

The Hebrew Feast Days

The Meaning and Prophetic Significance

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PROPHETIC & WORSHIP ASPECTS OF HEBREW FEAST DAYS

Introduction

Detailed worship and festival instructions are given in the Scriptures concerning the “Appointed Feasts” found in the Old Testament, especially concerning the Tabernacle¹, which was later replaced by the Temple. These instructions cover everything in the life of the people of God from their beginning in the Faith to their ultimate reward at the Second Coming of Christ. We will look at what these instructions meant then, what they means to us now, what they say about the future and what the Scriptures say will be done about them in the future.

Seven “Appointed Feasts” were given to Moses by the Lord on Mt. Sinai (Table 1); others were set up later for various reasons, but these will not be addressed here. Most people don’t know very much about the seven “Appointed Feasts”, much less what they’re all about or why they are important. This work will attempt first to get the reader “up to speed” so to speak so that he can understand how all the very complicated, but very specific, instructions fit into the life of the people of God. Each of the Appointed Feasts will be explained in terms of, first, a Commemorating Event in the life of the Hebrew nation which Israel was instructed to do or remember during the given festival. Second, the Prophetic Significance of the festival will be explained; some of the “Appointed Feasts” have been fulfilled by the work of Christ; others are still awaiting fulfillment. Third, a Spiritual Application using picture language will be made to illustrate what the Lord has to say concerning the salvation and growth of His people. Understanding the seven “Appointed Feasts” gives one a great deal of insight into the work of God past, present and future.

All of the “Appointed Feasts” are still celebrated in the Orthodox Church today, but in a different fashion than when they were first established. Table 1 lists the Hebrew Feast Days and also the occasion where they are celebrated today. Details of this will be brought out in the following pages.

Table 1

Appointed Feast Day	Celebration Today
Day of Passover	Good Friday and the Cross
Unleavened Bread	Bright Week
First Sabbath	Holy Saturday
Second Sabbath	Holy Baptism
Day of First-Fruits	Pascha and the Resurrection
Feast of Pentecost	Pentecost and the Church
Feast of Trumpets	Beginning of the Indiction & Christ’s Return
Day of Atonement	Sacrament of Confession & Judgment Day
Feast of Tabernacles	Holy Eucharist & the Kingdom of God

¹ These instructions were given over 400 years before the Temple was built. Therefore most of the focus will be on the Tabernacle, since the revelation was given with the Tabernacle in view.

Background

The Hebrew year is a lunar year and does not contain $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days, as does the Roman year. Under a lunar year, each month contains either 29 or 30 days and is determined as follows: each month begins with the first appearance of the first crescent of the new moon. It might be noted that the determination of when a given month begins was a little more complicated 3500 years ago than it is today, since they were not able to cope with an overcast sky as easily as we are. The length of the year was about 360 days. Since this lunar year system “loses” about five days every year, an additional month was added about every six years in order for the seasons to come in about the same months. The twelve (or thirteen) months of the Hebrew year are:

Months of the Hebrew Year

1	Nisan (Abib)	8	Chesvan (Bul)
2	Lyyar (Ziv)	9	Chislev
3	Sivan	10	Tebeth
4	Tammuz	11	Shebat
5	Ab	12	Adar
6	Elul	13	Second Adar
7	Tishri (Ethaniam)		

The seven “Appointed Feasts” (Leviticus 23:2, 1 Chronicles 23:32), their dates, and their Sabbaths are listed in [Figure 1](#). The Sabbaths of the “Appointed Feasts” can occur on any day of the week and are in addition to the weekly Sabbaths.

Athanasius of Alexandria [c. 293 –373 AD] stated² that we are not obligated to keep certain days as holy like in the Old Testament. Instead we remember what the Lord did, and celebrate His work.

“The God of all has commanded, ‘Speak, and let the children of Israel keep the Passover’ (Numbers 9:2 LXX). The Spirit exhorts in the Psalm, ‘Blow the trumpet at the new moon, in the glorious day of your feast’ (Psalm 81:3 LXX). And Nahum cries, ‘Keep your appointed feasts, O Judah’ (Nahum 1:15). I do not send word to you as though you were ignorant; but I publish it to those who know it, that you may perceive that although men have separated us, yet God having made us companions, we approach the same feast, and worship the same Lord continually. We do not keep the festival as observers of days, knowing that Paul reproves those who do so, ‘You observe days, months, seasons and years; I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain’ (Galatians 4:10-11). Rather we consider the day solemn because of the Paschal Feast; so that all of us, who serve God in every place, may together in our prayers be well-pleasing to God. Paul, announcing the nearness of gladness like this, did not announce days, but announced the Lord, for whose sake we keep the feast, saying, ‘Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). As we all contemplate the eternity of the Word, may we all draw near to do Him service.”

² Athanasius of Alexandria, [Festal Letters](#), III, 1.

The Hebrew Agricultural Year

The Hebrew year involves an agriculture-based economy and is reflected in the “Appointed Feasts.” Figure 2 shows the relative time distance between each of the “Appointed Feasts.” In the last two columns is noted what is happening from an agriculture viewpoint. Very simply, one cannot separate a people from their culture or a message from its cultural backdrop and expect to understand what the people experienced, or the full content of the message. For example, Paul, in obvious reference to the Feast of First-Fruits, says that Jesus Christ is the “First-Fruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20 ff). Knowing nothing about the Day of First-Fruits, this does not say much. In fact, there is a great deal contained in Paul’s statement, which will be seen later.

Figure 1
Details of the Seven Appointed Feasts

FEAST	DATE	SABBATH	OTHER NAMES
The Day of the Lord’s Passover	14 Nisan	No	Preparation Day (Mark 15:42)
The Feast of Unleavened Bread	15 Nisan to 21 Nisan	15 Nisan and 21 Nisan	Called the Feast of the Passover in the New Testament (John 13:1, Luke 2:41)
The Day of First-Fruits	16 Nisan	No	Called the “day after the Sabbath” (of 15 Nisan) Lev. 23:10-14
The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost	6 Sivan, 50 days after 16 Nisan	6 Sivan	Called the feast of harvest (Exodus 23:16), the day of First-Fruits (Numbers 28:26)
The Feast of Trumpets	1 Tishri	1 Tishri	In Hebrew tradition, Trumpets sometimes called “the 7 th new moon” or “the feast of the 7 th new moon.”
The Day of Atonement	9, 10 Tishri	10 Tishri	
The Feast of Tabernacles	15-22 Tishri	15 Tishri and 22 Tishri	Called the “Feast of Ingathering” (Exodus 23:16, the “Feast of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:39, and simply “The Feast” (1 Kings 8:2, 2 Chronicles 5:3)

Concerning the agricultural year of the Hebrew people, the Scripture doesn’t spell out exactly what species of crop is sown and harvested on what specific day. To clarify this, the

Gezer Calendar is included in Figure 2. This “Calendar” dates from about 925 BC and was discovered in the early 20th Century.

On the 16th of Nisan (i.e., the “day after the Sabbath” of the 15th of Nisan) a sheaf of the first fruits are brought in (Leviticus 23:9-14). What crop is not specified, but it is generally regarded as being barley for several reasons. First, barley is usually the first grain crop to ripen in the year, and has a fairly short growing season (60-70 days). Second, as a result of the plague of hail, the barley crop in Egypt was ruined because it was already “in the ear” (i.e. nearly ripe), whereas the flax had just come up and the wheat and spelt hadn’t broken ground yet (Exodus 9:31-32). It is assumed that the barley grown in Israel (It’s about 200 miles from Goshen to Jerusalem) is the same as grown in Egypt. Third, Hebrew tradition has always regarded the “first fruit sheaf” as being a barley sheaf. Fourth, from the Gezer Calendar, barley is the only grain crop that could be ripe at this time of year. One thing is certainly clear from the Leviticus 23 context: the first sheaf of the first crop belongs to the Lord. Since Jesus Christ is said to be “the first fruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20) it wouldn’t make sense³ if, for example, the “First-Fruit sheaf” were the second crop to be “in the ear.”

One might notice, too, that the “First-Fruit sheaf” is not the entire crop. The implication is that the barley is “in the ear” at about this time of year (Exodus 9:31-32). The entire crop is not necessarily ripe yet. After all, it is still just early spring. But the crop will be ripe very soon.

On the 6th of Sivan, 50 days after the 16th of Nisan, bread was baked from the wheat that had just been harvested and threshed. It was a “new grain offering,” “baked with leaven as first fruits to the Lord” (Leviticus 23:16-17). This feast was called Weeks since it occurred seven weeks after the Day of First-Fruits. In the New Testament it is called Pentecost, meaning fiftieth. While it is not the same as the Day of First-Fruits, it is certainly related to it in at least an agricultural sense. Since these loaves are regarded as “First-Fruits to the Lord” (Leviticus 23:17) it is obvious that the first loaf baked was to be the Lord’s.

The harvest preceding Weeks-Pentecost is not the end of the year’s harvest. It is merely the harvest of one type of crop. As will be shown in more detail later, the crop of Christ and His Church begins after the Day of First-Fruits, while the two wave loaves at Weeks-Pentecost speak of Jew and Gentile in the Church

Following Weeks (or Pentecost) is about four months of growing, maturing and harvesting. By the time of the Feast of Trumpets, virtually all the harvesting has been completed. One might note that the long summer intervening between Weeks and Trumpets is generally a hot one, especially toward the Negev (the southern part of Israel.) Galilee, in the north, and Jerusalem, on a mountain, are generally quite pleasant; but the area inland from Tel-Aviv - Jaffa and southward gets so hot that it is just unbearable to work in the heat of the day. This is probably what is referred to in one of Jesus’ parables, where the laborers who “bore the burden and scorching heat of the day” were understandably upset at receiving the same wage as those who began as the sun was setting (Matthew 20:12).

More will be said of this long, hot summer in the introductory paragraphs of the section devoted to the Feast of Trumpets as this author feels that this is where Christianity is at the

³ This would imply that there is “another Jesus” who was raised from the dead by whom men may be saved.

present time. The summer crop is grown and has almost reached maturity, and the harvest of the end of the age is imminent, at which point the Lord will come at the “last trumpet.”

Traditionally, in agricultural cultures, there is a big celebration after the crop is completely harvested, stored, ground, etc. In Hebrew tradition, Booths has generally been regarded in such a manner.

Figure 2
Hebrew Agricultural Year

Month	Corresponds To	Festival	Sabbaths	Agricultural Activity	Gezer Calendar
Nisan (Abib)	Mar.-Apr.	Passover; Unleavened Bread First-Fruits	None 15 th , 21 st None	Lamb Slain No Leaven 1st Sheaf Barley	Hoeing Up of Flax
Iyar	Apr.-May				Barley Harvest Completed
Sivan	May-June	Weeks or Pentecost	6 th	2 Loaves from 1st of Wheat Harvest	Wheat Harvest Begins
Tammuz	June-July				Vine Tending
Ab	July-Aug.				
Elul	Aug.-Sept.				Summer Fruits
Tishri	Sept.-Oct.	Trumpets Atonement Tabernacles	1 st 10 th 15 th , 22 nd	None None Harvest Complete	Olive Harvest
Heshvan	Oct.-Nov.				
Chislev	Nov.-Dec.				Planting Grain
Tebeth	Dec.-Jan.				
Shebet	Jan.-Feb.				Late Planting of Grain
Adar	Feb.-Mar.				

Thus the “Appointed Feasts” given to Moses on Mt. Sinai were divided into four spring feasts and three fall feasts. These feasts were so important that every Israeli man was required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem at Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17, Deuteronomy 16:16). Understanding these events was critically important to understanding the work of God in the midst of His people. He tells us what He’s going to do; then He does it; and finally He tells us what He’s done and how it applies to our lives. In the next section, we see that the work of God begins with the Cross.

THE LORD'S PASSOVER

This, the first festival of the Hebrew year, is not to be confused with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which immediately follows it. To avoid confusion, I will refer to each of the seven festivals by the name designation as given in the Pentateuch. Fifteen hundred years later, the festivals are sometimes referred to by slightly different terms, where the events of "Passover Week" are often blurred together. "Passover" (Matthew 26:2) and the "Feast of the Passover" (Luke 2:41, John 13:1) in the Gospels refers to the Feast days in general. In [Appendix A](#) is a summary of the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus correlated with both Roman time, Hebrew time (where the day begins at sundown), and the Hebrew "Appointed Feasts."

1) The Lord's Passover: Commemorating Event

Most people are aware of the "Passover" event in Egypt in the 15th century BC, but it bears repeating. The story can be found in Exodus 12 and has two essential parts: What man did and what God did.

On the 14th day of Nisan, in the mid to late afternoon (about 3:00 p.m.), the Passover lamb (male, without blemish) was to be killed. Its blood was to be applied to the side and upper doorposts of the house where the given family lived, and where they would later eat the roasted meat of the lamb (Exodus 12:6, 7, 22). This is what man was supposed to do. In applying the blood as commanded, they would inadvertently (or perhaps prophetically) be tracing out the outline of a cross.

What God did was in response to whether the given household obeyed His command and accepted the blood "as a token upon the houses" where they lived, or rejected the blood, disobeyed His command, and decided they could make it quite well apart from His way. The Lord said: "For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments -- I am the Lord. And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:12-13).

As is apparent from this quote, the "Lord's Passover" is so called because the Lord "passed over" the houses when He saw the blood, such that the house was delivered from death. This happened on what we call Good Friday evening.

2) The Lord's Passover: Prophetic Significance

Referring to [Appendix A](#), at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan (Thursday, about 1800 Roman time), Jesus and His disciples ate the Last Supper, after which Jesus went with His disciples to Gethsemane to pray. While there, He was betrayed and taken captive, and during the darkness, a pseudo-trial was given. The next morning, around sun-up (Friday, about 0600 Roman time), Jesus was delivered to Pilate immediately following Peter's denial (cf. cockcrow in Mark 14:72, 15:1). A few hours later at the "3rd hour" (Friday 0900 Roman time), Jesus was crucified (Mark 15:25). From the 6th hour until the 9th hour (Friday 1200 to 1500 Roman time),

there was darkness over the whole land (Mark 15:33). At the 9th hour, Jesus cried out, gave up the spirit, and died (Mark 15:34-37).

Precisely at this time, there was something significant happening at the Temple. According to the instruction in the books of Moses, the Passover Lamb was being slain in Jerusalem. As Jesus was dying, so was the Passover Lamb that was offered at the Temple! This was what John the Baptist was talking about when he said, referring to Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

John Chrysostom [c. 347 – 407 AD] noted⁴ that all the details of the Lord’s Passover were in keeping with the Scriptures.

“And His disciples said, ‘Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover’ (Matthew 26:17)? Even from this it is clear, that He had no house, no place go home to; and I suppose neither had they. Surely they would have asked him to come there if they did. But they had had no home either, having left all things behind (Matthew 19:27-30). But why did He keep the Passover? To indicate by all things up to the last day, that He is not opposed to the Law. And for what possible reason does He send them to an unknown person? To show by this also that He might have avoided suffering. For He who prevailed over this man’s mind, so that he received them; and that by words, He could have done the same with them that crucified Him, if it had been His will not to suffer. And what He did about the donkey, this He did here also. For there too He said, ‘If any man says anything to you, you shall say, that the Lord has need of them’ (Matthew 21:2-3); and so likewise here, ‘The Master says, I will keep the Passover at your house’ (Matthew 26:18). After this, because they didn’t know him, He gave them a sign, like as the prophet regarding Saul (1 Samuel 10:3), ‘You shall find one going up and carrying a pitcher’ (Mark 14:13-15). Notice the display of his power. He did not only say, ‘I will keep the Passover’, but He adds another thing also, ‘My time is at hand’. This He did, continually reminding His disciples of the passion, so that exercised by the frequency of the prediction, they should be prepared for what was to take place. At the same time He showed to them, and to him that was receiving Him, and to all the Jews that He voluntarily comes to His passion. He adds, ‘with my disciples’, in order that both the preparation should be sufficient, and that the man should not suppose that He was concealing Himself”.

Chrysostom continued to say⁵ that Jesus ate the Passover meal exactly as prescribed by the Law of Moses.

“If they were eating the Passover, did they eat it contrary to the Law? They should not have eaten it sitting down to their meal but standing. What then can be said? That after eating it, they then sat down to the banquet.”

“But another evangelist said that on that evening He not only ate the Passover, but also said, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you’ (Luke 22:15), that is, on that year. Why? Because then the salvation of the world was to be brought about, and the mysteries were to be delivered, and the subjects

⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXI, 1.

⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXI, 3.

of sorrow were to be done away with by His death; so welcome was the cross to Him”.

Thus, the prophetic significance of the celebration of the Lord’s Passover was simply that for almost 1500 years, from the Exodus to 30 AD, the fact that Jesus would die as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world was celebrated in advance. This was so precise that Moses even predicted that Christ would be taken down from the Cross that same day. For the Lord told him to write, “None of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day (i.e. the 14th of Nisan) shall remain overnight until morning” (Deuteronomy 16:4). The hymns of the Church address this also when they say that it was impossible that the author of life would be subject to corruption.

Justin Martyr [103 -165 AD] explained⁶ the prophetic significance of the Passover. The roasting of the Passover lamb formed the shape of a cross; and the offerings in Jerusalem ceased after Christ was crucified.

“The mystery, then, of the lamb which God enjoined to be sacrificed as the Passover, was a type of Christ; with whose blood, in proportion to their faith in Him, they anointed their houses, i.e., themselves, who believe on Him. The creation, which God created, Adam, was a house for the spirit, which proceeded from God. This injunction was temporary. God does not permit the lamb of the Passover to be sacrificed in any other place than where His Name was named. The days will come, after the suffering of Christ, when even the place in Jerusalem shall be given over to your enemies, and all the offerings shall cease. The lamb, which was commanded to be wholly roasted, was a symbol of the suffering of the cross which Christ would undergo. For the lamb, which is roasted, is roasted and dressed up in the form of the cross. For one spit is transfixed right through from the lower parts up to the head, and one across the back, to which are attached the legs of the lamb”.

Justin continued to say⁷ that Christ was not cursed by the Law but that He delivered His people just like the blood of the lamb delivered Israel in Egypt.

“Therefore our suffering and crucified Christ was not cursed by the Law, but made it clear that He alone would save those who do not depart from His faith. And the blood of the Passover, sprinkled on each man’s doorposts and lintel, delivered those who were saved in Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed. For the Passover was Christ, who was afterwards sacrificed, as also Isaiah said, ‘He was led as a sheep to the slaughter’ (Isaiah 53:7). It is written that on the day of the Passover you seized Him, and that also during the Passover you crucified Him. And as the blood of the Passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed.

Irenaeus of Lyons [c. 130 – c. 202 AD] stated⁸ that the details of the Passion of Christ had been foretold by Moses. There were a great many details specified about what was going to happen and what it would all mean.

⁶ Justin Martyr, Dialog with Tyrpho, 40.

⁷ Justin Martyr, Dialog with Tyrpho, 111.

⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies IV, x, 1-2.

“It would be endless to recount the occasions on which the Son of God was shown forth by Moses. Of the day of His passion, he was not ignorant; but foretold Him, after a figurative manner. By the name given to the Passover; and at that festival, which had been proclaimed such a long time previously by Moses, our Lord suffered, thus fulfilling the Passover. Moses did not describe the day only, but the place also, and the time of day at which the sufferings ceased, and the sign of the setting of the sun. ‘You may not sacrifice the Passover within any other of your cities which the Lord God gives you; but in the place which the Lord your God shall choose that His name be called on there, you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, towards the setting of the sun’” (Deuteronomy 16:5-6).

“Already he had declared His advent, ‘There shall not fail a chief in Judah, nor a leader from his loins, until He comes for whom it is laid up, and He is the hope of the nations. Binding His foal to the vine, and His donkey’s colt to the creeping ivy, He shall wash His stole in wine, and His upper garment in the blood of the grape. His eyes shall be more joyous than wine and His teeth whiter than milk’ (Genesis 49:10-12 LXX). Let those who have the reputation of investigating everything, inquire at what time a prince and leader failed out of Judah, who is the hope of the nations, who is the vine, why was the donkey’s colt referred to as His, what was the clothing, and what were the joyous eyes, what was the white teeth, and what the wine. Let them investigate every one of the points mentioned; and they shall find that there was none other announced than our Lord, Christ Jesus. Wherefore Moses, when chiding the ingratitude of the people, said, ‘O foolish and unwise people, is this how you repay the Lord’ (Deuteronomy 32:6). And again, he indicates that He who from the beginning founded and created them, the Word, who also redeems and enlivens us in the last times, is shown as hanging on the tree, and they will not believe on Him. For he says, ‘Your life shall be hanging before your eyes, and you will not believe your life’ (Deuteronomy 28:66). Again, ‘Has not this same one your Father bought you, and made you, and created you?’” (Deuteronomy 32:6)

Athanasius of Alexandria identified⁹ Pascha¹⁰ with Passover. We keep the Feast just like they were commanded to do: with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

“Let us then, my beloved brethren, celebrate with thanksgiving the holy feast which now draws near to us, ‘girding up the loins of our minds’ (1 Peter 1:13), like our Savior Jesus Christ. Of Him it is written, ‘Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the straps of His reins’ (Isaiah 11:5). Each one of us having in his hand the staff which came out of the root of Jesse, and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel (Isaiah 11:1, Ephesians 6:15), let us keep the feast. As Paul said, ‘We keep the Feast not with the old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth’ (1 Corinthians 5:8), reverently trusting that we are reconciled through Christ, and not departing from faith in Him. Nor do we defile ourselves together with heretics, and strangers to the truth, whose conversation and whose will degrade them. But rejoicing in afflictions, we break through the furnace of iron and darkness, and pass, unharmed, over that terrible Red Sea”.

⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, III, 5.

¹⁰ Pascha means “Passover” in Greek, and Pascha is the Feast Day that the Western world calls “Easter”.

