fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me — ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father — and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. ¹⁶ Also I have other sheep which are not from this pen; I need to bring them, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock, one shepherd." (John 10:11-18 JNT)

Messiah truly manifested El Rachum—The God of Compassion (Deuteronomy 4:31), in the fullness of measure.

He came with a heart to seek and save the lost. He healed all types of sicknesses and diseases, bound the broken-hearted, opened the eyes of those of faith, and freed people captive to all sorts of bondages. He truly manifested Adonai Rohi—The LORD Our Shepherd, who leads us to His peaceful places, and fills us with the substance of His life!



The primary purpose of the Feast of **Trumpets** (Rosh Hashanah; Head of the Year) is to call us to prepare our hearts for the coming solemn Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). It begins a period of reconciliation with God; specifically, “Ten Days of Repentance” or “Days of Awe” which culminate in Yom Kippur.

The trumpet (ram’s horn, or shofar) was also used to alarm the people and prepare them for battle. It is therefore a day to arise in spiritual awakening.

In addition, trumpets were used to proclaim the entry of a king. Therefore, on this high-holiday, we also proclaim God King of the Universe, and honor His kingship and authority over all creation.

Messiah came as KING to BE the final sacrifice for sin. Those placing faith in Him are reconciled with God. He has accomplished more through His sacrificial blood than a single day of confession could ever possibly do! He defeated the enemy of our soul and won the battle over the power of sin and death. By the power and authority of His resurrection, all those who put their faith in Him are justified before God and delivered from His judgment into eternal life.

To illustrate this point, Messiah raised a man, Lazarus, who had been in a tomb for four days. He did this, “for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may receive glory through it.” (John 11:4 JNT) He, therefore, declared:

“I AM the Resurrection and the Life! Whoever puts his trust in me will live, even if he dies; and everyone living and trusting in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26 JNT)

Placing our trust in Messiah, we become united with Him by faith, and our soul is justified before God to live for eternity.

Truly, He has prepared a way and a place for those who place their faith in Messiah. In Messiah, we see El Chaiyai—The God of my life (Psalm 42:8) and El Yeshuati—The God of my salvation. (Isaiah 12:2)

I AM
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE

Towards the end of His earthly ministry, Messiah was sharing a Passover meal with His closest disciples. He shared many key truths about the kingdom of God, and demonstrated the kind of way his disciples would share His love and serve one another by washing their feet. If that didn't startle them, Messiah said something that startled them even more.

"I AM the Way — and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me."
(John 14:6 JNT)

Messiah revealed that He not only is the true way or path to eternal life, but IS eternal life—and *the* true **atonement** for sin, opening the way of eternal life. What did He really mean? The apostle, Paul, shed light on the meaning of this.

⁴ Through immersion into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. ⁵ *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his.* ⁶ *We know that our old self was put to death on the execution-stake with him, so that the entire body of our sinful propensities might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.* ⁷ For someone who has died has been cleared from sin. ⁸ Now since we died with the Messiah, we trust that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, never to die again; death has no authority over him. ¹⁰ For his death was a unique event that need not be repeated; but his life, he keeps on living for God. ¹¹ In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God, by your union with the Messiah Yeshua. ¹² Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires; ¹³ and do not offer any part of yourselves to sin as an instrument for wickedness. On the contrary, offer yourselves to God as people alive from the dead, and your various parts to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace. (Romans 6:4-14 JNT)

As we allow our carnal sinful tendencies (lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and pride of life) to die, put our faith in Messiah, and trust in the Holy Spirit to enable us to rule over those tendencies, we become united with Messiah in His resurrection, and live IN HIM—the power of His resurrection—HIS WAY, HIS TRUTH and HIS LIFE.

Truly, no single **day of atonement** or collection of *mitzvot*—works of righteousness or commandments—nor confession can satisfy God's wrath and fulfill God's requirement of a blood sacrifice for the remission of sins. There is no way to reconcile our sins with a righteous, perfect God and make amends for transgressing His law; except coming before Almighty God with brokenness of heart and humility, receiving the sacrificial blood atonement of Messiah.

In Messiah, we truly know El Gibbor—The Mighty God, who has gone before us in triumph over death, and gives us strength through His Spirit; not only for today, but for eternity. Truly, He is El Olam—God Everlasting.

I AM
THE TRUE VINE

After sharing that He is “the way, the truth, and the life,” Messiah continued teaching, adding HOW to live IN THE WAY—permanently a temple—or tabernacle—for the Ruach HaKodesh—Holy Spirit.

“If you love me, you will keep my commands; ¹⁶ and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of Truth, to be with you forever. ¹⁷ The world cannot receive him, because it neither sees nor knows him. You know him, because he is staying with you and will be united with you....²⁵ “I have told you these things while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the *Ruach HaKodesh*, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything; that is, he will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ “What I am leaving with you is *shalom* — I am giving you my *shalom* (*peace*). I don’t give the way the world gives. Don’t let yourselves be upset or frightened. ²⁸ You heard me tell you, ‘I am leaving, and I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would have been glad that I am going to the Father; because the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:15-28 JNT)

He then headed with them towards the Garden of Gethsemane. There He challenged them to tarry with Him and pray. There, He prayed His greatest prayer, as recorded in John 17. Before doing so, however, He shared a great truth about how to live THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM—individually and together as a community of faith.

“I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch which is part of me but fails to bear fruit, he cuts off; and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit. ³ Right now, because of the word which I have spoken to you, you are pruned. ⁴ *Stay united with me, as I will with you — for just as the branch can’t put forth fruit by itself apart from the vine, so you can’t bear fruit apart from me.*

⁵ “I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who stay united with me, and I with them, are the ones who bear much fruit; because apart from me you can’t do a thing. ⁶ Unless a person remains united with me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up. Such branches are gathered and thrown into the fire, where they are burned up.

⁷ *“If you remain united with me, and my words with you, then ask whatever you want, and it will happen for you. ⁸ This is how my Father is glorified — in your bearing much fruit; this is how you will prove to be my talmidim (disciples).* (John 15:1-8 JNT)

The Feast of Sukkot, or Tabernacles, is in essence a celebration of our relationship—or fellowship—with God. It is a time we remember His faithfulness, and are grateful that He chose us to enter into intimate communion and fellowship with Him. That relationship finds itself and is expressed in its fullness through relationships amongst a community of believers worshiping and living in Messiah’s WAY—in SPIRIT and TRUTH—the WAY of HIS LOVE and FAITHFULNESS. In such a way, we bear His identity and character, and live a part of HIS VINE.

In living in His vine, and experiencing the flow of His sap—His Holy Spirit—we experience His presence! Truly, then He is revealed as Immanu EL—God with us. (Isaiah 7:14)

Enjoy His vineyard! Know His presence! Relate and engage with Him in intimate union and fellowship! Enter into His life—His love, His peace, and His joy—that yours be full!

**"The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace."**

**"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."
(Numbers 6:24-27 NKJV)**