

The Prophetic Mystery Hidden in God's Holy Feasts

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." –Leviticus 23:2, NKJV

In Leviticus 23 the Lord commands His people, Israel, to keep His holy days: the Sabbath (Shabbat, v. 3), Passover (v. 5), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (v. 6), the Feast of Firstfruits (vv. 10–11), Pentecost (Shavuot, vv. 15–16), the Feast of Trumpets (v. 24), the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, v. 27), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot, vv. 34–42). Historically, these holy, or appointed, days commemorated significant events in Israel's history and served as a time to gather and remember God's deliverance and blessings. Yet each of these holy days finds its ultimate fulfillment in Yeshua.

In Leviticus 23 the Lord commanded His people to remember the Sabbath: "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation....You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations" (vv. 3, 21). The Hebrew word for the Sabbath is Shabbat, which is a day of rest. In Judaism, Shabbat begins on Friday just before sunset and ends on the following evening after nightfall. The reason it begins in the evening instead of the morning is that this is the pattern recorded in the Creation account. In Genesis chapter 1, six times we read the phrase, "And there was evening and there was morning," referring to the span of one day (vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).

While God established the Sabbath at creation when He rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2–3), for ancient Israel the Sabbath rest was also a commemoration of their liberation from slavery in Egypt, where rest was not afforded to them.

Deuteronomy 5:15 declares: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day." Thus, the Sabbath became a celebration of freedom as well as a day of rest.

The rest prescribed on the Sabbath is both a physical ceasing of labor and an invitation to receive spiritual refreshment.

In the New Testament, Rabbi Yeshua invites those who are "weary and burdened" to come to Him for rest (Matt. 11:28, niv). Furthermore, He identified Himself as the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5) and taught that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Through the practice of taking a day a week to receive from the Spirit of Elohim, we receive the very rest of God Himself, who is by His very nature rest. Through Messiah, who released us from the debt and bondages of sin, we have access to this divine refreshment.

Leviticus 23 goes on to address seven feasts, four in the spring and three in the fall. Passover, the first of the spring holy days, commemorates how the Lord used the blood of a Passover lamb to deliver the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. Each family was to take the blood of an unblemished lamb and apply that blood on the doorpost of their home. When the angel of death, which was God's judgment, passed through Egypt that fateful night, the judgment passed over every home that had been marked by the blood of the lamb.

As followers of The Way, we understand that Yeshua is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Messiah's death and resurrection fulfill the symbolism of the Passover lamb, providing redemption and freedom from the bondage of sin. Therefore, Passover serves as a powerful reminder of God's salvation through Yeshua. This is why Paul says Christ has become our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7).

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which begins the day after Passover, Jewish families remove all leaven from their homes and eat only unleavened bread, called matzo. This is done in remembrance of when the children of Israel had to leave Egypt in haste after God instructed them, "When you hear My voice, leave in haste and do not wait for the bread to rise." (See Deuteronomy 16:3.) They were to instantly obey and move out. Thus, the Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of instantaneous and full obedience.

This is why Jesus' sinless body—symbolized by unleavened bread, free from the leaven of pride—was buried during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Yeshua is the absolute fulfillment of this holy day, the One who perfectly and immediately obeys the Father. The Feast of Unleavened Bread retains its original meaning for Israel and the Jewish people but took on its fullest and final meaning when Yeshua Himself, the Bread of Heaven, was broken, buried, and given unto us (Luke 22:19).

During the Feast of Firstfruits, each individual farmer was to bring the first sheaf of the spring harvest to the priest, who would then lift it up and wave it before the Lord. Yahweh would then deem the farmer's entire harvest acceptable and dedicated to Him.

Consider again that this feast corresponds with the first fruit of the spring harvest. In the winter, the sky is often gray and cloudy. There are no leaves on the trees, no splashes of green, no flowers or fruit. The ground is brown and truly looks dead. But when the spring comes, when the weather warms up and April showers water the earth, this dead-looking ground is suddenly made alive. The grass is green again, leaves begin to sprout from those dead-looking trees, flowers spring forth, and fruit grows anew. It is like the earth comes back to life from the dead.

This takes on new meaning when we realize that Yeshua was raised from the dead on this holy day. He is the firstfruits

of the harvest and “the firstborn of the dead” (Rev. 1:5). He ascended to heaven as “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20, MEV), heralding the new creation and the promise of our future resurrection. Yeshua is the first in a long line of God’s elect who will be raised from the dead to experience His love and presence in heaven forevermore!

Held seven weeks and a day (fifty days) after Passover, Shavuot, also known as Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks, was originally an agricultural feast day. But over the years traditional Judaism associated this feast with the day the Lord appeared on Mount Sinai and gave the Israelites His Law. Every year at this time religious Jews renew their acceptance of God’s gift, the Torah.

But Scripture tells of a time when the Law and the lawgiver would draw nearer. Jeremiah 31:33 says, “‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’” Ezekiel also anticipated this time when Yahweh would give His people a new heart and put His Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:26). The Law, once written on stone, would become etched in human hearts.

This was fulfilled in Acts 2, where we find 120 of the first believers in Yeshua gathered together in the Upper Room celebrating Shavuot. As they were there, recalling once again how Yahweh appeared in fire on top of the mountain and gave Moses His commandments, suddenly He appeared to them again—fresh and anew—up close and personal!