Athanasius continued¹¹ that Pascha (Passover) should not be observed carelessly but with the zeal and joy of a heavenly Feast that will be fulfilled at the Second Coming. The Lord died that we should no longer do the deeds of death; He became flesh that we should no longer live in the flesh, but worship in spirit God who is Spirit. He who abuses the days, does not keep the Feast, and like an unthankful person finds fault with Grace.

“God, who brought Israel out of Egypt, at this time calls us to the feast, saying by Moses, ‘Observe the month of new fruits, and keep the Passover to the Lord your God’ (Deuteronomy 16:1). By Nahum He said, ‘Keep your feasts, O Judah; pay to the Lord your vows’ (Nahum 1:15). If then God Himself loves the feast, and calls us to it, it is not right, my brethren, that it should be delayed, or observed carelessly. But with alacrity and zeal we should come to it, so that having begun joyfully here, we may also receive a foretaste of that heavenly feast. For if we diligently celebrate the feast here, we shall doubtless receive the perfect joy which is in heaven, as the Lord says, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say to you, that I will not eat it until it is fulfilled with you in the kingdom of God’ (Luke 22:15-16). Now we eat it if, understanding the reason for the feast, and acknowledging the Deliverer, we conduct ourselves in accordance with His grace. Paul said, ‘So that we may keep the Feast, not with old leaven neither with the leaven of wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth’ (1 Corinthians 5:8). For the Lord died in those days, that we should no longer do the deeds of death. He gave His life, that we might preserve our own from the snares of the devil. And, what is most wonderful, the Word became flesh, that we should no longer live in the flesh, but in spirit should worship God, who is Spirit. He who is not so disposed, abuses the days, and does not keep the feast, but like an unthankful person finds fault with the grace, and honors the days overmuch, while he does not supplicate the Lord, Who in those days redeemed him. Let him by all means hear, though fancying that he keeps the feast, the Apostolic voice reproving him, ‘Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years; I fear lest I have labored among you in vain’ (Galatians 4:10-11). For the feast is not on account of the days; but for the Lord’s sake, who then suffered for us, we celebrate it, for ‘our Passover Christ, is sacrificed’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). Even as Moses, when teaching Israel not to consider the feast as pertaining to the days, but to the Lord, said, ‘It is the Lord’s Passover’ (Exodus 12:11). To the Jews when they thought they were keeping the Passover, because they persecuted the Lord, the feast was useless. It no longer bore the name of the Lord, even according to their own testimony. It was not the Passover of the Lord, but that of the Jews (John 6:4). The Passover was named after the Jews, my brethren, because they denied the Lord of the Passover. On this account, the Lord, turning away His face from such a doctrine of theirs, said, ‘Your new moons and your Sabbaths My soul hates’ (Isaiah 1:14). Those who keep the Passover in like manner, the Lord again reproves, as He did those lepers who were cleansed (Luke 17:15ff), when He loved the one as thankful, but was angry with the others as ungrateful, because they did not acknowledge their Deliverer, but thought more of the cure of the leprosy than of Him who healed them”.

¹¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Festal Letters*, VI, 1-3.

Athanasius urged¹² us not to celebrate the Feast in an earthly manner, but as keeping festival in heaven with the angels. He urged watching like David, fasting like Daniel and praying like Paul. In no other manner is it possible to go up to Jerusalem.

“Let us glorify the Lord, by chastity, by righteousness, and other virtues. And let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, that we may be inheritors with the saints. Let us keep the feast then, as Moses. Let us watch like David who rose seven times, and in the middle of the night gave thanks for the righteous judgments of God. Let us be early, as he said, ‘In the morning I will stand before You, and You will look upon me; in the morning You will hear my voice’ (Psalm 5:3). Let us fast like Daniel (Daniel 9:3); let us pray without ceasing, as Paul commanded (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Let all of us recognize the season of prayer, but especially those who are honorably married; so that having borne witness to these things, and thus having kept the Feast, we may be able to enter into the joy of Christ in the kingdom of heaven. But as Israel, when going up to Jerusalem, was first purified in the wilderness, being trained to forget the customs of Egypt, the Word by this typifying to us the holy fast of forty days, let us first be purified and freed from defilement. So that when we depart this life, having been careful with fasting, we may be able to ascend to the upper chamber (Luke 14:15) with the Lord, to sup with Him; and may be partakers of the joy which is in heaven. In no other manner is it possible to go up to Jerusalem, and to eat the Passover, except by observing the fast of forty days”.

Athanasius continued to say¹³ that the Feast of Passover is no longer of the Jews: it is ours. The shadows are abolished and the new things are here. The heathen and the Jews pretend to keep festival, but the Lord hates their festivities since they are hypocritical and impious. The Jews pretend to keep the Passover, but joy and gladness is taken from their mouth.

“This is the season of the Feast, my brethren. It is near; being not now proclaimed by trumpets, as the history records (Numbers 10:1-10, 29:1), but being brought near to us by Christ, Who suffered on our behalf and rose again, as Paul preached, ‘Our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). Now the feast of the Passover is ours, not that of a stranger, nor is it any longer of the Jews. The time of shadows is abolished, and those former things have ceased. Now the month of new things is at hand, in which every man should keep the Feast, in obedience to Him who said, ‘Observe the month of new things, and keep the Passover to the Lord your God’ (Deuteronomy 16:1). Even the heathen fancy they keep festival, and the Jews hypocritically pretend to do so. But the Feast of the heathen He reproveth, as the bread of mourners, and He turns His face from that of the Jews, as being outcasts, saying, ‘Your new moons and your Sabbaths My soul hates’” (Isaiah 1:14).

“For actions not done lawfully and piously, are not of advantage, though they may be reputed to be so, but they rather argue hypocrisy in those who venture upon them. Therefore, although such persons pretend to offer sacrifices, yet they hear from the Father, ‘Your whole burnt offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices do not please Me; and although you bring fine flour, it is vanity,

¹² Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, VI, 12.

¹³ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, XIX, 1-2.

incense also is an abomination unto Me' (Isaiah 1:13). For God does not need anything; and, since nothing is unclean to Him, He has had enough in regard to them, as He testifies, by Isaiah, saying, 'I have had enough' (Isaiah 1:11). Now there was a Law given about these things, for the instruction of the people, and to prefigure things to come, for Paul says to the Galatians; 'Before faith came, we were kept guarded under the Law, being shut up in the faith which should afterwards be revealed unto us. The Law was our instructor in Christ, that we might be justified by faith' (Galatians 3:23-24). But the Jews didn't know or understand, therefore they walked in the daytime as in darkness, feeling for, but not touching, the truth we possess, which was contained in the Law; conforming to the letter, they did not submit to the spirit. When Moses was veiled, they looked on him, but turned away their faces from him when he was uncovered. They did not know what they read, but erroneously substituted one thing for another. Jeremiah cried against them, saying, 'falsehood and not faithfulness has prevailed upon the earth' (Jeremiah 9:3 LXX). The Lord therefore said concerning them, 'The strange children have lied to Me; the strange children have grown old' (Psalm 18:44-45 LXX). How gently He reproveth them, saying, 'Had you believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me' (John 5:46). But being faithless, they went on to deal falsely with the Law, affirming things after their own pleasure, but not understanding the Scripture. As they had hypocritically made a pretense of the plain text of Scripture, and had confidence in this, He was angry with them, saying, 'Who has required these of your hands?' (Isaiah 1:12) Since they were very bold, he threatens, 'Gather together your whole burnt offerings with your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning whole burnt offerings and sacrifices' (Jeremiah 7:21-22). They did not act rightly, neither was their zeal according to Law, but they rather sought their own pleasure in such days, beating down their servants, and gathering themselves together for quarrels. They beat up the lowly, and did all things that tended to their own gratification. For this cause, they continue without a feast until the end, although they make a display now of eating flesh, out of place and out of season. Instead of the legally appointed lamb, they have learned to sacrifice to Baal. Instead of the true unleavened bread, 'they collect the wood, and their fathers kindle the fire. And their wives prepare the dough, that they may make cakes to the host of heaven, and pour out libations to strange gods, that they may provoke Me to anger, says the Lord' (Jeremiah 7:18). They have the just reward of such devices; although they pretend to keep the Passover, joy and gladness is taken from their mouth. As Jeremiah says, 'There has been taken away from the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of those who are glad, and the voice of those who rejoice; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride' (Jeremiah 7:34). Therefore now, 'he, who among them sacrifices an ox, is as he who smites a man, and he who sacrifices a lamb is as he who kills a dog. He that offers fine flour is as if he offered swine's blood. He that gives frankincense for a memorial, is as a blasphemer' (Isaiah 66:3). Now these things will never please God, neither thus has the Word required of them. But He continues (Isaiah 66:3), 'These have chosen their own ways; and their abominations are what their soul delights in'.

Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal at the beginning of the day of the 14th of Nisan. The day began at sundown (1800 Roman time) and they ate their Passover meal shortly after 1800 Roman time. The ceremonial Paschal lamb would not be slain at the Temple until the Friday 1500 Roman time. But both these events occurred on the 14th Nisan Hebrew time. See Appendix A for a summary of these times. In order for the entire population to sacrifice their own Paschal lambs at the Temple, the sacrifices had to be on-going all day long on the 14th Nisan. Since Jesus was going to be sacrificed Himself at 1500 Roman time on Friday, He and His disciples had to eat their Paschal meal early on the 14th Nisan; that is on Thursday Roman time just after 1800.

On the first Passover, one lamb per household was to be slain. Later on when Israel had entered the land and the Lord's house was established in the place He chose (Deuteronomy 16:2), this was no longer the case (Matthew 26:17). Families and households grouped together to share the Paschal meal.

Also taking place on the Day of the Lord's Passover in the early hours of the 14th of Nisan, just after sundown, was the mystery of the Lord's Supper. In the upper room where Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples, "as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is My body'. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:26-28). In doing this when the Church meets around the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 10:21), we celebrate the Lord's Passover, and we are delivered from the destroyer (Exodus 12:23, 1 Corinthians 10:10), just like it happened to Israel in Egypt.

Athanasius stated¹⁴ that the Lord Himself had a great desire to keep the Passover; we should have this desire also. They ate it then ready to move out; so do we. Instead of a staff, we have Christ; instead of unleavened bread, we have the Eucharist; instead of sandals, we have the preparation of the Gospel. Christ is calling us to this!

"I wish to remind you and myself with you that the command asks us to come to the Paschal Feast not profanely and without preparation, but with sacramental and doctrinal rites, and prescribed observances. We learn from the historical account, 'A man who is of another nation, or bought with money, or uncircumcised, shall not eat the Passover' (Exodus 12:43-48). Neither should it be eaten in 'any' house, but He commands it to be done in haste; inasmuch as before we groaned and were made sad by the bondage to Pharaoh, and the commands of the task-masters. When the people of Israel acted in this way, they were counted worthy to receive the type, which existed for the sake of this feast. The Word of God said to His disciples, 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you' (Luke 22:15). That is a wonderful account, for a man might have seen them as ready for a procession or a dance, and going out with staves, sandals, and unleavened bread. These things, which took place before in shadows, were typical; but now the Truth is near us, 'the Image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1:15), our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Light. Instead of a staff, He is our scepter; instead of unleavened bread, is the bread, which came down from heaven. Instead of sandals, He has furnished us with the preparation of the

¹⁴ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, XIV, 3-4.

Gospel (Ephesians 6:15), and has guided us to His Father. If enemies afflict us and persecute us, He again, instead of Moses, will encourage us with better words, saying, ‘Be of good cheer; I have overcome the wicked one’ (John 16:33, 1 John 2:13). If after we have passed over the Red Sea, heat should bother us or some bitterness of the waters occur, the Lord will appear to us, imparting to us of His sweetness, and His life-giving fountain, saying, ‘If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink’ (John 7:37). Why do we wait, and why do we delay, and not come with all eagerness and diligence to the feast, trusting that it is Jesus who called us?”

Thus the Prophetic Significance of the Day of the Lord’s Passover is the Cross. This had been described to Moses c. 1500 years earlier in the slaying of the Paschal Lamb every Passover. As the events approached, John the Baptist announced, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). After these events in c. 30 AD, with the destruction of Jerusalem, the slaying of the Paschal Lamb has ceased. It was unnecessary because the prototype had taken its place. On this same day, the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper to take the place of the slaying of the Paschal Lamb.

3) The Lord’s Passover: Spiritual Application

Looking at the Lord’s Passover from a general viewpoint, there are two parts that form a spiritual application for those who have eyes to see it, ears to hear it, and a heart to understand it (Isaiah 6:8-10). The Passover is all about God’s passing over Israel in Egypt, delivering (saving) them from death. The reason Israel was passed over was because of the shed blood of the Passover Lamb. We commemorate the Day of the Lord’s Passover today as Good Friday¹⁵.

Taking this same information today, one can apply, by faith, the already-shed blood of the Lamb of God to the door of his dwelling (that is, his heart or his life.) Since the Lamb of God was slain once for all, this Passover does not need to be repeated yearly, but merely done once (Hebrews 9:26-28, 1 Peter 3:18). In the same manner it was done only once in Egypt for each household, but afterward was done only in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:1-2) as a reminder of their salvation from Pharaoh.

Practically speaking, this implies that one can see his need to be saved. It is not just a ritual that can be done for good luck. Further, it also implies that the person accepting Jesus’ blood on the door of his dwelling acknowledges Jesus to be his Lord and Messiah. And consequently, one enters into a relationship with Him by accepting His blood in this manner as a free gift of salvation from sins.

Simultaneously, when this is done, something else happens. According to Paul, when someone turns to the Lord, a veil is taken away (2 Corinthians 3:16). At the precise moment that Jesus Christ died on the cross, the veil in the Temple was ripped from top to bottom (Mark 15:38). This veil in the Temple (or in the portable temple, the tabernacle) stood between the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt (Exodus 25:22) and the Holy Place, where man dwelt as represented by the Levitical priesthood (Numbers 18). The Levitical priests did not have access to the Holy of Holies; only the High Priest did, and then only once a year (Leviticus 16:1, 2, 34).

¹⁵ For considerably more details about the celebration of Good Friday, its meaning and its implications from the Scriptures, see the Study Mark Kern, Good Friday, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

John Chrysostom reminded¹⁶ us how the Passover applies to us all. We have the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, sprinkled on our souls to protect us from the Destroyer, who fears that blood because he understands the Lord's death.

“Paul establishes many things incidentally, and is very full of thoughts. Such is the grace of The Spirit. He does not comprehend a few ideas with many words, but includes great thought in brevity of expressions. When discoursing about faith, he reminds us about the reality. ‘Through faith’, he says, ‘Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the first-born should touch them’ (Hebrews 11:28). What is ‘the sprinkling of blood’? A lamb was slain in every household, and the blood was smeared on the doorposts, and this was a means of warding off the Egyptian destruction. If then the blood of a lamb preserved the Jews unhurt in the midst of the Egyptians, and under so great a destruction, much more will the blood of Christ save us, who have had it sprinkled not on the doorposts, but in our souls. Even now the Destroyer is going about in this depth of night; but let us be armed with that Sacrifice, where he calls the ‘sprinkling’ anointing. God has brought us out from Egypt, from darkness, from idolatry. Although what was done was nothing, what was achieved was great. What was done was blood; but what was achieved was salvation, and the stopping and preventing of destruction. The angel feared the blood; for he knew of what it was a Type; he shuddered, thinking on the Lord's death; therefore he did not touch the door-posts”.

This is all being done for a much greater purpose than is at first perceived. Chrysostom stated¹⁷ that a mystery is being kept for the salvation of the world.

“Christ did not say, ‘You know that after two days I am betrayed’, but, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover’ (Matthew 26:2). What was done is a mystery and that a feast and celebration is being kept for the salvation of the world. With foreknowledge He suffered everything! As though this was sufficient consolation for them, He did not even say anything to them then about a resurrection. It was superfluous, after having discoursed so much about it, to speak of it again. Moreover, He shows that even His very passion is a deliverance from countless evils, having by the Passover reminded them of the ancient benefits in Egypt”.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁸ that the Orthodox celebration at Pascha imitates the life of Israel at Passover: baptism, fasting, prayer, discipline and good works ending in Jerusalem.

“When we look on the confusion of heretics, we shall, with Moses, sing that great song¹⁹ of praise, ‘Let us sing to the Lord, for he is very greatly glorified’ (Exodus 15:1). Thus, singing praises, and seeing that the sin which is in us has been thrown into the Red Sea, we pass over to the wilderness. Being first purified by the fast of forty days, by prayers, fasting, discipline, and good works, we shall be able to eat the holy Passover in Jerusalem.”

¹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XXVII, 1.

¹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXIX, 3.

¹⁸ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, III, 5.

¹⁹ The Song of Moses is used in the Orthodox Church as Ode 1 for Holy Saturday.

Chrysostom tied²⁰ the mystery of the Passover to the mystery of the Lord's Table. The rites of the Mosaic Law ceased when Jesus instituted the Eucharist because the next day, He became the Passover Lamb that had been foretold. The blood of the Eucharist is a New Testament, replacing the Old Testament offerings. In order that His disciples wouldn't be offended at eating His flesh and drinking His blood, Jesus first did just that Himself.

"Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the Passover? That you might learn from everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things there are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, where the type is, there He puts the truth".

"That evening was a sure sign of the fullness of times, and that the things were now come to the end. He gave thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this sacrament, to show that He came willingly to the passion, and to teach us whatever we may suffer to bear it thankfully, also suggesting good hopes. If the type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more the truth will set the world free, and He will be delivered up for the benefit of our race. I would add that He didn't appoint the sacrament before this, but waited until the rites of the Law were to cease. Thus the chief of the Feast Days He brings to an end, moving them to another most awesome table. He said, 'Take, eat, This is my body, Which is broken for many' (1 Corinthians 11:24). How were they not confounded at hearing this? He had told them before many and great things touching this. He didn't establish it any more, for they had heard it sufficiently, but he speaks of the cause of His passion, namely, the taking away of sins. He calls it blood of a New Testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new Law. For this He undertook of old, and this comprises the Testament that is in the new Law. Like the Old Testament had sheep and bullocks, so this has the Lord's blood. He shows that He was soon to die; therefore He made mention of a Testament, and He reminded them of the former Testament, for that also was dedicated with blood. Again He tells the cause of His death, 'which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matthew 26:28). And He said, 'Do this in remembrance of me'. Do you see how He removes and draws them away from Jewish customs? Just as you did that in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of Me. That was shed for the preservation of the firstborn; this is for the remission of the sins of the whole world. For, 'This', He said, 'is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins'".

"He said this to indicate that His passion and His cross are a mystery, again comforting His disciples. Like Moses said, 'This shall be to you for an everlasting memorial' (Exodus 12:14), so He said, 'in remembrance of Me', until I come. Therefore He said, 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover' (Luke 22:15), that is, to deliver to you the new rites, and to give a Passover, by which I am to make you spiritual. And He Himself drank of it! On hearing this, they might have said, 'Do we drink blood, and eat flesh?', and then be perplexed. When He began to speak about these things, many were offended (John 6:60-66). Therefore lest they should be troubled likewise, He first did this Himself, leading them to the calm participation of the mysteries. Therefore He Himself drank His own blood. Do we need to observe that other ancient rite also? By no means! For on this account He said, 'Do this', that He might withdraw them from the

²⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXII, 1.

other. If the Lord's Table now works remission of sins, as it surely does work it, the other is now superfluous".

Athanasius also linked²¹ the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord's Table. The Passover, like the Lord's Table, is heavenly food if we partake worthily.

"There is no one free from defilement, though his course may have been but one hour on the earth; Job, that man of surpassing fortitude, testifies to this. 'Who shall be pure from uncleanness? Not even one!' (Job 14:4 LXX) Let us pray that we may not eat the Passover unworthily, lest we be exposed to dangers. To those who keep the feast in purity, the Passover is heavenly food; but to those who observe it profanely and contemptuously, it is a danger and reproach. 'Whosoever shall eat and drink unworthily, is guilty of the death of our Lord' (1 Corinthians 11:27). Let us not merely proceed to perform the festal rites, but let us be prepared to draw near to the divine Lamb, and to touch heavenly food. Let us cleanse our hands; let us purify the body. Let us keep our whole mind from guile; not giving up ourselves to excess and to lusts, but occupying ourselves entirely with our Lord, and with divine doctrines. Being altogether pure (2 Peter 1:4), we may be able to partake of the Word".

In the Orthodox Church today, the Day of the Lord's Passover is celebrated as Good Friday (also called Great and Holy Friday). This is a very moving celebration where the awesomeness of the Son of God being murdered by His own creation is celebrated. These events will be remembered eternally and by celebrating them, we keep festival with the angels in heaven.

As we apply the blood of the Lamb of God to the door of our dwelling – our heart – we enter into a personal relationship with Him, and a veil is taken away. The blood of the Lamb of God protects us from the Destroyer, who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). This is not a magical incantation; it is a transfer from one kingdom to another; and it is a mystery that is being kept for the salvation of the world. This transfer of kingdoms is illustrated by the Eucharist that Jesus instituted on this day, where life in the future kingdom is illustrated by the Feast of Tabernacles. We begin to partake of heavenly food now in anticipation of that future banquet.

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Most people know far more about the Lord's Passover than about the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Also there has been considerable lumping together in Hebrew tradition, mixing the Lord's Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are not the same things.

The Scriptures spell them out as two distinct celebrations (Lev. 23:4-8). They are related, however, very definitely, their relationship as will be shown.

As an introduction to the feast of Unleavened Bread, it is important to bear in mind that a Sabbath (i.e. a day that is declared a Sabbath) is very significant. The Lord took Sabbaths seriously and considered them very important. The Sabbaths were to be "a sign between Me and

²¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, V, 5.

them that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them” (Exodus 31:13). The penalty for not keeping the Sabbath was death by stoning (Exodus 31:14-15). During the 40 years wandering in the wilderness, a man was stoned to death for so much as gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36).

Therefore, one can be quite certain that if the Lord declares a Sabbath as part of one of the “Appointed Feasts”, it is a significant and noteworthy event. And there is a reason for it.

1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread: Commemorating Event

In the year of the Exodus, the Feast of Unleavened Bread in its seven-day-long celebration spanned the Exodus of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12:15ff). It began with the eating of the Passover lamb at the beginning of the 15th Nisan – a suppertime meal -- and ended on the 21st of Nisan with the crossing of the Red Sea.

There are six significant things concerning this Feast as mentioned in the Scripture.

a) Sabbath of the 15th Nisan.

On this day, beginning in the evening at sundown and going on all night, the nation of Israel was to eat the roasted Passover lamb “with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; you shall eat it in haste” (Exodus 12:11). This they did as they left Egypt (Exodus 12:51). So then, the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorates (a) eating, and (b) leaving.

b) The Events between the Two Sabbaths.

The Second significant thing about the Feast of Unleavened Bread is what happened between the two Sabbaths. According to the record (Exodus 13:17-22), God, Himself, was going before the Nation of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This is the first time in the history of the people of God that God, Himself, physically led His people where He wanted them to go. Paul makes some very interesting statements concerning this week of Unleavened Bread and following: He said that all the people were baptized into Moses in both the cloud and in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-5).

c) Eating the Unleavened Bread.

The third significant thing about the Feast of Unleavened Bread is eating unleavened bread. Unleavened bread was eaten because the nation of Israel left Egypt in haste, on short notice, and didn’t have time to leaven it (Exodus 12:39). Unleavened bread is later called “the bread of affliction” (Deuteronomy 16:3) because it was supposed to remind them of their affliction in Egypt (Deuteronomy 26:7). We might note that the texture of unleavened bread, being tougher than and not as tasty as leavened bread, might imply some kind of “hardship.”

d) The Reminder.

The fourth significant thing about the Feast of Unleavened Bread is what the Scripture says the Feast was supposed to be to the people by way of reminder, and by way of instruction for one’s children. The Lord said that the Feast should serve as “a sign to you on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead” of two things. (a) Recollection of their deliverance (or salvation); that is, how the Lord with a strong hand brought them out of Egypt, (b) Walking

accordingly; that is, that “the Law of the Lord may be in your mouth” (Exodus 13:8-9; Deuteronomy 16:3).

Prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there was a concerted effort to rid every trace of leaven from their houses in obedience to the Scriptures. “For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory” (Deuteronomy 16:3-4). This resulted in a thorough cleaning and inspection of each household in order that some leaven might not be overlooked. This would have had to occur before sundown on the 13th of Nisan (Thursday 1800 Roman time) so the Passover Meal could be eaten on the 14th of Nisan or the early hours of the 15th of Nisan²².

e) Redemption and Sanctification.

The fifth significant thing is the redemption and sanctification of the first-born for the Lord. From the time of Abraham, Abraham and his descendants enjoyed a special relationship with the Lord (Genesis 15:1-7, 13-14, 17:1-14). When Israel was enslaved in Egypt, the Lord made it clear to Moses that the relationship between Himself and Israel was that of a father and a firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). Pharaoh’s firstborn came into the picture when, through the hardness of his heart, he wouldn’t let God’s firstborn go. Therefore, the Lord said He would kill Pharaoh’s firstborn (Exodus 4:23). From this, Israel was to learn “how the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel” (Exodus 11:7).

f) The Sabbath of the 21st Nisan.

Although the Scripture doesn’t explicitly say that this is the day of the crossing of the Red Sea, Hebrew tradition has always held such to be the case. Moreover, this would make good sense logically. As will be shown in more detail later, the feast generally speaks of separation and purification. This will be shown in more detail later. Therefore, a complete and final separation of Israel from Egypt and the ways of Egypt fitly conclude the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the other hand, if one maintains that the 21st of Nisan is not the day of the crossing of the Red Sea, then one is struck with an inconsistent (and thus logically untenable) position of the Lord declaring a Sabbath for absolutely no reason at all.

The crossing of the Red Sea was an extremely dramatic event. After Israel left Egypt on the 15th of Nisan -- that is, in the daytime hours, after the Lord spent the night “passing over” the land and destroying all the 1st born that weren’t covered by the blood of the Passover lamb -- Pharaoh changed his mind again and went after them (Exodus 14:5-9). Led by 600 select chariots (plus 50,000 cavalry and 200,000 foot soldiers according to Josephus²³), the Egyptians overtook the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Most maps of the Exodus place the Red Sea crossing at the Northwest tip of the Red Sea where the Southern end of the Suez Canal now exists. At that time, the Red Sea narrowed down to about a 5-8 mile wide body of water. According to Josephus, Israel was trapped between the Red Sea, the mountains and the Egyptian army.

By faith, Israel passed through the Red Sea as on dry land (Hebrews 11:29). Moses stretched out his hand over the Red Sea and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong East wind all night so that the waters were a wall²⁴ on their right and left (Exodus 14:21-22). Earlier that

²² In the sundown to sundown reckoning of a day, a full night comes before a full day. This actually makes much more sense than our middle of the night date change.

²³ Joseph, *Antiquities of the Jews*, II, xv, 3.

²⁴ See also Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, II, ii, 21; Tertullian, *Five Books Against Marcion*, II, ii, 4:20.

day, the pillar of cloud moved through their midst from in front of them to behind them to block the path of the Egyptian army (Exodus 14:19-20). Paul stated that because the Hebrews passed through the cloud and the sea that “all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:2).

In looking at the geography of this region, the Red Sea runs almost North-South at every potential crossing site. Therefore, a wind blowing from the East (compare Exodus 10:19) could not, by itself, push the waters back. However, it would have helped considerably in drying out the ocean bottom to allow people to cross on “dry land”. This dividing of the waters had to have had some additional supernatural help.

After the Hebrews crossed, the entire Egyptian army, led by Pharaoh, went in after them. However, “the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. That is, the Egyptians attempted to be baptized in the cloud and in the sea. He caused their chariot wheels to swerve and He made them drive with difficulty so the Egyptians said “let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against us” (Exodus 14:24-25). Too late! Just then Moses stretched his hand over the sea again and the waters returned to their normal state.

The waters returning to normal had the effect of a major tsunami (or tidal wave). Josephus adds²⁵ that there was a tremendous electrical storm that occurred as the Egyptian army was on the dry sea bed. “As soon as the whole Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its own place and came down with a torrent raised by storms of wind. Showers of rain also came down from the sky and dreadful thunder and lightning with flashes of fire. Thunder bolts also darted on them; nor was there anything which used to be sent by God upon men as indications of His wrath which did not happen at this time”. Thus the Egyptian army was electrocuted as well as drowned. As John Chrysostom wrote²⁶, the faith of Moses went beyond human reasoning, weakness and lowliness.

As a result of the Exodus, Egypt was ruined. Her crops were non-existent because of the plagues and her livestock were decimated. Her army was totally eliminated and all the surrounding nations knew it (Joshua 2:9-10). This left Egypt open to be conquered and to be made slaves themselves by some conquering nation as they had enslaved the Hebrews.

Sometimes we also find ourselves in predicaments from which there appears to be no escape: such as Moses was trapped between the sea, the mountains and a powerful army. Sometimes the only solution may be the resolve of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego as they were about to be thrown into the furnace: the Lord can save us if He wills; but even if He does not, we will not bow to idolatry (Daniel 3:13-27).

These two Sabbaths in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as commemorating events, can be seen as going together. On the first Sabbath, they were declared free, and left Egypt; but they weren't really free from the power of Egypt. On the second Sabbath, they were set free from the power of Egypt once and for all in a very dramatic manner.

²⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities*, II, xvi, 3.

²⁶ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, XXVII, 2.

2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread – In the Lives of the Disciples

Instead of titling this section “Prophetic Significance”, it has more meaning to follow each of the six significant points of the preceding section in relation to what was going through the minds of Jesus’ disciples (that is, all the disciples and not just the Twelve.)

a) Sabbath of the 15th Nisan.

The beginning of the Sabbath of the 15th Nisan (refer to Appendix A throughout this section) was probably the most awesomely, soul-searching time that any of the young men and women had faced in their lives as yet. Their leader, whom they recognized as the Christ, Son of the Living God, and Savior of Israel (Matthew 16:16), had just been given a grossly unfair trial²⁷ and was put to death. None other than the religious leaders of the country that they and their fathers had been taught to respect and trust did this. As the Sabbath began, their Lord and Christ had just been entombed (Mark 15:42-46, Luke 23:54). At this point, “they did not understand the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9). Just as if to add insult to injury, the religious leaders had gotten the Romans to post a guard at the tomb so that they couldn’t even pay their last respects if they wanted to (Matthew 27:62-28:4).

It might be added at this point that when the disciples were huddled together in the upper room, in a way, they did so “with their loins belted, their sandals on their feet, and their staff in their hand” (Exodus 12:11) just as their ancestors did at that 1st Passover in Egypt. They were enough in fear of the religious leaders (as their ancestors had feared Pharaoh) to be ready to run at a moment’s notice. In a similar manner, Paul encouraged the Ephesians to “belt your waist with truth” (Ephesians 6:14).

While huddled in the upper room, the “lamb” they were chewing over was the events of the last day or two (cf. Luke 24:15-21). They weren’t eating their own Passover meal, because they’d already eaten it the night before, at their Lord’s direction (Matthew 26:17-35, see Appendix A). The meal, or lack of it, that they had that evening, probably consisted solely of awesome, soul-searching discussions or foreboding centered around sincerity, truth, and “what-is-life-all-about” topics. After the day they had just gone through—the 14th of Nisan—when Jesus was crucified—they probably wouldn’t have been physically able to eat that night. This is the fulfillment of the “eating” and “leaving” mentioned in the preceding section.

Their Lord and Master, on the other hand, had descended into Hades (Ephesians 4:8-9), and was in the process of leading captivity captive. But the disciples didn’t know this until later. This will be addressed in detail in the next section.

We will not be able to leave Egypt or escape the destroyer unless we partake of the Passover with a desire for God as the Apostles thought they did when they ate the Passover meal with the Lord in anticipation of it the previous day. But they learned by this night that there was much more to God and His plan of redemption than even what they thought. Gregory the Theologian added²⁸ that we must do as Israel did of old regarding purification.

²⁷ To understand just how grossly unfair this trial was, see the Study for Good Friday.

²⁸ Gregory of Nazianzen, Oration on Holy Baptism, XL, 40.

“What of the loins, or reins, for we must not pass these over? Let the purification take hold of these also. Let our waist be belted and kept in check by continence, as the Law commanded Israel of old when partaking of the Passover. For no one comes out of Egypt purely, or escapes the Destroyer, except he who has disciplined these. Let the reins be changed by that good conversion by which they transfer all the affections to God. So that they can say, Lord, all my desire is before You, and the day of man I have not desired; for you must be a man of desires, but the desires must be those of the spirit”.

b) The Events between the Two Sabbaths.

So as they're huddled together in the upper room, where the Scripture records them as being for the 1st and 2nd appearance of post-resurrection Jesus to the eleven (John 21:19-24), outside, all around them, was a celebration going on. Jerusalem was crowded with people who had come from all over the earth to be here for this event (Deuteronomy 16:16). Outside, everyone was celebrating and recalling their deliverance (or salvation) by the Lord with a strong hand out of Egypt and at least going through rituals that were intended to keep “the Law of the Lord in their mouth” (Exodus 13:9). Most people were undoubtedly quite sincere in their celebrating, and probably thankful that the Lord had provided them the means to make the trip to Jerusalem this year. Ironically, virtually no one realized that they had just crucified the same Lord that led them out of Egypt (1 Corinthians 10:4) or that the real Passover Lamb had just been entombed. We can see this from these same people's reaction when informed of such by Peter (Acts 2:14-42) some fifty days later. And by therefore crucifying their deliverer (Messiah), they were breaking the Law of the Lord (in a most heinous way) that was supposed to be in their mouth especially at this time of year.

The disciples, huddled in the upper room, did not have a great deal of hope at this point. This changed when Jesus appeared to them in the evening after the 16th of Nisan (the beginning of the 17th of Nisan (See Appendix A). But if there is one thing they were aware of at this point, it's a cleavage between themselves and the rest of Israel. They were afraid that their religious leaders would do the same to them (under cover of darkness, of course!) as they did to their Lord (John 20:9). Although the disciples' eyes were somewhat blind and their hearts were somewhat hard with unbelief at what their Lord said He would do, (Luke 24:25; Mark 16:14) still, like it or not, they had just left their own little Egypt. Later on the disciples would realize that the Lord had made a distinction between “Israel” and “Egypt” (Galatians 6:16; Romans 9:6-8; comp. Exodus 11:7). “Egypt” here is used as an image of bondage to sin and is what Peter said when he spoke at Pentecost and exhorted the crowd to “be saved from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40). The disciples, for sure, had seen the religious leaders for what they were (cf. Matthew 23) and they wanted no part of it. But they didn't as yet realize just what was in store for them as an alternative. Or rather they just didn't believe what their Lord had said just yet.

c) Eating the Unleavened Bread.

Eating unleavened bread during the Feast generally speaks of separation and purification. It speaks separation in that this was the time of leaving behind bondage and slavery in Egypt. It speaks purification in that unleavened bread (pure, without germ or leaven) is eaten throughout the Feast. Paul speaks of this Feast as being a time of putting away an old leaven of malice and wickedness, and keeping the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians

5:7-8). It has been mentioned how the disciples' separation had been affected. At this point, their purification is in process by virtue of their having to face their dilemma sincerely and realistically. Peter tried some of the old leaven on the Day of the Lord's Passover (i.e. His denial, Matthew 26:69-75), before the Lord was crucified. He didn't like it.

Additionally, this "unleavened bread" of sincerity and truth that the disciples were "chewing over" was easily a "bread of affliction." They had had their differences and confrontations with the religious leaders simply by being associated with Jesus, but they never had to be afraid to walk the streets at night for fear of crucifixion like they did that week of Unleavened Bread.

John Chrysostom commented²⁹ on this to say that a belt around the waist is a foundation for the body when working, running and fighting. Spiritually this refers to someone who has tightened up his life, is not given over to lust, and has control of his thoughts.

"Stand therefore," says he, 'having belted your hips with truth'. He is not speaking of a literal, physical belt; all the language in this passage he employs in a spiritual sense. And observe how methodically he proceeds. First he tightens his soldier's belt? What then is the meaning of this? The man that is loose in his life, and is dissolved in his lusts, and that has his thoughts trailing on the ground, him he braces up by means of this belt. He does not allow him to be impeded by the garments entangling his legs, but leaves him to run with his feet free. 'Stand therefore, having belted your loins', says he. By the "loins" here he means this: just what the keel is in ships, the same are the loins with us the basis or groundwork of the whole body. They are, as it were, a foundation, and upon them as the schools of the physicians tell you, the whole frame is built. In 'belting the loins' he compacts the foundation of our soul. He is not speaking of these loins of our body, but is discoursing spiritually; as the loins are the foundation alike of the parts both above and below, so is it also in the case of these spiritual loins. We know, when persons are fatigued, they put their hands on their loins as if upon a sort of foundation, and in that manner support themselves. It is for this reason that the belt is used in war that it may bind and hold together this foundation in our frame. For this reason also when we run we have our belt tightened. This guards our strength. Let this then be done also with respect to the soul; then in doing anything we shall be strong; and it is a thing most especially becoming to soldiers.

Israel was commanded to eat the Passover lamb with their loins girded, with their sandals on their feet, and with their staff in their hand (Exodus 12:11). John Chrysostom stated³⁰ that we need to be ready for our Exodus at any moment as we prepare for our death. Leaving our Egypt, we live as travelers on a journey, where our citizenship is in heaven. We face a desert without virtue in our life on earth, filled with snakes and scorpions in the form of demons. Yet our leader is not just Moses, but Christ.

"Why did Israel eat the Passover with their loins girded? They had their belt on their waist, their staff in their hands, and their shoes on their feet; thus they ate the Passover. These are awesome mysteries, and of vast depth. They came

²⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XXIII.

³⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XXIII, Moral.

out of Egypt; they ate the Passover. ‘Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). Why did they have their belt on their waist? Their appearance is that of travelers; having shoes and staves in their hands and eating standing declares this. The Jews were continually forgetting God’s benefits to them. Accordingly then, God tied the sense of His benefits, not only to the time, but also to the habit of those that were to eat. This is why they were to eat with belt and sandals on, that when they were asked the reason, they might say, ‘we were ready for our journey, we were just about to leave Egypt to the land of promise and we were ready for our Exodus’. This then is the historical type. But the reality is this; we too eat a Passover, even Christ; for ‘our Passover has been sacrificed, even Christ’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). We too ought to eat it, that we too may be ready for our Exodus”.

“Let no one that eats this Passover look towards Egypt, but towards Heaven, towards ‘the Jerusalem that is above’ (Galatians 4:26). On this account you eat with your belt tightened and your shoes on your feet, that you may know, that from the moment you first begin to eat the Passover, you ought to set out, and to be on your journey. This implies two things: that we must depart from Egypt, and that, while we stay, we must stay as in a strange country. ‘For our citizenship is in Heaven’ (Philippians 3:20); and that our whole life long we should be prepared. So that when we are called we may not put it off, but say, ‘My heart is fixed’. (Psalm 108:1). Some might feel that Paul, who knew nothing against himself, could say this; but those like me, who require a long time for repentance, cannot say it. Yet being belted is the part of a waking soul; listen to what God says to righteous Job, ‘Belt up your waist like a man, for I will ask of you, and you speak to Me’ (Job 38:3). The Lord said this to all the prophets and again to Moses. He Himself appeared to Ezekiel belted (Ezekiel 9:11 LXX). The angels also appear to us belted (Revelation 15:6), as being soldiers. From our being belted, it comes that we also stand bravely. We are going to depart, and many are the difficulties that intervene. When we have crossed this plain, immediately the devil is on us, doing everything, contriving every trick. Those who have been saved out of Egypt, those who have passed the Red Sea, those who are delivered from the evil demons, and from unnumbered plagues, may be taken and destroyed by him. But, if we are vigilant, we too have a pillar of fire, the grace of the Spirit. The same both enlightens and overshadows us. We have manna; actually far more than manna. We have spiritual drink, not water that springs from the Rock. We also have our encampment (Revelation 20:9), and we dwell in a desert; for a desert without virtue is the earth, even more desolate than that wilderness. Why was that desert so terrible? Because it had scorpions and adders (Deuteronomy 8:15)! ‘A land which no one passed through’ (Jeremiah 2:6). Yet that wilderness is not so barren of fruit, as is this human nature. How many scorpions, how many asps are in this wilderness; how many snakes, how many ‘offspring of vipers’ (Matthew 3:7) are these through whom we pass! Yet let us not be afraid; for the leader of this our Exodus is not Moses, but Jesus”.

d) The Reminder.

Between the two Sabbaths of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples experienced being led by God in a new way. At the Exodus, Israel was led by God personally (according to I

Corinthians 10:4 they were led by Christ). The disciples had been led by Christ before, but the Jesus they knew had humbled and emptied Himself (Philippians 2:6-8; John 6:62) to the point that they barely recognized Him in His now glorified form (John 20:14-16, 21:1-7; Luke 24:15 ff.). When He first appeared to the eleven disciples huddled in the upper room, they were startled and terrified (Luke 24:36-43). Now, for the first time, they were face to face with the Christ of the cloud and the pillar — the Christ before He humbled Himself. Three of the twelve had seen this Jesus in a radiant state earlier at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36), but it was not quite like this. There Jesus' face and clothing became radiant white much as Moses' face had been when he was on the mountain (Exodus 34:29-35). The difference between then and now is that then they were all overshadowed by the cloud, terrifying Peter, James and John. Here Christ *is* the cloud who teleports Himself at will and passes through solid walls (John 20:19). Physically He does not appear shaped like a cloud as He did then; but He is the same God (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). It was a strong reminder as to Who exactly they were dealing with -- God with Us!

e) Redemption and Sanctification.

A major issue was the redemption and sanctification of the first-born for the Lord. From the time of Abraham, Abraham and his descendants enjoyed a special relationship with the Lord (Genesis 15:1-7, 13-14, 17:1-14). When Israel was enslaved in Egypt, the Lord made it clear to Moses that the relationship between Himself and Israel was that of a father and son, even a firstborn (Exodus 4:22).

Within Israel, the firstborn of each family was to be sanctified or set aside for a special purpose. This was first instituted shortly after the death of Pharaoh's firstborn (Exodus 13:2, Numbers 3:13, 8:17). With regard to this "special purpose", the firstborn was to be the Lord's; later one discovers that what God had in mind was for the firstborn of every family to minister to Him as a priest (Numbers 3:12, 8:15-16, Exodus 19:5-6). However, because of the unfaithfulness of the firstborn (along with everyone else), and due to the faithful response of the tribe of Levi at the time of the incident involving the golden calf, God chose the Levites to be priests instead of the firstborn (Exodus 32:26-29, Numbers 3:12-13, 40-48, 8:14-19).

Among the firstborn, each was to be redeemed whether man or beast. The firstborn of clean animals instead of being redeemed were offered as a sacrifice (Numbers 18:15-17). All this speaks of some aspect of the work of Christ, Who is the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29).

f) The Sabbath of the 21st Nisan.