This encounter inaugurated the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah that the Lord would no longer speak to His people only by the writings on the tablets of stone. Instead, He was fulfilling these prophecies by communicating to His people from His Spirit within them. Thus, for believers in Yeshua,

this feast, the last of the spring holy days, symbolizes the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who enables us to fulfill God's purposes and bear witness to His truth.

The Feast of Trumpets, the first of the three fall festivals, was marked in ancient Israel by the blowing of the trumpets, or the shofar. In the Torah the blowing of the trumpets often preceded times when God revealed Himself or was about to break in on behalf of His people. In Exodus 19, the first time the Israelites as a nation encountered Yahweh, the Lord announced Himself with the blowing of a trumpet that proceeded out of heaven (vv. 10–20).

For believers in Messiah this feast is a picture of the rapture. When Jesus returns with the blowing of a trumpet from heaven, those who are not prepared to meet Him will tremble in unspeakable fear. But those of us who are ready to see our God will ascend and meet Messiah in the air, just as Moses did when he went up the mountain to meet God after he heard the heavenly shofar blow.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, Paul writes: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." And Paul says elsewhere, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52).



To order Kirt Schneider's book, [Decoding the Torah](#), visit .

In both the past and future, the blowing of the shofar announces God's manifest presence. Thus, the Feast of Trumpets calls believers to be alert and ready. The next time God

sounds His trumpet from heaven, it will signal Messiah's return. At this time, His glory will be fully manifested to the entire world.

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, which means "the Day of Covering") follows the Feast of Trumpets. In ancient times, on this holy day the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies, a sacred room where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and pour the blood of a bull and a goat on top of the Ark of the Covenant, called the Mercy Seat in Hebrews 9:5. When the Lord saw the blood poured out upon the Mercy Seat, He would overlook the sins of His people for a year.

Leviticus 17:11 declares: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" (emphasis added). Biblically, the Day of Atonement is about the blood that is shed for the forgiveness and covering of sin.

The Lord can only be in covenant with humanity through a blood atonement, for "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, for believers in Yeshua, this holy day symbolizes the ultimate atonement made by Messiah, the sinless One whose blood was poured out, opening the way for us to be in covenant relationship with God forever.

In one way, this feast has been fulfilled, insofar as Yeshua's blood has already been shed and we are able to be in fellowship with God now. But there is also a prophetic way that Yom Kippur will find fulfillment in the future—the Jewish people will turn to Messiah Yeshua. Zechariah 12:10 says, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a

firstborn.”

When Yeshua returns, He will lift the veil from their eyes! The Book of Revelation foretells this glorious event that Zechariah wrote about: “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen” (Rev. 1:7). Paul also foretells of this event in Romans 11, stating that at Messiah’s return “all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins’” (vv. 26–27).

The Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament alike anticipate a time in the future when a mass of Jewish people will receive Yeshua as their Messiah. As they do, the kingdom of God will be fully inaugurated in the earth and the fullness of the Day of Atonement will be gloriously manifest.

Finally, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, commemorates God’s provision and protection during the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness. During this feast, at many Jewish homes and synagogues a sukkah—meaning a tabernacle or booth—is built out of lumber, grass, or any other natural substance and serves as a temporary structure reminding Jewish people of the temporary tents the Israelites lived in during their journey toward the Promised Land. It is then decorated with natural materials such as tree branches, leaves, flowers, vegetables, and fruit. Many people will eat their meals and sleep in the sukkah for the entire seven days of the feast, remembering how the Israelites had nothing but God in their forty years of wandering in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt.

For believers in Messiah, Sukkot is a beautiful foreshadowing of how we should live today—totally dependent on God and joyously thankful for His provision. It is also a reminder that just as the Lord was with His people during their wilderness journey—His presence was seen every day for forty

years as a pillar of fire by night and a glory cloud hovering over the Tabernacle by day—so is God's presence with us today wherever we go.

The Feast of Tabernacles will find its ultimate fulfillment when Yeshua reigns in the new heaven and the new earth, tabernacling with His people in the fullest sense. (See Revelation 21.) For believers, Sukkot serves as a reminder of the hope of eternal life and the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom.

To recap how Yeshua fulfilled God's spring holy days: He died for us on Passover, was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, and sent the Holy Spirit on Shavuot. Regarding God's fall holy days: Yeshua returns on the Feast of Trumpets, the salvation of Israel is represented in the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles points to the coming new heavens and new earth, where we will forever tabernacle with Messiah.

While believers in Yeshua are not bound by the Levitical Law to observe these feasts, recognizing their significance and what they symbolize can enhance our appreciation of the gospel and the overarching message of Scripture.

Paul wrote in Romans 11:24 and Ephesians 2:12 that Gentile believers have been grafted into the commonwealth of Israel. Therefore, all of us, Jew and Gentile alike, who are in relationship with Yahweh through Messiah have been grafted into Israel, the olive tree, and, therefore, these holy and appointed days are now an opportunity for spiritual blessing for all God's people!

By remembering the precept to celebrate and honor God's feasts (Lev. 23:2), we are established in faith.

Rabbi Schneider *hosts the impactful television program —Discovering The Jewish Jesus, which is available in more than one hundred million homes in the United States and nearly two*

hundred nations worldwide. In 2021 he began broadcasting on radio and now airs across America. Rabbi Schneider imparts revelation of Jesus' Jewish heritage and His fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Questions of how the Old and New Testaments tie together, and how Yeshua completes the unfolding plan of The Almighty Yahweh, are answered with exceptional clarity.