Nothing at all is mentioned in the New Testament as having occurred on the 21st of Nisan, which is the following Friday, the second Sabbath of this Feast. At the appearance of Jesus to the disciples the day after the Resurrection (the beginning of the 17th of Nisan), He "opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). This gave the disciples a beginning of understanding regarding what the Feast was all about. But there is no event mentioned in the New Testament concerning the 21st of Nisan. From the Resurrection to the Ascension all that is mentioned is the appearances of Jesus to various people and events leading up to such. In Figure 3, all these appearances are listed, excluding Ascension Day. What we know is that (1) the Twelve were baptized into a baptism of repentance by John

the Baptist 3 1/2 years ago; (2) on the beginning of the 17th of Nisan at evening, this year, Jesus breathed on the disciples (excluding Thomas) in the upper room. There they “received the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). (3) On Pentecost, 43 days after the second Sabbath they were all “filled with the Holy Spirit” and began speaking in other tongues such that all the foreigners in town heard the disciples speak in their own native language (Acts 2:4 ff.). (4) Following Peter’s sermon on Pentecost, the 3,000 converts were admonished to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38).

On the 15th of Nisan, the Exodus (c. 1500 BC) and the Descent into Hades (30 AD) occurred. On the 21st of Nisan, the Crossing of the Red Sea (c. 1500 BC) occurred, but there is no similar major event recorded as happening in 30 AD. During this time the disciples were coming to grips with the implications of the Resurrection. In doing so, they were being freed from the power of sin; but there is no dramatic event recorded that we can point to. Even though no major event occurred on the 21st of Nisan in the lives of the Disciples, the events of the original 21st of Nisan have come to speak of Baptism as a necessity for the Church to free us from the power of sin. This will be addressed more in greater detail in the next section.

If one looks ahead to the Feast of Tabernacles, one will note that the second Sabbath of the Feast of Tabernacles occurs exactly 6 months to the day after the second Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Since there is no obvious fulfillment of the second Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, its fulfillment evidently will occur at the end times. Since the Feast of Tabernacles refers to the time of the Second Coming of Christ, the second Sabbath of Unleavened Bread could refer to something that precedes the Second Coming. John referred to “two witnesses” who were described as doing very spectacular things that led up to the purification and separation of the people of God from those allied with the devil. These witnesses began to act in this way 3 years and 6 months prior to the Second Coming (Revelation 11:1-12). Thus one possible meaning for the second Sabbath, the 21st of Nisan, is the beginning of the times of great affliction, where the people of God begin to eat “the bread of affliction” in a new way. These times lead up to the day when the people of God will be freed from the power of the devil forever.

FIGURE 3 APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Appearance	To Whom	Day	Reference
1	Mary Magdalene	16 Nisan Early Morning	Mark 16:9, John 20:11-17
2	The Myrrh-Bearing Women: Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, etc.	16 Nisan Early Morning	Matthew 28:8-10, Mark 16:8, Luke 24:9-10
3	Peter ³¹	16 Nisan	Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5

³¹ It is not known whether the appearance to Peter came before that to Cleopas and Luke, or if it occurred as Cleopas was walking (running?) back from Emmaeus. See Luke 24:33, 34.

4	Cleopas and Luke on Road to Emmaeus	16 Nisan Afternoon	Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-35
5	The Eleven Minus Thomas	17 Nisan Evening	Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-24
6	The Eleven Including Thomas	24 Nisan Evening	John 20:24-29
7	Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and Two Others While Fishing on Sea of Galilee	After 26 Nisan	John 21:1-24, esp. 21:14
8	The Eleven on a Mountain in Galilee	After 26 Nisan	Matthew 28:16-20
9	500 Brethren at Once	Before Pentecost	1 Corinthians 15:6
10	James	Before Pentecost	1 Corinthians 15:7

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is thus all about separation and purification. This was the effect on Jesus' disciples during the week of Unleavened Bread as they mulled over "the bread of affliction", and they emerged from this week as greatly changed individuals. In the days following the week of Unleavened Bread, they were no longer afraid of the Jewish leaders but boldly taught in the Temple about the work of Christ.

3) The Feast of Unleavened Bread -- Spiritual Application

To see the Feast of Unleavened Bread in its spiritual application, it is important to remember what has just happened on the day of the Lord's Passover. The Passover Lamb (the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ) has just been slain; in the spiritual application, this fact has just been accepted or believed. The blood of this lamb has been applied to the door of one's dwelling; in the spiritual application, one's dwelling is his body; and is sometimes referred to as a tent (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). Therefore, the believer is "passed over" and is not subject to the wrath of God (Romans 5:9). Moreover, since the veil in the Temple was ripped apart, the new believer has access to the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, having been "presented before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Colossians 1:22)

To help understand the spiritual application of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we will take it in the order that it occurred. First came Christ's descent into Hades on the 15th of Nisan. In His human body, He was lying in the grave; in His human soul, He descended into Hades. This accomplished our victory over death. During the week of Unleavened Bread, we begin to follow our Lord's direction, as pictured by the Cloud and the Pillar. At the end of the week of Unleavened Bread comes baptism, which frees us from the power of our enemy.

a) The Events of Holy Saturday

Holy Saturday in our day represents the present day celebration of the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and we celebrate it in a similar fashion to the Hebrews in the Old Testament. It was a day of immense significance to the Church, and it was rightly to be

designated a Sabbath due to its importance. All the major events of the Resurrection occurred on Holy Saturday such that the events of the Day of First-Fruits represent the victory parade.

There are two themes to the events of Holy Saturday³²:

1. This is the Climax of Christ's Mission in becoming incarnate as a man.
2. On this day our deliverance from death was accomplished.

b) The Climax of Christ's Mission

In the Orthodox services for Holy Saturday, there are fifteen Old Testament Readings that illustrate various aspects of Holy Saturday. In the following are three of these that speak of how this day is the Climax of Christ's Mission.

1. Joshua 5:10-15 The Captain of the Lord's Host.

As Joshua was about to lead the army of Israel toward a miraculous conquest of Jericho in the Promised Land, he met Christ, Who was there as the Commander of the army of the Lord.

On Holy Saturday, many are entering the Promised Land as Christ leads captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8). Others of us still face the great wilderness of this life, full of scorpions and adders. Joshua's encounter with Christ at Jericho gives us some illumination about our present situation. As Joshua led the people into the Promised Land, the Lord spoke to him, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Joshua 5:9). As they celebrated their first Passover in the Promised Land, the manna ceased as suddenly as it started (Joshua 5:12).

Manna was God's special provision to get His people through the wilderness (Exodus 16:35, Numbers 11:7). Jesus called the manna "bread from heaven" and said that the "true bread from heaven is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:32-33). He then went on to say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). Here He is speaking of the Lord's Supper, which is God's special provision for the wilderness of this life.

Once we have arrived in the Promised Land at the Second Coming, the manna will not be necessary just as it wasn't necessary after Israel crossed into the Promised Land. At that time, everyone will know the Lord (Jeremiah 31:34), and everywhere will be holy ground (Joshua 5:15). And we will all join the saints and angels in worshipping the captain of the host of the Lord.

There is dual imagery here. The manna ceased when Israel entered the Promised Land. But yet, manna is also an image of the Eucharist, which we need to carry us through the wilderness of this life.

2. Isaiah 61:1-9 "Christ Preaches the Gospel"

Isaiah's prophecy involves more than one might observe from a quick reading. He begins with the prophecy of Christ being anointed to preach the Gospel, which Christ quoted when He read from Isaiah in the Synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-17). For doing this, the members of the Nazareth tried to throw Him off a cliff. Irenaeus stated³³ that the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus' humanity because of His anointing; He did not need to rest on His Deity.

³² What follows is a brief summary of the Study Mark Kern, Holy Saturday, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

³³ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, ix, 3.

John of Damascus applied Isaiah's words (free the prisoners, sight to the blind, etc.) to those in Hades awaiting the coming of Christ. In doing so, he distinguished³⁴ between two meanings of the word "corruption". The first applied to Christ because He was truly human and was subject to death. The second did not apply to Him because He was not allowed to decay in His humanity. After His Resurrection, neither meaning applied to Him. At His descent into Hades in His deified soul, He released the prisoners and gave sight to the blind (Isaiah 61:1) for those who had been bound for ages.

Isaiah also paints a picture in his prophecy of a contrast between this age and the age to come. He speaks of rebuilding the old ruins, raising up the former desolation and repairing the ruined cities, the desolation of many generations. There shall be everlasting joy, justice and truth; everyone will know that His people are the posterity whom the Lord has blessed.

3. Jeremiah 31:31-34 "The New Covenant"

The Reading from Jeremiah covers not just the New Covenant, but also the transition to the New Covenant and life in the Kingdom of God following the Second Coming. All this was set in motion by Christ's victory over death on Holy Saturday. The purpose of the Law (the Old Covenant) as given at Mt. Sinai was to lead the people of God to Christ (Romans 10:4). As such, the Law was our tutor or pedagogue³⁵ until Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24). Part of the Law was used as a "Creed" in the 1st Century synagogue worship. When Christ came, He said that He came to fulfill the Law; therefore the Law must be seen in the light of Grace. The pillar and central focus of the Law is the love of God.

One might say, "The Law is not made for a righteous person" (1 Timothy 1:9). The Law was very versatile and was designed both for those who had a heart of faith and for those who were stiff-necked. Abraham did not need the details of the Law because his heart was right. The Early Church taught³⁶ that God bound Israel for the hardness of their hearts, that by sacrificing, resting, and purifying themselves, etc., they might come to the knowledge of God, who ordained these things for them. The Mosaic Law bridged a gap until the coming of Christ when the Law would be written on men's hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and the Holy Spirit would take up residence in men's bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

John Chrysostom stated³⁷ that the Law saves us by exposing sin and bringing us to the realization of our need for faith. Instead of excluding us from the Promises, it aids us in obtaining them.

c) Our Deliverance from Bondage was accomplished on Holy Saturday

In the Orthodox service³⁸ for Holy Saturday Vespers, one of the hymns reads:

"Today hell groans and cries aloud: 'It had been better for me had I not accepted Mary's Son, for He has come to me and destroyed my power; He has shattered the gates of brass, and as God He has raised up the souls that I once held'. Glory to Your Cross, O Lord, and to Your Resurrection!

"Today hell groans and cries aloud: 'My power has been destroyed. I accepted a mortal man as one of the dead; yet I cannot keep Him prisoner, and with Him I shall lose all those over

³⁴ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, III, 28-29.

³⁵ A pedagogue was a trustworthy slave who was charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys.

³⁶ Apostolic Constitutions VI, iv, 20

³⁷ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chap 3, vv. 19-21.

³⁸ Mother Mary & Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, tr., The Lenten Triodion, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, S. Canaan, PA, 1994, p. 656.

whom I ruled. I held in my power the dead from all the ages; but see, He is raising them all'. Glory to Your Cross, O Lord, and to Your Resurrection!

"Today hell groans and cries aloud: My dominion has been swallowed up; the Shepherd has been crucified and He has raised Adam. I am deprived of those whom I once ruled; in my strength I devoured them, but now I have cast them forth. He who was crucified has emptied the tombs; the power of death has no more strength'. Glory to Your Cross, O Lord, and to Your Resurrection!

In the Orthodox service³⁹ for Pascha (Easter), the service begins with what amounts to a reenactment of Christ in Hades on Holy Saturday, where the words of the service are lifted right from the Psalms. After the Reading of the Resurrection Gospel (Mark 16:1-8), Psalm 68:1-3 and Psalm 118:24 is chanted with each verse followed by "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!" This goes like:

"Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him flee from before His face. As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish; as wax melts before the fire, so let sinners perish at the Presence of God. This *is* the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

After this a prayer is given for the whole world, broken down into many specifics. After the prayer, Psalm 24:7-10 is chanted responsively from outside the Church building, where someone inside takes the role of the demons in Hades: As the priest knocks loudly on the door of the Church:

Priest: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates; and the king of glory shall come in."

Demons: "Who is this king of Glory?"

Priest: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in war! (knocking again)
Lift up your gates, O ye princes; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates; and the king of glory shall enter in."

Demons: "Who is this king of glory?"

Priest: "The Lord of hosts; He is this king of glory."

Without the understanding of the Church for the meaning of these Psalms, one would have difficulty tying them to the events of Holy Saturday. In fact, it would be difficult to understand what the events of Psalm 24 refer to at all. Paul explained what was happening in Hades on Holy Saturday, "When Christ ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now this, He ascended -- what does it mean, but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He, who descended, is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Ephesians 4:8-10). In many of the hymns of the Church there is a theme of the events of Holy Saturday as being a massacre in Hades where the demons were no match with the Son of God.

In the Orthodox services for Holy Saturday, there are Fifteen Old Testament Readings prescribed for Holy Saturday. Each of these presents a different facet of Christ's work. Following are seven of these that illustrate how this day is Our Deliverance from Death.

³⁹ The Liturgikon, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, 1989, pp. 381-384.

1. Exodus 12:1-11 “Christ – The Passover Sacrifice”

This Reading describes the “Passover” event in Egypt c. 1500 BC, where all of Israel was delivered from death. On the 14th day of Nisan, in mid to late afternoon (about 3:00 p.m.), the Passover lamb (male, without blemish) was killed. Its blood was applied to the side and upper doorposts of the house where the given family lived, and where they would later eat the roasted meat of the lamb (Exodus 12:6, 7, 22). In applying the blood as commanded, they couldn’t help but trace the outline of a cross.

God responded to this. If the given household obeyed His command and accepted the blood “as a token upon the houses” where they lived, they were saved. If they rejected the blood, disobeyed His command, and decided they could make it quite well apart from His way, they weren’t. The Lord said: “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments – I am the Lord. And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:12-13).

Thus it is called the “Lord’s Passover” because the Lord “passed over” the houses when He saw the blood, such that the house was delivered from death.

In c. 30 AD, at the same time that the Passover Lamb was being slain at the Temple⁴⁰ in response to the Lord’s command, Jesus cried out, gave up the spirit, and died on the Cross (Mark 15:34-37). The prophetic significance of the celebration of the Lord’s Passover was simply that for almost 1500 years, from the Exodus to 30 AD, the fact that Jesus would die as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world was celebrated in advance or in anticipation just as He ate that year’s Passover meal with His Apostles on Thursday night in anticipation of the events of the next day – Good Friday. Holy Saturday is the climax of this event.

2. Exodus 13:20-15:19 "Crossing the Red Sea"

Immediately following the Passover Sacrifice, this Reading describes the events that occurred during the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread, which concluded with the crossing of the Red Sea, where all of Israel was again delivered from death. The Day of the Lord’s Passover was the 14th of Nisan, a Friday, and was the day the Lord was crucified. Holy Saturday, the 15th of Nisan, was the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted until the 21st of Nisan. The 15th of Nisan and the 21st of Nisan were both Sabbaths, indicating that there was a special meaning for both days.

On the 15th of Nisan, Israel was on their way out of Egypt, beginning the Exodus. Also on the 15th of Nisan, or Holy Saturday, Christ was in Hades leading captivity captive. The 21st of Nisan is regarded by Hebrew tradition as the day of the crossing of the Red Sea. Moreover, this would make good sense logically. A complete and final separation of Israel from Egypt and the ways of Egypt fitly conclude the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

⁴⁰ In order for everyone in Jerusalem to “eat the Passover”, the Paschal Lambs were slain all day long. Jesus and His disciples “ate the Passover” early on the 14th of Nisan in the evening. Others ate their Passover all day long. But there was also the ceremonial “Passover” that was offered as the “official” Paschal Lamb. Jesus died on the Cross as this Paschal Lamb was being offered.

Beginning in the evening of the 15th of Nisan and going on all night, the nation of Israel ate the roasted Passover lamb “with their loins girded, their sandals on your feet, and their staff in their hand; they ate it in haste” (Exodus 12:11). This they did as they left Egypt (Exodus 12:51).

Between the two Sabbaths, God, Himself, went before the Nation of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:17-22). This is the first time in the history of the people of God that God, Himself, physically led His people where He wanted them to go. Paul made some very significant statements concerning this week of Unleavened Bread and following: He said that all the people were baptized into Moses in both the cloud and in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-5). Moses represents Christ as head of the Church, the cloud represents the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the Red Sea represents separation from the things of this world. Thus Holy Saturday is the Climax of the Lord’s Mission in that it shows us where we are going.

3. Genesis 22:1-18 "Isaac Prefigures Christ"

This Reading describes the sacrifice of Isaac as directed by the Lord, where Isaac was delivered from death at the last minute. Isaac, like Christ, was obedient in doing everything his father asked, including being sacrificed. Abraham, by faith, proceeded to offer Isaac assuming Isaac would be raised from the dead afterward.

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. He went, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country” (Hebrews 11:8-9). He was told he was going to inherit this land; yet he lived in it and never received it. This is because “he waited for the city which has foundations whose craftsman and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

John Chrysostom stated⁴¹ that Abraham’s task was more difficult than Abel’s, Enoch’s and Noah’s. They had to go beyond human reasoning, but Abraham was asked to obey the Lord’s commands even though the commands seemed to oppose the Lord’s promises.

“Great indeed was the faith of Abraham. In the case of Abel, Noah and Enoch, there was an opposition of reasoning⁴² only, and it was necessary to go beyond human reasoning. In this case it was necessary not only to go beyond human reasoning, but to see something more. For what was of God seemed to be opposed to what was of God; and faith opposed faith, and command opposed promise”.

In addition, the Lord had told him that his descendants would be as numberless as the dust on the earth (Genesis 13:16), yet it would be through Sarah that they would be numbered (Genesis 17:16-19). The Lord first mentioned how numerous Abraham’s posterity could be when Abraham was 75 years old and Sarah was 66 years old (Genesis 12:1-3). It wasn’t until 25 years later that Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5, 17:17). This required considerable patience on the part of Abraham. It taught Abraham to expect the miraculous in his dealings with God, since Sarah was at least 40 years past the age of child bearing when Isaac was born.

⁴¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XXV, 1.

⁴² For example, Abel offered the firstborn of his flock to be burned to ashes (Genesis 4:4). Enoch was translated and never died (Genesis 5:24, Jude 1:14-15). Noah built a huge boat (Genesis 6:15) that couldn’t possibly be transported to the water, and at a time when it had never rained (Genesis 2:5-6).

When Isaac was young, the Lord told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on the top of Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:1-2). Hebrew tradition⁴³ places this mountain top as the site where the Temple in Jerusalem⁴⁴ was later built. However, offering human sacrifice was contrary to the Lord's Law (Leviticus 18:21, Deuteronomy 18:10) and was seemingly contrary to the Lord's promise that his posterity would be numbered through Isaac (Genesis 17:16-19). This did not deter Abraham.

After traveling three days, they reached the foot of the mountain (Genesis 22:4). Abraham told his servants to stay there at the foot of the mountain with the donkey, "and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you" (Genesis 22:5). As they walked up the mountain, with Isaac carrying the wood, and his father the fire and the knife, young Isaac asked his father, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7). Abraham replied, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:8). In saying this, Abraham seems to have understood the coming of the Son of God as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36). Abraham concluded that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead if that was His plan (Hebrews 11:17-19). Josephus stated⁴⁵ that Isaac shared Abraham's faith and willingly climbed up on the altar to be sacrificed. Ambrose of Milan stated⁴⁶ it this way: "Isaac feared the Lord, as might be expected from the son of Abraham. He was subject to his father to such an extent that he would not avoid death in opposition to his father's will".

In this way the sacrifice of Isaac anticipates the sacrifice of Christ and illustrates our deliverance from death.

4. Daniel 3:1-30 "The Young Men in the Furnace"

The three young men, who were delivered from death in the Babylonian furnace, present an Old Testament picture of Christ's descent into hell. Just as the Son of God descended into the Babylonian furnace, so He descended into hell. This parable also presents a secondary picture of how the Gentiles would recognize the Incarnate Christ.

During the Babylonian captivity, King Nebuchadnezzar ruled most of the civilized world. Near Babylon, he had a 90 foot tall gold statue of himself made⁴⁷ and sent word to all his officials to come bow down to it at the dedication of the statue (Daniel 3:1-5). Anyone not doing so was to be thrown into a huge furnace (Daniel 3:6, 11). There was an awakening going on in Nebuchadnezzar's life, but it was going to take some refining.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego had been appointed by the Prophet Daniel as officials over the province of Babylon, where Daniel was ruler over the whole province and chief prefect over the Magi (Daniel 2:48-49). Some of the Chaldeans complained to the king that the

⁴³ Gower, *Manners and Customs of Bible Times* 1987, p. 203

⁴⁴ Solomon built the First Temple on Mt. Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1).

⁴⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities*, I, xiii, 4.

⁴⁶ Ambrose of Milan, *Duties of the Clergy*, I, xvii, 66.

⁴⁷ The gold statue that Nebuchadnezzar made was an image of what he saw in his dream (Daniel 2:27-45), that Daniel interpreted in the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Daniel 2:1). In the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Daniel 3:1), he had become puffed up from the lofty words that Daniel had addressed him with, so he made a copy of this image, in order that he might be worshipped by all as God. See Hippolytus, "On Daniel", III, 3:1, *Fragments from Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture*.

Jews (Daniel's officials) were not obeying the king's command (Daniel 3:12). The king was angry and called them in to give an account, threatening them with the furnace, and asking, "What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:14-15) They replied, "Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18). One aspect of religious life in this part of the world was the worship of fire. Throwing the three young men into the furnace was delivering them over to the Babylonian "gods".

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were bound with ropes (Daniel 3:19-21), and were taken to the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's mighty men. The soldiers put the three young men (probably down a ramp) into the midst of the furnace (Daniel 3:22). They then proceeded to make the fire hotter by adding fuel to the fire. As they were doing so, the fire streamed 73 feet above the furnace and killed them. Inside the flame, the angel surrounded the three young men with a moist whistling wind (Song of the Three Children 1:22-26). According to Hippolytus⁴⁸, the angel inside the furnace drove the flames that killed the soldiers.

"See how even the fire appears intelligent, as if it recognized and punished the guilty. It did not touch the servants of God, but it consumed the unbelieving and impious Chaldeans. Those who were within were sprinkled with (cooling) dew by the angel, while those who thought they stood in safety outside the furnace were destroyed by the fire".

Nebuchadnezzar observed the three young men loose and walking about in the flames accompanied by one he described as "the Son of God" (Daniel 3:24-25 LXX). While in the flames, they sang a song of praise to God while they walked about in the furnace. This Song was originally part of the text of Daniel, but is now listed in the Old Testament Apocrypha (in the Septuagint) as "The Song of the Three Children".

5. Jonah 1:1-4:11 "The Belly of the Sea Monster"

The Book of Jonah is unusual in that the entire focus of the book is the mission of a Hebrew prophet to a Gentile city. In the process, Jonah was delivered from death in the belly of a sea monster. Jesus said, "No sign will be given to this generation except the sign of the prophet Jonah. Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39-40).

In the early 8th Century BC, Jonah was told by the Lord to prophesy against Nineveh, a city in Northern Assyria, 600 miles from Jerusalem. Nineveh was an ancient city, was built by Nimrod following the Flood (Genesis 10:11) and was the Capital city of the Assyrian Empire in the late 8th Century BC.

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah "fled to Tarshish (i.e. Spain) from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). The Lord then sent a fierce storm on the Mediterranean Sea so that the ship was about to break up (Jonah 1:4). The sailors ascertained by casting lots that the storm came up on account of Jonah (Jonah 1:7). They therefore asked Jonah what they should do to him in order to calm the storm (Jonah 1:11). Jonah replied, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (Jonah 1:12). The sailors were unwilling to shed innocent blood and tried rowing harder; when

⁴⁸ Hippolytus, "On Daniel", III, 3:47, Fragments from Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture.

all hope seemed lost, they asked the Lord to forgive them and threw Jonah overboard (Jonah 1:13-15). Immediately the storm ceased and the sailors all made vows and offered sacrifices to the Lord (Jonah 1:16). Jonah, however, was swallowed by a great sea creature that the Lord appointed (Jonah 1:17). The great sea creature was not a modern “whale” and was larger than anything that is common today. According to Tertullian⁴⁹,

“Jonah was swallowed by the monster of the deep, in whose belly whole ships were devoured, and after three days was vomited out again safe and sound”.

The Hebrew text refers to this sea monster as *dag*, or just the generic word for fish. The LXX refers to the sea monster as *ketos*, or a huge fish. Neither of these words are very helpful in identifying what species of sea creature it was that was large enough both to swallow Jonah, and whose belly was large enough to allow Jonah to breathe for three days (Jonah 1:17).

We can get some understanding of Jonah’s experience from Jonah’s prayer while he was in the sea creature’s belly.

- Jonah prayed from the “belly of hell” (Jonah 2:2 LXX). This indicates that it was quite unpleasant, and the stench must have been unbearable.
- Jonah stated that “The waters closed over me, the deep encircled me; the weeds⁵⁰ were wrapped around my head” (Jonah 2:5, Dead Sea Scrolls). Thus the sea creature swallowed other things besides Jonah, and Jonah had difficulty moving and untangling himself in the sea creature’s belly.
- Jonah stated that he “went down to the roots of the mountains; the earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit⁵¹, O Lord, my God” (Jonah 2:6 DSS). This indicates that the sea creature was a deep diver, and that the pressure from the deep water was quite high.
- Jonah stated, “When my soul was failing me, I remembered the Lord” (Jonah 2:7 LXX). This indicates that Jonah was near death in the sea creature’s belly, possibly from lack of oxygen, possibly from the “bends”, which is a very painful death for deep-sea divers.
- Finally, after three days, “Then the Lord commanded the sea creature and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land” (Jonah 2:10). For the sea creature to do this, it was likely a species that could move as easily in shallow water as in deep water.

Only one sea creature mentioned in the Scripture was large enough to swallow Jonah, and this was the “leviathan”, which is probably extinct now. Leviathan was described as having the following characteristics:

- He is very large. “And all the ships coming together⁵² would not be able to bear the mere skin of his tail; neither *shall they carry* his head in fishing-vessels” (Job 41:7 LXX).
- His skin is like armor plate, and harpoons cannot penetrate it. His face is as large as a door. “Who will open the doors of his face? Terror is round about his teeth. His inwards are as brass plates and the texture of his *skin* as a smyrte stone” (Job 41:14-17 LXX). “If spears should come against him, *men* will affect nothing, *either with* the spear or the breast-plate.

⁴⁹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, II, vi, 58.

⁵⁰ According to Keil and Delitzsch, these weeds, Hebrew *suph*, are sea grasses, which grow on the ocean bottom. See Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, v. 10, p. 271.

⁵¹ Keil and Delitzsch suggest that the word translated “pit” probably refers to an undersea cavern, perhaps the lair of the sea creature. See Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, v. 10, p. 272.

⁵² These fishing vessels are larger than rowboats and could carry the Twelve Apostles across the Sea of Galilee. This suggests a rough weight of the head of leviathan as over 2000 pounds.

For he considers iron as chaff, and brass as rotten wood. The bow of brass shall not wound him; he deems a slinger as grass” (Job 41:26-28 LXX).

- He can breathe fire and smoke out of his mouth. “At his sneezing a light shines, and his eyes are *as* the appearance of the morning star. Out of his mouth proceed as it were burning lamps, and as it were hearths of fire are cast abroad. Out of his nostrils proceeds smoke of a furnace burning with fire of coals. His breath is *as* live coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth” (Job 41:18-21 LXX).
- His swimming motion is so strong that it makes the sea appear to boil (Job 41:31 LXX).
- He lives in the deepest parts of the ocean, and is king of all that are in the waters (Job 41:32-34 LXX).
- Leviathan was also used figuratively as an image of Satan (Isaiah 27:1).

After his deep-sea adventure, Jonah received another vision directing him to go to Nineveh (Jonah 3:1). This time he obeyed! Walking through the streets, he proclaimed that Nineveh would be overthrown in 40⁵³ days (Jonah 3:4). Word of his encounter with the sea creature and the storm may have gotten back to Nineveh, because Jonah received instant attention! All the people of Nineveh believed God and began fasting in sackcloth and ashes, including the King of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-6). When God saw their repentance, He relented concerning their destruction and spared the city (Jonah 3:10). Succeeding generations in Nineveh, however, forgot the Lord; about 150 years later, Nineveh was obliterated so completely that it wasn’t until the 19th Century that archaeologists finally discovered its location.

One message for us from Jonah is that “as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great sea creature, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). And just as leviathan, who swallowed Jonah, represents Satan, so Hades, who “swallowed” Christ in His death, represents the efforts of Satan (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

6. Our Descent and Resurrection at the Second Coming

We will also be delivered from death. When Christ returns in glory at the Second Coming, Paul stated that the dead in Christ would be raised first to meet Him as He comes.

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

This implies that “the dead in Christ”, who rise first, will still be on earth and not in heaven. If they are caught up together with those still alive, they must be in the graves, similar to

⁵³ The LXX reads “3 days”, while the Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls read “40 days”. Justin Martyr (2nd Century) mentioned that this difference existed in his days also. See Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, CVII.

Lazarus, awaiting the Second Coming. But then who is in heaven that comes with Christ at His return? The Church Fathers say that these will be those that were raised when Christ descended into Hades. Those in Hades, like Lazarus, are in a place of comfort and are very aware of things going on – even aware of those that are in torment, like the rich man⁵⁴. The Scriptures imply that the martyrs, those who have testified to the Faith with their own blood, may already be in heaven (Revelation 6:9). Both those in heaven and those comforted in Hades are active, are concerned about us and are able and willing to pray for us.

John Chrysostom gave⁵⁵ a broader definition to the word “martyr” than just someone who was killed while standing firm in the Faith. Sometimes we are tortured in other ways; we would gladly give up our life to help someone else but don’t have the opportunity. The result is the same.

“Nothing is holier than the tongue, which in evils gives thanks to God; truly in no respect does it fall short of that of martyrs; both are alike crowned. Over this one (the martyr) stands the executioner to force it to deny God by blasphemy; over the other the devil stands torturing it with executioner thoughts, darkening it with despondencies. If one bears his grief, and gives thanks, he has gained a crown of martyrdom. For instance, is her little child sick, and does she give God thanks? This is a crown to her. What torture is so bad that despondency is not worse? Still it does not force her to vent a bitter word. The child dies: again she has given thanks. She has become the daughter of Abraham. If she sacrificed not with her own hand, yet she was pleased with the sacrifice, this is the same; she felt no indignation when the gift was taken away.”

“Again, is her child sick? She has made no amulets. It is counted to her as martyrdom, for she sacrificed her son in her resolve. Even though those things are worthless, and a mere cheat and mockery, still there were nevertheless those who persuaded her that they do work: and she chose rather to see her child die, than to put up with idolatry. As then she is a martyr, whether it is in her own case, or in her son’s that she has thus acted; so is that other one an idolatress. It is evident that she would have sacrificed, had it been allowed her to do so. These amulets, though those who make money by them are forever rationalizing about them, and saying, ‘we call upon God, and do nothing extraordinary’; the thing is idolatry. Are you one of the faithful? Make the Sign of the Cross; say, ‘This I have for my only weapon; this for my remedy; and I know no other’. Tell me, if a physician should come to someone, and, neglecting the remedies belonging to his art, should use incantation, should we call that man a physician? By no means; for we see not the medicines of the healing art; so neither, in this case, do we see those of Christianity”.

Tertullian stated⁵⁶ that Christ descended into hell after His death and removed the Patriarchs and Prophets to be with Him in Paradise. But those that have died since His descent will remain in Hades until His Second Coming. John describes the souls of just the martyrs under the altar in heaven (Revelation 6:9), where the souls of everyone else must still be on earth

⁵⁴ In the story of Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom, we refer to the rich man today by the name Dives, which simply means “rich man”.

⁵⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, VIII, v. 15.

⁵⁶ Tertullian, A Treatise on the Soul, I, ix, 55.

in Hades. Also, there are some of the dead that are raised at the Second Coming to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17); these must have been dwelling in Hades.

“We suppose the lower regions of Hades are not a bare cavity, nor some subterranean sewer of the world, but a vast deep space in the interior of the earth, and a concealed recess in its bowels. We read that Christ in His death spent three days in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40), that is, in the secret inner recess which is hidden in the earth. Now although Christ is God, yet being also man, ‘He died according to the Scriptures’ and ‘was buried’ (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). He fully complied with His own law by remaining in Hades in the form and condition of a dead man. He did not ascend into the heights of heaven before descending into the lower parts of the earth, that He might there make the patriarchs and prophets⁵⁷ partakers of Himself (1 Peter 3:19). This being the case, you must suppose Hades to be a subterranean region, and keep at arm’s length those who are too proud to believe that the souls of the faithful deserve a place in the lower regions. These persons, who are ‘servants above their Lord, and disciples above their Master’ (Matthew 10:24), would no doubt spurn the comfort of the resurrection, if they must expect it in Abraham’s bosom. They say that it was for this purpose that Christ descended into hell, that we might not ourselves have to descend there”.

“Well, then, what difference is there between the heathen and Christians, if the same prison awaits them all when dead? How shall the soul mount up to heaven, where Christ is already sitting at the Father’s right hand, when as yet the archangel’s trumpet has not been heard by the command of God? (1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16) As yet those whom Christ will find on the earth, have not been caught up into the air to meet Him at His coming (1 Thessalonians 4:17), in company with the dead in Christ, who shall be the first to arise (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16). To no one is heaven opened; the earth is still safe for him, but I would not say it is shut against him. When the world shall pass away, then the kingdom of heaven shall be opened. We shall sleep in Paradise, you tell me, where already the patriarchs and prophets have been removed from Hades in the retinue of the Lord’s resurrection. How is it, then that the region of Paradise, which as revealed to John in the Spirit lay under the altar, displays no other souls in it besides the souls of the martyrs? (Revelation 6:9) How is it that the most heroic martyr Perpetua⁵⁸ on the day of her passion saw only her fellow-martyrs there, in the revelation which she received of Paradise? The sword which guarded the entrance permitted none to go in there, except those who had died in Christ and not in Adam?”

“Observe, then, the difference between a heathen and a Christian in their death. If you have to lay down your life for God, as the Comforter counsels (Matthew 10:37-39, Mark 8:34-38), it is not in gentle fevers and on soft beds, but in the sharp pains of martyrdom. You must take up the cross and bear it after your Master, as He has Himself instructed you (Matthew 16:24-27). The sole key

⁵⁷ The “Patriarchs” in the context of the pre-Flood civilization that Peter referred to represents the people numbered in Genesis 5. But Tertullian generalized the text of Peter’s Epistle to include others who lived prior to Christ’s Advent, such as the Prophets, Abraham, etc.

⁵⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 1 gives a brief summary of the life of Perpetua and her friends, but not her vision.

to unlock Paradise is your own life's blood. Every other soul is detained in safe keeping in Hades until the day of the Lord".

Irenaeus stated⁵⁹ that Christ observed the law of the dead, and spent three days in the lower parts of the earth. Just as no disciple is above his Master, so we will do the same, awaiting our resurrection.

"Christ dwelt for three days in the place of the dead, as the prophet says⁶⁰ concerning Him. 'And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them'. And the Lord Himself says, 'As Jonah remained three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth' (Matthew 12:40). Paul says, 'But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?' (Ephesians 4:9) This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, 'You have delivered my soul from the nethermost hell' (Psalm 86:13 LXX). When He rose again on the third day, He spoke to Mary, who was the first to see Him and to worship Him. 'Don't touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say to them, I ascend to My Father, and to your Father'" (John 20:17). Christ observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and waited until the third day 'in the lower parts of the earth' (Ephesians 4:9). Afterwards He rose in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples (John 20:20, 27): He thus ascended to the Father. The Lord 'walked in the midst of the shadow of death' (Psalm 23:4 LXX), where the souls of the dead were kept; yet afterwards He arose in the body. After the resurrection, He was taken up into heaven. It is clear that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event. Then they will receive their bodies, and rise in their entirety; that is, bodily; just as the Lord arose, they shall come into the presence of God. 'For no disciple is above the Master, but everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master' (Luke 6:40). Our Master, therefore, did not immediately depart, taking flight to heaven, but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father. This had been also shown through Jonah; rising again after three days, He was taken up to heaven. So we also should await the time of our resurrection, prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets; and so be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this privilege".

John Cassian stated⁶¹ that the souls of people who have died are still capable of reason and feelings such as hope, sorrow, joy and fear. They are in a state where they are already beginning to taste something of what is reserved for them at the Last Judgment.

"People are not idle after the separation from this body, and are capable of feeling. In the parable of the beggar Lazarus and Dives, the rich man clothed in

⁵⁹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V, xxxi, 1-2.

⁶⁰ In Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, 72, Justin stated that the Jews of his day had intentionally deleted this from the Hebrew text of Jeremiah's writings. In Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, xx, 4, Irenaeus attributed the quote to Isaiah, and in Irenaeus, Against Heresies, IV, xxii, 1, he attributed it to Jeremiah. All we can say is that it is not in any of our texts today, either the Hebrew text, the LXX or the Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁶¹ John Cassian, First Conference of Abbot Moses, I, i, 14.

purple, one obtained a position of bliss, in Abraham's bosom, the other was consumed with the dreadful heat of eternal fire (Luke 16:19-24). But understand the words spoken to the thief 'Today you shall be with Me in Paradise' (Luke 23:43). They clearly show that not only their former intelligence continues with the souls, but also in their changed condition they partake of some state, which corresponds to their actions and deserts? For the Lord would certainly never have promised him this, if He had known that his soul, after being separated from the flesh, would either have been deprived of perception or have been resolved into nothing. It was not his flesh but his soul which was to enter Paradise with Christ. We must avoid, and shun with the utmost horror, that wicked punctuation of the heretics, who do not believe that Christ could be found in Paradise on the same day on which He descended into hell. They punctuate 'Verily, I say unto you to-day', and making a stop apply 'you shall be with Me in Paradise', in such a way they imagine that this promise was not fulfilled at once after he departed from this life, but that it will be fulfilled after the resurrection. They do not understand what He declared to the Jews, who fancied that human difficulties and weakness of the flesh hampered him as it did them. 'No man has ascended into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven' (John 3:13). By this He clearly shows that the souls of the departed are still endowed with reason, but that they even have such feelings as hope and sorrow, joy and fear. They already are beginning to taste beforehand something of what is reserved for them at the last judgment, and they are not resolved into nothing after their departure from this life. They live a more real life, and are still more earnest in waiting on the praises of God".

Rufinus of Aquileia stated⁶² that Christ's descent into hell brought three kingdoms at once under His subjection: things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth (Philippians 2:10). He achieved this victory over the angelic world-rulers whom He had established at the Creation.

"When God made the world in the beginning, He set over it certain powers of celestial virtues by which the race of mortal men might be governed and directed. Moses signifies this, 'When the Most High divided the nations, He appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God' (Deuteronomy 32:8 LXX). But some of these, as he who is called the Prince of this world, did not exercise the power, which God had committed to them according to the laws by which they had received it. Nor did they teach mankind to obey God's commandments, but taught them rather to follow their own perverse guidance. Thus we were brought under the bonds of sin, because, as the Prophet said, 'We were sold under our sins' (Romans 7:14). Every man, when he yields to lust, is receiving the wages for his own soul (Matthew 16:26). Those wicked rulers held every man under that bond; when Christ came, He tore them down and stripped them of their power. Paul signifies this under a great mystery when he says of Him, 'He destroyed the hand-writing which was against us, nailing it to His cross, and led away principalities and powers, triumphing over them in Himself' (Colossians 2:14-15). Those rulers, whom God had set over mankind, had become tyrannical, attacked the men who had been committed to

⁶² Rufinus of Aquileia, A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, 15.

their charge and routed them utterly in the conflicts of sin. Ezekiel mystically intimates this when he says, 'In that day angels shall come hastening to exterminate Ethiopia, and there shall be perturbations among them in the day of Egypt; for behold He comes' (Ezekiel 30:9 LXX). Having stripped them of their power, Christ is said to have triumphed, and to have delivered to men the power which was taken from them. Also He said to His disciples, 'Behold I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the might of the enemy' (Luke 10:19). The Cross of Christ brought those, who had wrongfully abused the authority which they had received, into subjection to those who had before been in subjection to them. But this teaches mankind first of all to resist sin even to death, and to be willing to die for the sake of the Faith."

7. 1 Kings 17:8-24 "Elijah Raises the Widow's Son"

Elijah's raising the widow's son teaches us some things about our resurrection from death and about the implications of Holy Saturday. Like the widow's son, we will be raised, and the Kingdom of God will not be exclusively Jewish any more. The three years of drought speaks of Christ's three-year public ministry, and the one widow who gave Elijah everything she had speaks of the Church. Therefore this widow is preferred over many others, just as Christ prefers the Church over many pretenders.

The widow portrays the righteous during a drought on the earth, which is our present condition, and the rain is the Coming of Christ. She was miraculously preserved by something that foreshadows the Eucharist. Just as Elijah went to the Gentiles in Sidon, so the Church is now largely of the Gentiles.

Elijah was a descendant of the settlers of Gilead (1 Kings 17:1) who moved in during the time of the Judges (Judges 12:4-7). The first mention of him occurred during the reign of King Ahab following Ahab's marriage to Jezebel and the subsequent building of altars and a Temple to Baal, and building the Asherah on the high places. Elijah said to King Ahab that there would be neither dew nor rain for several years until he (Elijah) said so. Then Elijah left for the East side of the Jordan (1 Kings 17:1-3).

Elijah lived there for a while and was fed by ravens sent by the Lord, who brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening. His source of water was the brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:4-6). When the brook dried up from the lack of rain, the Lord told him to go to the town of Zarephath in Sidon on the Mediterranean coast. Sidon was the birthplace of Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31).

On entering the gate of Zarephath, he called to a widow who was gathering sticks, asking for a drink of water. As she was going to get the water, he asked her also for a piece of bread. She replied that she had no bread. All she had was a handful of flour and a little oil. She was going to prepare a last meal for her son and herself, expecting that they would starve to death afterward because of the famine⁶³ and drought (1 Kings 17:9-12).

⁶³ Plowing to plant crops was timed to take advantage of the winter rains. Beginning in late October, the first heavy rains come and loosen the soil sufficiently for plowing. Rain is intermittent throughout the winter, and ends with some heavy showers of March and April (the late rain). From April to October is the dry season and the hot summer, where clouds are infrequent and rain is rare. Without these rains, hardship or famine

Elijah instructed her to use that last little bit to make him a little bread cake, then some for her and her son. “For thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth’” (1 Kings 17:11-14). She did as Elijah asked and her bowl of flour lasted for several years until the famine was over. During that time, Elijah stayed in the upper room of her house (1 Kings 17:15-16).

During the time Elijah stayed there, the woman’s young son died. Elijah carried the child to the upper room and laid him on his own bed. Then he raised him from the dead (1 Kings 17:24). According to tradition⁶⁴, the child was later known as the Prophet Jonah who prefigured Christ by spending three days in the belly of the sea monster (Jonah 1:17).

This account has a strong message for us: putting the things of God first has significant benefits. The widow had very little; yet by faith she gave of what she had to Elijah. Her benefits were an unlimited food supply, her son resurrected, and her testimony has been remembered as being greater than all the widows in Israel (Luke 4:25-26).

d) Eating the Passover Lamb and Unleavened Bread

One more thing needs to be mentioned in regard to the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: eating the lamb. This is the first thing the Israelis did once the Passover Lamb’s blood had been shed, and it is the first thing the new believer does once he accepts God’s pardon. God’s pardon is the blood on the doorpost. It is given by God and is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8, Romans 5:15-19), and it is both a necessary and sufficient condition for God to pass over the new believer, delivering him from death (Romans 5:9). But, one might ask, what does the “eating” refer to?

In the chapter on “The Lord’s Passover - Prophetic Significance”, it was shown that Jesus Christ is the Passover Lamb. Jesus is quoted as saying that a person needs to eat His flesh in order to avoid death (John 6:49-51). It is important that the new believer do this right away. Because just as the Israelis needed some substantial nourishment to carry them in their journey out of Egypt, so the new believer needs some real “meat” for strength to get him “on his feet” and out of his bondage. Applying what Jesus said about this, He also said, “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63). In other words, the “eating” is with one’s heart, and the “digesting” is with one’s mind.

In Orthodox tradition, following baptism, the newly illumined is chrismated (anointed with oil) to receive the Holy Spirit, and then receives the Eucharist, the body and blood of the Lamb of God. In addition, the most common time for baptism in the Orthodox Church is on Holy Saturday, which is the same as the First Sabbath of the Feast Day of Unleavened Bread.

As the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is “eaten” (accepted, received) and “digested” (understood, sorted out), something different becomes apparent. If the new believer has the eyes to see, he can see his new Lord and Master begin to lead him, authoritatively, decisively away from his

was a certainty, as demonstrated by Elijah (1 Kings 18:1-2). Moses linked the rains from heaven with the love of God and the obedience to His commandments (Deuteronomy 11:10-17).

⁶⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 22.

bondage toward the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, the Kingdom of God. Usually, there is a real excitement, rejoicing, and anticipation in a new believer's life around this time as he first sees "the movement of the pillar and the cloud," (i.e., the presence of God directing his life.)

Note that Paul mentions that, "our fathers were under the cloud and were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1). The cloud was out in front leading the way, yet they were "under" the authority of the cloud just as the new believer is now "under" the authority of his Lord. As they were baptized into Moses, (Moses being the head of the Israeli nation is often representative of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Church), the new believer is baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

e) Bright Week in the Church

According to the Law, unleavened bread was to be eaten throughout each of the seven days of the feast. Anyone eating something leavened was to be cut off from the nation of Israel! From the seriousness of the penalty of eating leavened foodstuffs, one might infer that this issue is at least one of, if not the, central issue of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Paul writes to the Corinthians and mentions both the Lord's Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The "old leaven" which was to be cleaned out of one's dwelling (Exodus 12:19), which is spiritually, one's life or one's heart, is mentioned as referring to malice and wickedness, whereas the unleavened bread of the feast is mentioned as referring to sincerity and truth.

The way this works in real life is that our change in attitude becomes obvious to all our neighbors, just as Israel's new life became obvious to all their neighbors. To understand this analogy, we must look carefully at the words that describe the cloud and the pillar that led Israel in the wilderness. At the giving of the Law from Mt. Sinai, the fire on top of Mt. Sinai "burned with fire to the midst of heaven" (Deuteronomy 4:11). This was no longer just a small bush burning, but was a huge fire thousands of feet tall that was visible to Israel's neighbors over 50 miles away. As the Pillar moved, Israel moved; thus Israel's neighbors knew where they were at any moment and when they were getting close. Sometimes we may think of the Pillar and the Cloud as a small dust devil (no pun intended) moving around in the wilderness. However, the Cloud was large enough to block the path of the 250,000-man⁶⁵ Egyptian army (Exodus 14:19-20). As the neighbors of Israel watched Israel approach, they were completely demoralized. For example, Rahab, the Jericho harlot who welcomed the spies, testified that "the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og⁶⁶, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Joshua 2:9-11). They knew that Israel's God:

1. Spoke to Israel in person from the fire on Mt. Sinai.
2. Destroyed Egypt's huge army in the Red Sea leaving no survivors.
3. Led Israel day by day through the wilderness.
4. Provided Israel with food from heaven every day.

⁶⁵ According to Josephus, *Antiquities*, II, xv, 3, Pharaoh led 600 select chariots, 50,000 cavalry, and 200,000 foot soldiers into the wilderness to bring Israel back.

⁶⁶ Both Sihon and Og were much stronger than Israel at that time.

5. Provided 600,000 Israelis plus all their livestock with water from a Rock. How can anyone fight against an army where the miraculous is normal procedure?

The same thing is true with us. As the veil of our perception is taken away (2 Corinthians 3:13-16), there is a change in our attitude that people can recognize. As we apply ourselves to the things of God, we begin to be led by the Holy Spirit, and people will start to recognize the Holy Spirit in us.

Corresponding to the Feast of Unleavened Bread today is “Bright Week” in the Church. This is the week following Pascha (Easter), and there is a mystery here that not all are granted the ability to see. Having come through the forty days of fasting, corresponding to the forty years in the wilderness, we begin a time of rejoicing to celebrate our separation from the things of this world. Whereas strict fasting for 40 days preceded Pascha, fasting of any kind is forbidden during Bright Week following Pascha. This is a time of great rejoicing and fasting, which is a kind of mourning, is just not appropriate. The sincerity and truth that was displayed as a type in Unleavened Bread (1 Corinthians 5:8) now sees its fulfillment in Bright Week.

Ambrose of Milan stated⁶⁷ that the depth of the mystery was veiled by Moses, so that only those to whom it has been given might know the mystery of the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:11-12).

“All do not see the depths of the mysteries, for they were hid from the Levites, lest they should see who ought not to see, and they who cannot serve should take it up. Moses saw the circumcision of the Spirit, but veiled it, so as to give circumcision only in an outward sign. He saw the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; he saw the sufferings of the Lord, but he veiled the unleavened bread of truth in the material unleavened bread. He veiled the sufferings of the Lord in the sacrifice of a lamb or a calf”.

One can sense in the words of Exodus 11 and 12 an atmosphere of things happening quickly, on very short notice, with little time to prepare (Exodus 12:39; Deuteronomy 16:3). So it is when one comes to know the Lord. A life with God is not just something that one plans; it is a moment by moment walk with the Lord. Knowing the Lord as a name in a book is useless; one needs to listen to His direction as a voice in one’s heart. Just as the whole nation of Israel couldn’t help but break out in song after its baptism in the Red Sea (Exodus 15), so the new believer often can’t help but want to sing about his recent salvation and his newly-discovered Lord.

In the Orthodox calendar, the forty days of Lent preceding Pascha are spent in fasting and in mourning our expulsion from Paradise. We should be zealous in our fasting, but in a spiritual sense and not just in a fleshly sense. At Pascha, we celebrate our return to Paradise and we should earnestly desire this. Athanasius stated⁶⁸ it in these words:

“Ours also is the Passover, the calling is from above, and ‘our conversation is in heaven’. As Paul says, ‘We have here no abiding city, but we seek that which is to come’ (Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 13:14). Looking forward, we properly keep the feast. Heaven truly is high, and its distance from us infinite;

⁶⁷ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy I, 50, 260.

⁶⁸ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letter XLIII.

for ‘the heaven of heavens’, he says, ‘is the Lord’s’ (Psalm 115:16). But not, on that account, are we to be negligent or fearful, as though the way there were impossible. But rather should we be zealous. Yet not, as in the case of those who journeyed east and, finding a plain in Shinar, began to build a tower. There is no need for us to bake bricks with fire, and to seek asphalt for mortar (Genesis 11:3); for their tongues were confused, and their work was destroyed.

For us the Lord has consecrated a way through His blood, and has made it easy. Not only has He afforded us consolation respecting the distance, but also He has come and opened the door for us, which was once shut. It was shut from the time He cast out Adam from the delight of Paradise, and set the Cherubim and the flaming sword, that turned every direction, to keep the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). This is now, however, opened wide. He that sits on the Cherubim, having appeared with greater grace and loving-kindness, led into Paradise with Himself the thief who confessed (Luke 23:40-43); and having entered heaven as our forerunner, opened the gates to all. Paul also, ‘pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling’ (Philippians 3:14), by it was taken up to the third heaven. Having seen those things which are above, he descended and he teaches us, announcing what is written to the Hebrews. ‘You have not come to the mountain that can be touched and that burned with fire, to clouds and darkness, to a tempest, and to the voice of words. But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven’ (Hebrews 12:18-23). Who would not wish to enjoy companionship with these! Who would not desire to be enrolled with these, that he may hear with them (Matthew 25:34), ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’.

f) The Role of Baptism

But the life of the believer or his walk with God does not end here. Egypt is often used metaphorically throughout the Scriptures as a picture of the bondage and slavery of sin (Deuteronomy 5:6, 7:8; Exodus 20:2). Just as the nation of Israel had to leave the land of Egypt (their place of bondage), so the new believer has to leave his place of bondage, whatever it may be. Different people have different kinds of bondage; some have it with fornication, others with hate, others with lying or various forms of deceit, etc. The point is to leave it.

There are times when the power behind the bondage tries to come after the new believer to bring him back to the bondage he’s just left, very much as the armies of Pharaoh went after the Israelis. At this point, one should walk by faith and not by sight. Instead of crying out and desiring to go back to the bondage of Egypt as the Israelis did (Exodus 14:10-12), the thing to do is what Moses said: “Do not fear! Take your stand and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever” (Exodus 14:13). What followed was the baptism of Israel in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

In the spiritual application of the second Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, just as Moses called the baptism of Israel in the Red Sea: “The salvation of the Lord”, so Peter says

that “baptism now saves you -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21). Note that by baptism he does not mean merely removing dirt from the flesh (washing or dunking in water), but “an appeal to God for a good conscience.” Should the power behind one’s former bondage try to swallow up the new believer after he has left his former bondage, appealing to the new believer’s new Lord and Master will not go unheard (1 Corinthians 10:11-13). (For more details on how the resurrection of Jesus Christ is involved, refer to the next chapter on the Day of First-Fruits or to Romans 6:1-23).

The principle that is involved here is the destruction of the power of sin. If Egypt can be seen as representing the bondage and slavery of sin, then the army of Pharaoh certainly represents the power of sin. At the baptism of the Israelites in the Red Sea, as the baptism of a new believer, the power of sin is buried (cf. also 1 Corinthians 15:56; Romans 6:3-7, 14).

In short, what is happening here is that the baptism in the cloud is the “appeal to God for a good conscience,” and the baptism in the Red Sea is the demonstration or burial that is customarily referred to as “baptism.”

There is a very strong association of Holy Baptism with the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Orthodox tradition. During the year new members are instructed in the Faith, but their Baptism is often delayed until just before Pascha. This way, they are prepared for Holy Baptism by the 40-day fast and the joy of their Baptismal celebration coincides with the celebration of Bright Week. Prior to Holy Baptism, often done the evening before, the Exorcism Prayers are done to make a “distinction between Egypt and Israel” (Exodus 11:7). As part of these prayers, the newly illumined renounce their ties to the evils of this world and confess their Faith using the Nicene Creed.

Just prior to His Crucifixion, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet. After doing so, He stated, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you” (John 13:10), where the exception was Judas (John 13:11). Commenting on Jesus’ statement that the disciples were completely clean, Gregory the Great used⁶⁹ the illustration of baptism in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) to state that all our previous sins are forgiven. But as we cross the wilderness of this life, however, we encounter other enemies that we must deal with.

“The passage of the Red Sea was a figure of Holy Baptism, in which the enemies behind died, but others were found in front in the wilderness. To all who are bathed in Holy Baptism all their past sins are remitted, since their sins die behind them even as did the Egyptian enemies. But in the wilderness we find other enemies, since, while we live in this life, before reaching the country of promise, many temptations harass us, and hasten to bar our way as we are wending our way to the land of the living. Whoever says, then, that sins are not entirely put away in baptism, let him say that the Egyptians did not really die in the Red Sea. But, if he acknowledges that the Egyptians really died, he needs to acknowledge that sins die entirely in baptism, since surely the truth avails more in our absolution than the shadow of the truth. In the Gospel the Lord says, He that is washed needs not to wash, but is completely clean (John 13:10). If, therefore, sins are not entirely put away in baptism, how is he that is washed completely

⁶⁹ Gregory the Great, Epistles, XI, 45.

clean? He cannot be said to be completely clean, if he has any sin remaining. But no one can resist the voice of the Truth; He that is washed is completely clean. Nothing, then, of the contagion of sin remains to him whom He Himself who redeemed him declares to be completely clean”.

John Chrysostom carried⁷⁰ this spiritual application one step further with regard to a desire to return to the Egypt of sin. It is important to remove all traces of leaven from our lives in order that we may be completely free from sin.

“Not only does he remind them of the ‘unleavened bread’ (1 Corinthians 5:7-8 ff), but also to point out the affinity of the Old Testament with the New; and to point out also that it was impossible, after the ‘unleavened bread’, again to enter Egypt. But if anyone chose to return, he would suffer the same things as they did. Those things were a shadow of these”.

“Let us explain why the leaven is cast out of all their borders. What then is the hidden meaning? The believer must be freed from all iniquity. Just as among them he perishes with whomever is found old leaven, so also with us wherever is found iniquity. Since the punishment being so great in that which is a shadow, in our case it cannot help but be much greater. If they so carefully clear their houses of leaven, and pry into mouse-holes; much more ought we to search through the soul so as to cast out every unclean thought”.

Tertullian noted⁷¹ that baptism is a sealing of a faith that has already begun. For Israel, faith began with the Exodus and continued with the leading of God in the pillar and the cloud. Otherwise, baptism is of necessity, not free will; we cease sinning because we want to, not because we are forced to.

“That baptismal washing is a sealing of faith, which faith is begun and is commended by the faith of repentance. We are not washed in order that we may cease sinning, but because we have ceased, since in heart we have been bathed already. The first baptism of a learner is this: a perfect fear; thenceforward, in so far as you have understanding of the Lord, faith is sound, the conscience having once for all embraced repentance. Otherwise, if it is only after the baptismal waters that we cease sinning, it is of necessity, not of free-will, that we put on innocence. Who, then, is preeminent in goodness? He who is not allowed to be evil, or he whom it displeases to be evil? He who is asked or he whose pleasure it is to be free from crime?”

g) Commentary from the Church Fathers on Holy Saturday

Athanasius of Alexandria noted⁷² the perspective present on Holy Saturday: while Christ’s body was lying in the tomb, He went to preach to the spirits in Hades. His body, Joseph wrapped in a linen cloth, and laid it away at Golgotha. Thus it is shown to all that the Body was not the Word, but the Body of the Word. It was this that Thomas handled when it had risen from the dead. It was in this Body that Thomas saw the print of the nails, which the Word Himself had undergone; though He was able to prevent it, He did not do so. On the contrary, the

⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XV, 7-8.

⁷¹ Tertullian, On Repentance, III, I, 6.

⁷² Athanasius of Alexandria, “Letter to Epictetus”, LIX, 5, Personal Letters.

incorporeal Word made His own the properties of the Body, as being His own Body. The Word was not changed into flesh and bones, as some heretics claimed. If it was, there would be no need for a tomb, for the Body would have descended into Hades leaving the tomb empty.

Ignatius of Antioch stated⁷³ that Jesus' passion was exhibited to creatures in heaven, creatures on earth and creatures under the earth. We often overlook the last of these.

“Jesus was truly begotten of God and of the Virgin, but not after the same manner. For God and man are not the same. He truly assumed a body; for ‘the Word was made flesh’ (John 1:14) and lived upon earth without sin. He says, ‘Which of you convicts me of sin?’ (John 8:46) He really both ate and drank. He was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate. He really, and not in appearance only⁷⁴, was crucified, and died, in the sight of beings in heaven, beings on earth, and beings under the earth. By those in heaven I mean such as are possessed of incorporeal natures; by those on earth, I mean the Jews and Romans, and such persons as were present at that time when the Lord was crucified. By those under the earth, I mean the multitude that arose along with the Lord. The Scripture says, ‘Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised’ (Matthew 27:52), their graves being opened. He descended into Hades alone, but He arose accompanied by a multitude; He tore apart that means of separation which had existed from the beginning of the world, and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Ephesians 2:14).

Rufinus of Aquileia summarized⁷⁵ what the Scripture says of Christ's descent into hell. His human soul was in Hades while His human body was in the grave. He returned from Hades as a victor drawing all people to Himself. He was free among the dead because He could not be detained by death.

“That He descended into hell is also evidently foretold in the Psalms, where it is said, ‘You have brought Me down to the dust of death’ (Psalm 22:15 LXX). And again, ‘What profit is there in My blood, when I go down to the pit?’ (Psalm 30:9) And again, ‘I am stuck fast in deep mire, and there is no standing’ (Psalm 69:2 LXX). Moreover, John the Baptist said, ‘Are You the Coming One (into hell, without doubt), or do we look for another?’ (Luke 7:20) Peter also said that ‘Christ being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient in the days of Noah’ (1 Peter 3:18-20). Moreover, the Lord says by the Prophet, as though speaking of the future, ‘You will not leave my soul in hell, neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption’ (Psalm 16:10 LXX). Again, in prophetic language, he speaks of the descent into hell as actually fulfilled, ‘O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Hades. You have delivered me from among them that go down to the pit’ (Psalm 30:3 LXX).

“We speak of the nether world of the dead and the heavenly realm of the angels, because we are bounded by the limits of the body prescribed to us. But to God, Who is present everywhere and absent nowhere, what is the nether world

⁷³ Ignatius of Antioch, To the Trallians, Chapter 9.

⁷⁴ The Arch Heretic Simon Magus was the first to proclaim that Jesus only appeared to be crucified, but was not really. Some of Simon's followers also proclaimed this false idea. By the end of the 1st Century, when Ignatius wrote his letters, this was a big issue.

⁷⁵ Rufinus of Aquileia, Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, 28-30.

and what is the heavenly realm? The flesh which had been deposited in the sepulcher, is raised, that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption' (Psalm 16:10 LXX). He returned a victor from the dead, leading with Him the spoils of hell. He led forth those who were held in captivity by death, as He Himself had foretold, when He said, 'When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself' (John 12:32). To this the Gospel bears witness, when it says, 'The graves were opened, and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the Holy City and appeared to many'" (Matthew 27:52-53).

"It is said, 'I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord will help me' (Psalm 3:5 LXX). Again, 'Because of the misery of the poor, and because of the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, said the Lord' (Psalm 12:5 LXX). And in another place, 'You have turned and made me alive, and brought me again out of the depths of the earth' (Psalm 71:20 LXX). He was spoken of, 'I have been reckoned with them that go down to the pit; I became as a man without help; free among the dead' (Psalm 88:4-5 LXX). It is not said 'a man', but 'as a man'. In that He descended into hell, He was 'as a man'; but He was 'free among the dead', because He could not be detained by death. Therefore in the one nature the power of human weakness, in the other the power of divine majesty is exhibited. Hosea also speaks most clearly of the third day, 'After two days He will heal us; on the third day we shall arise, and live before Him' (Hosea 6:2 LXX). This he says in the person of those who, rising with Him on the third day, are recalled from death to life. They are the same persons who say, 'On the third day we shall live before Him, and shall know Him'. But Isaiah says plainly, 'Who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep'" (Hebrews 13:20, Isaiah 63:11).

Rufinus also stated⁷⁶ that Christ's descent into hell brought three kingdoms at once under His subjection: things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth (Philippians 2:10). He achieved this victory over the angelic world-rulers whom He had established at the Creation.

When God made the world in the beginning, He set over it certain powers of celestial virtues by which the race of mortal men might be governed and directed. Moses signifies this, 'When the Most High divided the nations, He appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God' (Deuteronomy 32:8 LXX). But some of these, as he who is called the Prince of this world, did not exercise the power, which God had committed to them according to the laws by which they had received it. Nor did they teach mankind to obey God's commandments, but taught them rather to follow their own perverse guidance. Thus we were brought under the bonds of sin, because, as the Prophet said, 'We were sold under our sins' (Romans 7:14). Every man, when he yields to lust, is receiving the wages for his own soul (Matthew 16:26). Those wicked rulers held every man under that bond; when Christ came, He tore them down and stripped them of their power. Paul signifies this under a great mystery when he says of Him, 'He destroyed the hand-writing which was against us, nailing it to His cross, and led away principalities and powers, triumphing over them in Himself' (Colossians 2:14-15). Those rulers, whom God had set over

⁷⁶ Rufinus of Aquileia, A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, 15.

mankind, had become tyrannical, attacked the men who had been committed to their charge and routed them utterly in the conflicts of sin. Ezekiel mystically intimates this when he says, 'In that day angels shall come hastening to exterminate Ethiopia, and there shall be perturbations among them in the day of Egypt; for behold He comes' (Ezekiel 30:9 LXX). Having stripped them of their power, Christ is said to have triumphed, and to have delivered to men the power which was taken from them. Also He said to His disciples, 'Behold I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the might of the enemy' (Luke 10:19). The Cross of Christ brought those, who had wrongfully abused the authority which they had received, into subjection to those who had before been in subjection to them. But this teaches mankind first of all to resist sin even to death, and to be willing to die for the sake of the Faith.

Clement of Alexandria showed⁷⁷ that the Gospel was preached to both Jews and Gentiles in Hades. Christ did this when He descended into hell; the Prophets foretold this, and the Apostles continued the preaching after their deaths. In this way everyone, even those who had not heard about Christ in their lifetime, would have a chance to come to repentance, now that they are no longer darkened by the passions of their bodies. This is an additional dimension of the mercy of God; people can either repent or confess that their punishment is just. If they have done evil in ignorance, without clearly knowing God, they have an opportunity to repent.

"The Lord preached the Gospel to those in Hades. The Scripture says, 'Hades says to Destruction'⁷⁸, We have not seen His form, but we have heard His voice' (Job 28:22). Plainly it is not the place, which heard the voice, but those who have been put in Hades, and have abandoned themselves to destruction, as persons who have thrown themselves voluntarily from a ship into the sea. They are those that hear the Divine power and voice. Who in his senses can suppose the souls of the righteous and those of sinners in the same condemnation, charging Providence with injustice?"

"The Scriptures show that the Lord preached the Gospel to those that perished in the flood, or rather had been imprisoned, who formerly were disobedient in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:19-20). It has been shown⁷⁹ that the Apostles, following the Lord, preached the Gospel to those in Hades. It was requisite that as here, so also there, the best of the disciples should be imitators of the Master; so that He should bring to repentance those belonging to the Hebrews, and they the Gentiles. That is, those who had lived in righteousness according to the Law, who had ended life not perfectly, but sinfully, should have an opportunity to repent. For it was suitable to the divine administration, that those possessed of greater worth in righteousness, and whose life had been pre-eminent, on repenting of their transgressions, though found in another place, yet being confessedly of the number of the people of God, should be saved, each one according to his individual knowledge."

"Christ also exerts His might because it is His work to save; which He did by drawing to salvation those who became willing, by the preaching of the Gospel, to believe on Him, wherever they were. If the Lord descended to Hades

⁷⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, VI, 6.

⁷⁸ The Hebrew text reads, "'The Place of Ruin and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears'". The LXX text reads similarly. Clement's text is slightly different from those today.

⁷⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, II, 9.

for no other end but to preach the Gospel, it was either to preach the Gospel to all or to the Hebrews only. If to all, then all who believe shall be saved, although they may be of the Gentiles, on making their profession there. God's punishments are saving and disciplinary, leading to conversion, and choosing rather the repentance than the death of a sinner (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11). Souls, darkened by passions, when released from their bodies, are able to perceive more clearly, because of their being no longer obstructed by the flesh. If, then, Christ preached only to the Jews, who lacked knowledge and faith, it is plain that, since God is no respecter of persons, the Apostles also preached the Gospel to those of the heathen who were ready for conversion. It is well said⁸⁰ by the Shepherd, 'They went down with them therefore into the water, and again ascended. These descended alive, and again ascended alive. But those who had fallen asleep, descended dead, but ascended alive'. Further the Gospel says, 'that many bodies of those that slept arose' (Matthew 27:52), plainly as having been translated to a better state. A universal movement and translation took place through the economy of Christ" (John 5:25).

"Did not the same dispensation occur in Hades, so that even there, all the souls, on hearing the proclamation, might either exhibit repentance, or confess that their punishment was just, because they didn't believe? There were some, who had departed before the Advent of the Lord, and did not have the Gospel preached to them, and had no ground for believing or not, to obtain either salvation or punishment. For it is not right that these should be condemned without trial, and that those alone who lived after the Advent should have the advantage of Divine righteousness. To all rational souls it was said from above, 'Whatever one of you has done in ignorance, without clearly knowing God, if, on becoming conscious, he repent, all his sins will be forgiven him' (Acts 3:17, 19; 17:30). 'For, behold', Moses said, 'I have set before your face death and life, that you may choose life' (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19). God says that He set, not that He made both, in order to give the comparison of choice. In another place He says, 'If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken'" (Isaiah 1:19-20).

"If, then, He preached the Gospel to those in the flesh that they might not be condemned unjustly, how is it conceivable that He did not for the same cause preach the Gospel to those who had departed this life before His Advent? 'For the righteous Lord loves righteousness: His face beholds the upright' (Psalm 11:7 LXX). 'But he who loves unrighteousness hates his own soul'" (Psalm 11:6 LXX).

"If, then, in the deluge all sinful flesh perished, punishment having been inflicted on them for correction, we must first believe that the will of God, which is disciplinary and beneficent, saves those who turn to Him. Then, too, the more subtle substance, the soul, could never receive any injury from the physical element of water, since it is incorporeal."

⁸⁰ Hermas (of the Seventy), The Shepherd, III, 16, in Roberts & Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

Athanasius of Alexandria added⁸¹ that it was traditional to proclaim a feast when an enemy was slain; in our case, it is the devil. We couldn't do this in Egypt or in Babylon; we can do this in the Church. We should not approach the Lord's Table to eat of the Word of the Father – our Passover – with filthy clothing. We should clothe our minds with pure garments, such as a love of virtue.

“Blessed Moses ordained the great feast of the Passover, and our celebration of it, because Pharaoh was killed, and the people were delivered from bondage. In those times, when those who tyrannized the people had been slain, temporal feasts and holidays were observed in Judea (Esther 9:20-28, Judith 9:15). Now that the devil is slain, that tyrant against the whole world, we do not approach a temporal feast, but an eternal and heavenly feast. Not in shadows do we celebrate it, but we come to it in truth. They were filled with the flesh of a dumb lamb and accomplished the feast by anointing their door-posts with the blood, imploring aid against the destroyer. But we eat the Word of the Father and have the lintels of our hearts sealed with the blood of the New Testament (Matthew 26:28); we acknowledge the grace given us from our Deliverer. He said, ‘Behold, I have given you to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy’ (Luke 10:19). For no more does death reign; but instead of death, life, since our Lord said, ‘I am the life’ (John 14:6). Everything is filled with joy and gladness; as it is written, ‘The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice’ (Psalm 97:1). When death reigned, ‘sitting down by the rivers of Babylon, we wept’ (Psalm 137:1) and mourned, because we felt the bitterness of captivity; but now that death and the kingdom of the devil is abolished, everything is filled with joy and gladness. God is no longer known only in Judea, but in all the earth. ‘Their voice has gone forth, and the knowledge of Him has filled all the earth’ (Psalm 76:1, 19:4). What follows is obvious; we should approach such a Feast, not with filthy clothing, but having clothed our minds with pure garments. We need to put on our Lord Jesus, that we may be able to celebrate the Feast with Him. Now we are clothed with Him when we love virtue and are enemies to wickedness; when we exercise ourselves in temperance and mortify lasciviousness; when we love righteousness before iniquity; when we honor sufficiency and have strength of mind; when we do not forget the poor but open our doors to all men; when we assist humble-mindedness but hate pride”.

Athanasius continued⁸² to say that the Passover is an abstinence from evil. We fast by meditating on death that we may be able to live.

“The Passover is abstinence from evil for exercise of virtue, and a departure from death to life. This may be learned even from the ancient type. They worked hard to pass from Egypt to Jerusalem, but now we depart from death to life; they passed from Pharaoh to Moses, but now we rise from the devil to Christ. Just as the type of deliverance bore witness every year, so now we commemorate our salvation. We fast meditating on death that we may be able to live. We watch, not as mourners, but as they that wait for the Lord, when He shall have returned from the wedding, so that we may vie with each other in the triumph, hastening to announce the sign of victory over death”.

⁸¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, IV, 2-3

⁸² Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, V, 4.

h) Summary of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

In one word, then, the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures separation: separation from an old life of a bondage to sin and various wickedness, and the beginning of a life of real righteousness, having been purified from former sins (see 2 Peter 1:9).

Numbers mean something, too. The number seven is generally recognized as representing perfection or completion. Eating unleavened bread for seven days would then represent a *complete* separation from the old life of bondage and its power. This separation is illustrated very dramatically in the inundation of the armies of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. As mentioned earlier, baptism in water on what was the 2nd Sabbath of this feast makes a fitting conclusion to this “feast of separation” in that it adds a harmonic note of completion to the seven days of sincerity and truth (Compare 1 Peter 3:21).

The new believer who has come through this “Feast of Separation” has a unique standing among mankind. Jesus Christ, Himself the firstborn of creation (Colossians 1:15) makes a distinction between “Israel and Egypt” (Exodus 11:7); that is between His own and those of the world (John 10:1-16). Those who are His own are said to have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12-15, 21:27), and are referred to collectively as “the general assembly and church of firstborn ones who have been enrolled in heaven” (Hebrews 12:23). As such, they represent the firstborn of mankind and are designated to be a kingdom of priests -- the so-called royal Priesthood -- to God the Father (Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6, 1 Peter 2:5, 9). All this was made possible by Christ’s death and resurrection, and is the fulfillment and spiritual application of the sanctification of the firstborn. It began in its present form in the lives of the disciples during the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, although it wasn’t very apparent then due to the external turmoil of that time. Such things are easier seen in retrospect, and thus are mentioned here.

Yet there is a mystery here that not all are granted the ability to see. Ambrose of Milan stated⁸³ that Moses veiled the mysteries that he saw partly to avoid conflict over them.

“All do not see the depths of the mysteries. They are hid from the Levites, lest they should see who ought not to see, and lest they who cannot serve should take it up. Moses saw the circumcision of the Spirit, but veiled it, so as to give circumcision only in an outward sign. He saw the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; he saw the sufferings of the Lord, but he veiled the unleavened bread of truth in the material unleavened bread. He veiled the sufferings of the Lord in the sacrifice of a lamb or a calf”.

Referring to the man in Corinth who had his father’s wife, Paul felt it necessary to “deliver the man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:5). Paul explained this by saying, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, since you are truly unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). Later the man repented and Paul urged the Corinthians to forgive him (2 Corinthians 2:5-8). There are two uses of the term “leaven” in this context. One refers to the

⁸³ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy I, 50, 260.

leaven as sin, and this needs to be purged out of our lives just as was done in every household prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The other use compares leaven in a lump of dough to the Kingdom of God in terms of the effect the Kingdom of God has on the world (Luke 13:20-21). In John Chrysostom's words⁸⁴, "Since this converts the large quantity of meal into its own quality, even so shall you convert the whole world".

Ambrose of Milan stated⁸⁵ that the judging and purging are done by the whole Church, just as the whole Church was found worthy.

"Paul judged that the sinner should at once be restored to the heavenly sacraments if he himself wished to be cleansed. He is purged as by certain things done by the whole people, washed in the tears of the multitude, redeemed from sin by the weeping of the multitude, and is purged in the inner man. Christ granted to His Church that one should be redeemed by means of all, as she herself was found worthy of the coming of the Lord Jesus, in order that through One all might be redeemed".

Ambrose continued to say⁸⁶ that Paul's meaning is slightly obscured by the two uses of the word 'leaven'. Paul's action in Corinth in delivering the man over to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:4-8) was an illustration of the first use of the term "leaven". But Paul's forgiveness of the man after his repentance was an illustration of the second meaning of 'leaven' (i.e. leaven in a lump of dough). Regarding the second meaning of 'leaven' associated with Paul's action in Corinth, Ambrose stated,

"This leaven of the Kingdom the Church hides in her meal, when she softened the hard letter of the Law by a spiritual interpretation. She has ground it in the mill of her explanations, bringing out from the husks of the letter the inner secrets of the mysteries. From this, she sets forth the belief in the Resurrection, wherein the mercy of God is proclaimed, and wherein it is believed that the life of those who are dead is restored. This comparison seems to be fitly brought forward in this place, since the kingdom of heaven is redemption from sin, and therefore we all, both bad and good, are mingled with the meal of the Church that we all may be a new lump. But that no one may be afraid that a mixture of evil leaven might injure the lump, Paul said, 'That you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened' (1 Corinthians 5:7). That is to say, this mixture will change you in the pure integrity of your innocence. If we thus have compassion, we are not stained with the sins of others, but we gain the restoration of another to the increase of our own grace, so that our integrity remains as it was. Therefore he adds, 'For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us'. That is, the Passion of the Lord profited all, and gave redemption to sinners who repented of the sins they had committed".

As a final word of spiritual application, one can sense in the words of Exodus 11 and 12 an atmosphere of things happening quickly, on very short notice, with little time to prepare (see Exodus 12:39; compare Deuteronomy 16:3). So it is when one comes to know the Lord. A life with God is not something that one plans; it is a moment by moment walk with the Lord. We do not just know the Lord as a name in a book; we listen to His direction as a voice in our heart.

⁸⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XLVI, 2.

⁸⁵ Ambrose of Milan, Concerning Repentance I, 15, 80.

⁸⁶ Ambrose of Milan, Concerning Repentance I, 15, 81-83

And just as the whole nation of Israel just couldn't help but break out in song after its baptism in the Red Sea (Exodus 15), so the new believer often just can't help but want to sing about his recent salvation and his newly-discovered Lord.

In the Orthodox calendar, the forty days of Lent are spent in fasting and in mourning our expulsion from Paradise. Athanasius stated⁸⁷ that Paradise was shut when Adam was expelled; but now Paradise has been opened to everyone by Christ, and we celebrate our return to Paradise at Pascha.

“Ours is the Passover; the calling is from above; and ‘our citizenship is in heaven’ (Philippians 3:20). As Paul says; ‘we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come’ (Hebrews 13:14); looking forward to this, we properly keep the feast. Heaven truly is high, and its distance from us is infinite; for ‘the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s’ (Psalm 115:16). But we are not, on that account, negligent or fearful, as though the way there were impossible. But rather we should be zealous. We do not move from the East, like those of old, find a plain in Shinar, and begin to build a tower; there is no need for us to bake bricks with fire, and to seek tar for mortar (Genesis 11:3). Their tongues were confused, and their work was destroyed. But for us the Lord has consecrated a way through His blood, and has made it easy. He has not only consoled us respecting the distance, but He has also come and opened the door for us which was once shut. It was shut from the time He cast Adam out from the delight of Paradise, and set the Cherubim and the flaming sword, that turned every direction, to guard the way back to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). This is now wide open. He that sits on the Cherubim, having appeared with greater grace and loving-kindness, led into Paradise with Himself the thief who confessed. Having entered heaven as our forerunner, He opened the gates to all. Paul also, ‘pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling’ (Philippians 3:14) by it was taken up to the third heaven, and having seen those things which are above, and then descended, he teaches us, announcing what is written to the Hebrews. ‘You have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven’ (Hebrews 12:18-23). Who would not wish to enjoy the high companionship with these! Who would not desire to be enrolled with these, that he may hear with them (Matthew 25:34), ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world’.

This is the glory of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! We are separated from this world by removing all the leaven of it from our souls and made ready to enter into the Kingdom of God with the new and glorious leaven of Life.

⁸⁷ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, XLIII.

THE DAY OF FIRST-FRUITS

The Day of First-Fruits represents the Day of Christ's Resurrection and the Orthodox Church celebrates this day today as Pascha (Easter). In the minds of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, there was an expectation of a bodily resurrection, but it remained a mystery regarding just how it would happen. For example, during the years that Israel was in Egypt, the Patriarch Job⁸⁸ said, "For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth. After my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27)

Although the Day of First-Fruits is mentioned after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it actually falls during the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the 16th of Nisan (Leviticus 23:11). Refer back to the diagrams in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

The Day of First-Fruits is the first of the harvest-related festivals, and as such, would have no place being celebrated until Israel entered the land and had a crop to celebrate with (see Leviticus 23:10, Deuteronomy 26:1-11). It is related to the Feast of Weeks in that the Feast of Weeks is specified as occurring exactly seven weeks after the Day of First-Fruits (Leviticus 23:15, 16).

A word on how people counted in Moses' day is necessary, where the same is true in Jesus' day. By our way of reckoning, the Feast of Weeks occurred 49 days after the Feast of First-Fruits. By their way of reckoning, it occurred 50 days after because they reckoned the Day of First-Fruits as being "the first day after" the Day of First-Fruits.

The same is true concerning the Lord's Passover (14 Nisan) and the Day of First-Fruits (16 Nisan). We would reckon First-Fruits as being the 2nd day after Passover; they would reckon it as being *the third day*. This will be shown to be very important later on.

1) The Day of First-Fruits – Commemorating Event

There are two significant events that the Lord commanded to take place on the Day of First-Fruits: waving the barley sheaf and recounting the history of Israel. With regard to the barley sheaf, much has already been said in the chapter on "The Hebrew Agricultural Year." The barley crop is the first crop to come up from (burial in) the ground, and is the first crop to ripen (see Exodus 9:31, 32). One sheaf only was cut and this one sheaf, the first grain of the imminent harvest, was then waved by the priest before the Lord (Leviticus 23:10-12). The wave sheaf was generally regarded (in symbolic terms to an agricultural people), as an embodiment of a declaration or promise that a harvest is imminent. And the sheaf represents people as shown by the Patriarch Joseph's dreams.

⁸⁸ Job was the great grandson of Esau and lived in the area of Mt. Seir Southeast of the Dead Sea. For details of his life, see: Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 6; Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Buena Vista, CO, 2006, May 6, p. 199; and Lives of the Saints at www.oca.org.

In the Patriarch Joseph's dream, Joseph's sheaf⁸⁹ stood upright while his brothers' sheaves bowed down to Joseph's sheaf (Genesis 37:7-8). This dream was a prophetic revelation about what would happen in Egypt, where Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain during the famine, and they bowed down to Joseph (Genesis 42:6-8), who was then second in command to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:25-44).

The one sheaf of the Day of First-Fruits represents Christ; the waving of this sheaf before the Lord at the Temple was an announcement that Christ would rise from the dead on that day. This announcement was performed every year for c. 1500 years in order that God's people might understand what was to happen in the future, just like Joseph's dream predicted what would happen.

On the same day, after the First-Fruit sheaf was brought to the priest at the Temple in a basket, the bearer of the basket of barley was to declare to the Lord, "I have entered the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us" (Deuteronomy 26:1-11). The priest would then take the basket and set it down beside the altar. Then the bearer of the basket would proceed to recount the history of the nation of Israel:

- A. Jacob, an Aramean, was ready to perish from famine.
- B. He went down to Egypt and sojourned there, being few in number.
- C. While there he became a great, mighty, and populous nation.
- D. But the Egyptians treated them harshly and put them in hard bondage.
- E. They cried out to the Lord and the Lord heard their voice and saw their affliction, toil and oppression.
- F. And the Lord brought them out of Egypt with:
 - 1. A mighty hand
 - 2. An outstretched arm
 - 3. Awe-inspiring terror
 - 4. Signs
 - 5. Wonders or miracles
- G. And He has brought them to this place, and given them this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Then the bearer of the basket would say "and now, behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O Lord, have given me."

It's would be very easy for someone living under the Old Covenant to just go through the motions of all this and have no understanding of all that it means. It's easy to think of this as just an agricultural festival similar to what happened in the neighboring pagan countries.

2) The Day of First-Fruits – Situation in Perspective in Israel

It is important to understand the perspective of the Israeli nation when the Day of First-Fruits was first celebrated, after the Conquest of Canaan, 42 years after the Exodus. It was not celebrated the year Israel entered Canaan in the 1st month of the 41st year when the 2nd commemoration of Passover took place (Passover was commemorated only once while in the

⁸⁹ The sheaf was a bundle of grain that was tied together.

wilderness. This was on the anniversary of the actual event before the rebellion at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran). It is here assumed that the Day of First-Fruits was celebrated the next year (in the first month of the 42nd year), even though nothing specific is mentioned in the Scripture (See Joshua 5:11, 12).

When the Day of First-Fruits was first celebrated, the events that happened during both the wandering years and at entrance into the Promised Land were fresh in the minds of the people. The manna, the food the Israelis ate during their 40 year stay in the Sinai wilderness, had ceased on the Day of First-Fruits the year before. In the year they entered the land on the 14th of Nisan, they observed the Passover. On the next day, the 15th of Nisan, a Sabbath, they ate some of the produce of the land. The next day, the manna stopped (Joshua 5:11-12).

Both the first year, and virtually every year since, the central theme preceding and following the day of the Feast of First-Fruits was the celebration of the fact that they had been delivered from Egypt. Also, being in the middle of the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were in the midst of eating unleavened bread for seven days. Further, the barley crop was ripe, but as yet not reaped.

3) The Day of First-Fruits – Prophetic Significance

Refer once again to the chart in Appendix A. On this day, shortly before dawn, Jesus Christ was resurrected from His burial in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb (Matthew 27:57-66, 28:1-10). According to Paul, Jesus was "the First-Fruits of those that are asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). As such, He is the barley sheaf that was waved before the Lord in celebration that the harvest is at hand. Later Paul makes it clear that the harvest of which Jesus Christ is the First-Fruits is all "those who are His at His coming" at the end of the age (1 Corinthians 15:23, 24). Since the Day of First-Fruits was not a Sabbath day, the actual harvesting of the barley could begin on this same day. And so the Lord's harvest began this day, also.

Jesus said that it was written in the Scriptures that the Christ was to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day (Luke 24:44-46, 1 Corinthians 15:4 see also Luke 24:26, 27; John 20:9). There are numerous references to Christ's suffering (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, etc.), but no references at all, apart from First-Fruits, to Christ rising precisely on the third day. Jesus used Jonah's three days in the belly of the sea monster as an illustration of His three-day burial. But to make this connection before Christ was incarnate took some keen insight. That the Day of First-Fruits was to be taken unmistakably as a resurrection prophecy can be seen by connecting the "history lesson" of Deuteronomy 26:1-11 to the First-Fruit sheaf offering. In the "history lesson", the predominant theme is the resurrection of the Israeli nation from the point of certain death by (1) a mighty hand, (2) an outstretched arm, (3) awe-inspiring terror, (4) signs, and (5) wonders or miracles. And in the First-Fruit sheaf one is celebrating the resurrection of the seed that was buried in the ground.

The Future Resurrection of the Dead

To understand the significance of the Day of First-Fruits, we must consider the Old Testament expectation relating to events after their death (e.g. Genesis 37:35, 42:38, Job 14:13, 19:25, Psalms 16:10, 49:15, 88:3, 89:48). Old Testament believers did not expect, as Paul did

later (Philippians 1:23), to be with the Lord immediately upon death. They simply expected to be in the grave, or Sheol, to await the coming of their Redeemer. They realized, however, that

1. Their Redeemer lived (Job 19:25) and
2. He would not abandon their soul to Sheol (Psalms 16:10).

Jesus referred to Lazarus as being in “Abraham’s bosom” (not heaven, or with the Lord), while the rich man, who had no compassion on Lazarus, was in “Hades” and in torment (Luke 16:22-26). From these and other passages, it seems that there were two parts to “the grave” or Sheol: one for the righteous (i.e. Abraham’s bosom), and one for the unrighteous, containing flames (Luke 16:24). Between the two was a great chasm so that no one can cross between the two (Luke 16:26).

This transition of believers from Sheol (Abraham’s bosom) to heaven occurred at the Resurrection. This is what Paul referred to as the Lord leading captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8, Psalm 68:18). This transfer was the beginning of the harvest of which the First-Fruit sheaf was a promise or declaration of imminence. At the end of the age comes the grand finale of the harvest (Revelation 14:14-20) where first all the “tares” are gathered (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) and bundled and prepared to be burned. More will be said about this end-of-the-age harvest in the chapters concerning the Feast of Trumpets.

As we saw in the section, “The Events of Holy Saturday,” Christ’s Descent into Hell is the theme for Holy Saturday and the fulfillment of the First Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He descended to rescue those who had been dwelling there in Abraham’s bosom, like Lazarus (Luke 16:20-26). Yet, when Christ returns in glory at the Second Coming, Paul stated that the dead in Christ would be raised first to meet Him as He comes.

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

This implies that “the dead in Christ”, who rise first, will still be on earth and not in heaven. If they are caught up together with those still alive, they must be in the graves, similar to Lazarus, awaiting the Second Coming. But then who is in heaven that comes with Christ at His return?

Irenaeus stated⁹⁰ that Christ observed the law of the dead, and spent three days in the lower parts of the earth. Just as no disciple is above his Master, so we will do the same, awaiting our resurrection.

“Christ dwelt for three days in the place of the dead, as the prophet says⁹¹ concerning Him. ‘And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly

⁹⁰ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V, xxxi, 1-2.

in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them'. And the Lord Himself says, 'As Jonah remained three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth' (Matthew 12:40). Paul says, 'But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?' (Ephesians 4:9). This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, 'And you have delivered my soul from the nethermost hell' (Psalm 86:13 LXX). When He rose again on the third day, He spoke to Mary, who was the first to see Him and to worship Him. 'Don't touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say to them, I ascend to My Father, and to your Father'" (John 20:17). "Christ observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and waited until the third day 'in the lower parts of the earth' (Ephesians 4:9). Afterwards He rose in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples (John 20:20, 27), He thus ascended to the Father. The Lord 'walked in the midst of the shadow of death' (Psalm 23:4 LXX), where the souls of the dead were kept; yet afterwards He arose in the body. And after the resurrection, He was taken up into heaven. It is clear that the souls of His disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event. Then they will receive their bodies, and rise in their entirety, that is bodily; just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God. 'For no disciple is above the Master, but everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master' (Luke 6:40). Our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight to heaven, but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown through Jonah, and rising again after three days was taken up to heaven. So we also should await the time of our resurrection, prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this privilege".

John Cassian stated⁹² that the souls of people who have died are still capable of reason and feelings such as hope, sorrow, joy and fear. They are in a state where they are already beginning to taste something of what is reserved for them at the Last Judgment.

"People are not idle after the separation from this body, and are capable of feeling. In the parable of the beggar Lazarus and Dives, the rich man clothed in purple, one obtained a position of bliss, in Abraham's bosom, the other was consumed with the dreadful heat of eternal fire (Luke 16:19-24). But understand the words spoken to the thief 'Today you shall be with Me in Paradise' (Luke 23:43). They clearly show that not only their former intelligence continues with the souls, but also in their changed condition they partake of some state, which corresponds to their actions and deserts? For the Lord would certainly never have promised him this, if He had known that his soul, after being separated from the flesh, would either have been deprived of perception or have been resolved into nothing. It was not his flesh but his soul which was to enter Paradise with Christ.

⁹¹ In Justin Martyr, Dialogue With Trypho, 72, Justin stated that the Jews of his day had intentionally deleted this from the Hebrew text of Jeremiah's writings. In Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, xx, 4, Irenaeus attributed the quote to Isaiah, and in Irenaeus, Against Heresies, IV, xxii, 1, he attributed it to Jeremiah. All we can say is that it is not in any of our texts today, either the Hebrew text, the LXX or the Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁹² John Cassian, First Conference of Abbot Moses, I, i, 14.

We must avoid, and shun with the utmost horror, that wicked punctuation of the heretics, who do not believe that Christ could be found in Paradise on the same day on which He descended into hell. They punctuate ‘Verily, I say unto you to-day’, and making a stop apply ‘you shall be with Me in Paradise’, in such a way that they imagine that this promise was not fulfilled at once after he departed from this life, but that it will be fulfilled after the resurrection. They do not understand what He declared to the Jews, who fancied that human difficulties and weakness of the flesh hampered him as it did them. ‘No man has ascended into heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven’ (John 3:13). By this He clearly shows that the souls of the departed are still endowed with reason, but that they even have such feelings as hope and sorrow, joy and fear. They already are beginning to taste beforehand something of what is reserved for them at the last judgment, and they are not resolved into nothing after their departure from this life. They live a more real life, and are still more earnest in waiting on the praises of God”.

4) The Day of First-Fruits – Spiritual Application

The spiritual application of the Day of First-Fruits has two aspects: one has to do with the harvest (of which Jesus Christ was the first) which concludes at the end of the age. The other has to do with our walk in this present age.

Referring to the harvest aspect, Paul states that if Jesus Christ is not raised, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and those who have fallen asleep (Old Testament believers included) have perished. They are still in Sheol (1 Corinthians 15:16-18). However, since Jesus Christ was in fact raised from the dead, and as a First-Fruit of those who are asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20); therefore, we also shall be raised up (2 Corinthians 4:14, Ephesians 2:7, Romans 6:8, 9). We shall also be present together with all believers when Jesus Christ returns to set up the throne of His father David and rule the earth with justice (Isaiah 9:6, 7), and with the strength of an iron rod (Revelation 12:5).

Referring to our walk in this present age, the Day of First-Fruits is related to baptism. Consider the words of Paul, “Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

This is the spiritual application of the “history lesson” (Deuteronomy 26:1-11). Just as Israel was raised from certain death to become a great, mighty nation and to live in a land flowing with milk and honey by means of (1) a mighty hand, (2) an outstretched arm, (3) awe-inspiring terror, (4) signs, and (5) wonders; so, too, the Kingdom of God today. That the Kingdom of God today consists of an uncountable multitude is well attested to (Revelation 7:9, Hebrews 12:1). That these believers belong to a Kingdom flowing with milk and honey (i.e., uncountable riches) is witnessed by Paul (Ephesians 1:18-23, Colossians 1:27, 2:2-3). And that our Lord works by means of (1) a mighty hand, (2) an outstretched arm, (3) awe-inspiring terrors, (4) signs, and (5) wonders is found by merely reading through the book of Acts.

What then is the connection to baptism? Baptism implies burial. Since the charges against us (our sins, guilt, etc.) have been nailed to the cross; and since by faith we have accepted

this, God's provision, we have identified ourselves into Christ's death. Baptism proclaims this by burying the new believer in water. But baptism does not end in the water. The new believer emerges from the water just as Christ emerged from the grave and just as the Israeli nation emerged from certain death.

But just a "resurrection experience" is not the point of baptism either; it is a means to an end. At the time of the Day of First fruits, Israel was in the midst of eating unleavened bread for seven days, and eating unleavened bread implies a new and different life-style⁹³ (1 Corinthians 5:8). Thus, Paul says, "so we too might walk in newness of life." It is this "walking in newness of life" that baptism is all about.

This "walking in newness of life" is not just following a bunch of rules and gutting it out. At the time that the Israeli army entered Canaan, the manna ceased on the Day of First-Fruits (Joshua 5:11-12). And the reason it ceased was because God had made provision for them to walk in a newness of life. They were now at a point where they could begin to draw from the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, the Kingdom of God. And so today with the new believer, once he has "appealed to God for a good conscience" (1 Peter 3:21) in baptism; the resources of the Kingdom of God are available to enable him, in fact, to walk in newness of life.

The Lord had said of the Levites, "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. The Levites shall be a ransom from them; therefore, they shall be Mine, because all the firstborn are Mine. On the day I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to cattle. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord" (Numbers 3:12-13 OSB LXX).

Ambrose of Milan stated⁹⁴ that the Levites were sanctified as First-Fruits of the nation of Israel instead of the firstborn.

"The duty of the Levites is no light one, for the Lord says of them: 'Behold I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of every first-born that opens the womb among the children of Israel. These shall be their ransom, and the Levites shall be Mine. For I sanctified to Myself all the first-born in the land of Egypt' (Numbers 3:12-13). We know that the Levites are not reckoned among the rest, but are preferred before all, for they are chosen out of all. They are sanctified like the First-Fruits and the firstlings which belong to the Lord, since the payment of vows and redemption for sin are offered by them".

Similar to the Levites, we have been made a kingdom of priests to God the Father and to Christ (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6, 20:6), as a result of Christ's Resurrection. This was the intent at the time of the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:5-6) and it has been realized by the fulfilling of the Law by Christ regarding the Day of First-Fruits.

Comments from the Church Fathers on First-Fruits

⁹³ Refer also to the Spiritual Application of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

⁹⁴ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy I, 50, 259.

Christ is the First-Fruits as our Great High Priest (Hebrews 8). As His fellow priests, we are part of the crop that followed. Ambrose stated⁹⁵ that the First-Fruits are of the same nature as the remaining fruit.

“Now the First-Fruits are undoubtedly of the same nature and kind as the remaining fruits, the first of which are offered to God as a petition for a richer increase. They are a holy thank-offering for all gifts, and as a kind of libation of that nature which has been restored”.

John Chrysostom noted⁹⁶ that the First-Fruits refer to both Christ and to the giving of the Holy Spirit, and more is yet to come.

“For the First-Fruits are so great that we are thereby freed from our sins, and attain righteousness and sanctification. And if those of that time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow (Acts 5:15), or garments (Acts 19:12), consider how great the whole must be. If the creation, devoid as it is of mind and reason, and though in ignorance of these things, yet groans, much more should we”.

Referring to the manner of the Resurrection, Paul wrote, “That which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own” (1 Corinthians 15:37-38). Referring to this, Chrysostom wrote⁹⁷ that if a different body rises than that which had fallen asleep, then the devil has not given back that which he took captive. **The same words apply to Christ’s Resurrection.** It is not one substance that is sown, and another that is raised, but the same substance improved. If this is not the case, then neither will Christ have resumed the same body when He became the First-Fruits of them that rise again.

“Paul’s discourse no longer regards the resurrection, but the manner of the resurrection, what is the kind of body which shall rise again; whether it will be of the same kind, or better and more glorious. He takes both from the same analogy, intimating that it will be much better. But the heretics, considering none of these things, dart in and say, ‘One body falls and another body rises again. How then is there a resurrection? The resurrection is of that which was fallen. But where is that wonderful and surprising trophy over death, if one body falls and another rise again? He will no longer appear to have given back that which he took captive. How can this analogy apply? It is not one substance that is sown, and another that is raised, but the same substance improved. If this is not the case, then neither will Christ have resumed the same body when He became the First-Fruits of them that rise again. According to the heretics He threw aside the former body, although it had not sinned, and took another”.

Chrysostom continued to say⁹⁸ that we live for Christ not just because God raised up our First-Fruits (i.e. Christ), but also because we are not our own.

“Paul exhorted the Corinthians to virtue from Christ’s love; he then led them on to this from what has been actually done for them; he added, ‘If any man is in Christ,’ he is ‘a new creature’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). ‘If any has believed in

⁹⁵ Ambrose of Milan, Decease of His Brother Saytrus II, 91.

⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XIV, v. 23.

⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XLI, 3.

⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XI, 4.

Him, he has come to another creation'; for he has been born again by the Spirit. For this cause, we ought to live for Him, not only because we are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19), not only because He died for us (1 Corinthians 5:15), not only because He raised up our First-Fruits (1 Corinthians 15:20-23), but because we have also come to another life. See how many just grounds he urges for a life of virtue".

With this a background, Chrysostom addressed⁹⁹ the attitude we should have. We should long for the redemption of our body and the things to come such that all our conversations revolve around the age to come.

"This is the language of a right-minded child: not to be riveted to things that are seen, neither to account things present some great matter; but to hasten to our Father and to long for the things to come. This springs out of a good conscience, and a soul set free from things that are on earth. Paul himself was longing after this every day; he said, that 'even we ourselves, who have the First-Fruits of the Spirit, groan, waiting for an adoption, the redemption of our body' (Romans 8:23). He who has this fondness can neither be puffed up by the good things of this life, nor embarrassed by its sorrows; but as though dwelling in the heavens, is freed from each sort of irregularity.

'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven' (Luke 11:2). Behold a most excellent train of thought! He asks us to long for the things to come, and hurry towards that destination; till that may be, even while we live here, to be diligent in showing the same conversation as those above. You must long, says He, for heaven, and the things in heaven. Even before heaven, He asked us make the earth a heaven and do and say all things, even while we are continuing in it, as having our conversation there; these too should be objects of our prayer to the Lord. There is nothing to hinder our reaching the perfection of the powers above, just because we inhabit the earth; it is possible even while living here, to do all, as though already placed on high".

John of Damascus spoke¹⁰⁰ of Christ as the First-Fruits of man's compound nature (i.e. the flesh animated with the intelligent and rational soul). Taking His flesh from the holy Virgin, He was animated with human reason and thought. But He did not change His divinity into human flesh; He did not change the essence of flesh into the nature of His divinity; and He did not make one compound nature out of His humanity and Divinity. His humanity and His Divinity are distinct.

"After the assent of the holy Virgin, the Holy Spirit descended on her, according to the word of the Lord which the angel spoke, purifying her, and granting her power to receive the divinity of the Word, and likewise power to bring forth. She overshadowed by the hypostatic Wisdom and Power of the Most High God, the Son of God, Who is of like essence with the Father as of Divine seed. From her holy and most pure blood He formed flesh animated with the spirit of reason and thought, the First-Fruits of our compound nature; not by procreation but by creation through the Holy Spirit. He did not develop His body by gradual additions but perfect it at once. The Divine Word was not made one

⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XIX, 7.

¹⁰⁰ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith III, 2.

with flesh that had an independent pre-existence. Taking up His abode in the womb of the holy Virgin, He unreservedly in His own subsistence took upon Himself through the pure blood of the eternal Virgin a body of flesh animated with the spirit of reason and thought. Thus He assumed to Himself the First-Fruits of man's compound nature, Himself the Word, having become subsistence in the flesh. He is at once human flesh, and at the same time flesh of God the Word, and likewise flesh animated, possessing both reason and thought. We speak not of man as having become God, but of God as having become Man. For being by nature perfect God, He naturally became likewise perfect Man. He did not change His nature or make the dispensation an empty show, but became, without confusion, change or division, one in subsistence with the flesh, which was conceived of the holy Virgin, and animated with reason and thought. He did not change the nature of His divinity into the essence of flesh, nor the essence of flesh into the nature of His divinity. He did not make one compound nature out of His divine nature and the human nature He had assumed".

Gregory of Nyssa stated¹⁰¹ that Christ led the way for us, as the firstborn of all creation, such that as He did, so shall we do. As the First-Fruits of those that slept, He implanted in our nature the power of rising from the dead. By sharing in Baptism, He became the firstborn of many brethren. By assuming human nature as First-Fruits, He presented all humanity to God its Father.

"Not only was all creation made by Him. But when the original creation of man had decayed and vanished away (Gregory's paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 5:17), and another new creation was wrought in Christ, in this too, He took the lead. He is Himself the first-born of all that new creation of men which is effected by the Gospel. In order that this may be made clearer let us thus divide our argument. Paul on four occasions employs this term, calling Him, 'first-born of all creation' (Colossians 1:15), 'the first-born among many brethren' (Romans 8:29), and 'first-born from the dead' (Colossians 1:18). On another occasion he employs the term absolutely, without combining it with other words, 'But when again He brings the first-born into the world', He says, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him' (Hebrews 1:6). Whatever view we entertain concerning this title in the other combinations, the same we shall in consistency apply to the phrase 'first-born of all creation'. For since the title is one and the same it must be that the meaning conveyed is also one. In what sense then does Christ become 'the first-born among many brethren'? In what sense does He become 'the first-born from the dead'? This is plain! We are by birth flesh and blood, as the Scripture says, 'He Who for our sakes was born among us and was partaker of flesh and blood' (Gregory's paraphrase of Hebrews 2:14). In order to change us from corruption to incorruption by the birth from above, the birth by water and the Spirit, He led the way in this birth, drawing down the Holy Spirit on the water, by His own baptism. In all things He became the first-born of those who are spiritually born again, and gave the name of brethren to those who partook in a birth like His own by water and the Spirit."

"Since it was also fit that He should implant in our nature the power of rising again from the dead, He became the 'First-Fruits of them that slept' (1

¹⁰¹ Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius II, 8.

Corinthians 15:20) and the ‘first-born from the dead’. By His own act He loosed the pains of death, so that His new birth from the dead was made a way for us also, since the pains of death, wherein we were held, were loosed by the resurrection of the Lord. By having shared in the washing of regeneration, He became ‘the first-born among many brethren’. By having made Himself the First-Fruits of the resurrection, He obtained the name of the ‘first-born from the dead’. Having in all things the pre-eminence, after ‘all old things have passed away’ (2 Corinthians 5:17), He became the first-born of the new creation of men in Christ by the two-fold regeneration (i.e. water and the Spirit). By both Holy Baptism and that which is the consequence of the resurrection from the dead, He became for us in both alike the Prince of Life, the first-born and the First-Fruits.”

“This first-born, then, has also brethren, concerning whom He speaks to Mary, saying, ‘Go and tell My brethren, I go to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’ (John 20:17). In these words He sums up the whole aim of His dispensation as Man. ‘Men revolted from God, and ‘served those which by nature were not gods’ (Galatians 4:8), and though being the children of God became attached to an evil father falsely so called. For this cause, the mediator between God and man, having assumed the First-Fruits of all human nature, sent to His brethren the announcement of Himself, not in His divine character, but in that which He shares with us. He said, ‘I am departing in order to make by My own self that true Father, from whom you were separated, to be your Father, and by My own self to make that true God from whom you had revolted to be your God. For by that First-Fruits which I have assumed, I am in Myself presenting all humanity to its God and Father’ (Gregory’s paraphrase of John 14). Since, then, the First-Fruits made the true God to be its God, and the good Father to be its Father; the blessing is secured for human nature as a whole, and by means of the First-Fruits the true God and Father becomes Father and God of all men. Now ‘if the First-Fruits is holy, the lump also is holy’ (Romans 11:19). But where the First-Fruits is, and the First-Fruits is none other than Christ, there also are they that are Christ’s”.

Gregory was clear¹⁰² that Christ as the First fruits applies to His humanity, not to His Deity. For He is the First born of many brethren (Romans 8:29) in His humanity, but the Only begotten of the Father (John 1:14) in His Deity. In His Deity, He has no brethren; only in His humanity did He have brethren.

“Of this new creation therefore in Christ, which He Himself began, He was called the first-born, being the First fruits of all, both of those begotten into life, and of those quickened by resurrection of the dead. ‘That He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living’ (Romans 14:9), and might sanctify the whole lump by means of its First fruits in Himself. Now that the character of ‘first-born’ does not apply to the Son in respect of His pre temporal existence; the appellation of “Only-begotten” testifies of this. For he who is truly only-begotten has no brethren, for how could anyone be only-begotten if numbered among brethren?

¹⁰² Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius IV, 3.

The Lord's Table

John of Damascus continued¹⁰³ to say that the First-Fruits of our nature allowed a second birth to take place in us to deliver our nature from the sin of our first parent. We become by adoption what He is Himself by nature.

“It was fitting that not only the First-Fruits of our nature should partake in the higher good but every man who wished it. To do this, a second birth should take place and that the nourishment should be new and suitable to the birth and thus the measure of perfection be attained. Through His birth, that is, His incarnation, baptism, passion and resurrection, He delivered our nature from the sin of our first parent, death and corruption. He became the First-Fruits of the resurrection, and made Himself the way, image and pattern, in order that we, too, following in His footsteps, may become by adoption what He is Himself by nature, sons and heirs of God and joint heirs with Him. He gave us therefore a second birth in order that, just as we who are born of Adam are in his image and are the heirs of the curse and corruption, so also being born of Him we may be in His likeness and heirs of His incorruption, blessing and glory”.

That the First-Fruits are related to the Lord's Table is stated by Irenaeus¹⁰⁴. The bread and the cup are the First-Fruits of His own gifts.

“Giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the First-Fruits of His own created things, He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, ‘This is My body’. not as if He did not stand in need of them; He desired that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful. The cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood. He taught that the new oblation of the New Covenant, which the Church received from the Apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence, the First-Fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament”.

Irenaeus also stated¹⁰⁵ that both oblations and sacrifices are still offered by Christians as they were among the Hebrews; only the kind has changed, since it is now done by free men.

“We are bound to offer to God the First-Fruits of His creation, as Moses says, ‘You shall not appear in the presence of the Lord your God empty’ (Exodus 23:15, 34:20). So that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honor which flows from Him. We have not abandoned the offering of oblations in general; for there were both oblations there among the Jews, and there are oblations here among the Christians. Sacrifices were among the people of Israel; sacrifices are present, also, in the Church. But the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen

In the Church throughout the world today, the Day of First-Fruits is celebrated every year as Pascha (Easter) as the Resurrection of Christ. For most of the world, this celebration is the highlight of the Church Year and Churches everywhere are packed for this event – and rightly so. But the Day of First-Fruits is really just a beginning, not an end in itself. An important part

¹⁰³ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith IV, 13

¹⁰⁴ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies IV, 17, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies IV, 18, 1.

of the Day of First-Fruits is the Feast that comes exactly 7 weeks afterward: the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS

The Feast of Weeks is commonly referred to as Shevuoth (Hebrew meaning “weeks”) among Hebrews and as Pentecost (Greek meaning “fiftieth”) among Christians. It is a one-day event and is a Sabbath day (Leviticus 23:21) that is still celebrated around the world by all Christians as “Pentecost”.

The Feast of Weeks was proclaimed to occur exactly seven weeks after the Day of First-Fruits. This means it was to occur on the fiftieth day¹⁰⁶ after the Day of First-Fruits (Leviticus 23:15-16). During these seven weeks, the barley crop (one of the staples of the Hebrew diet) was harvested and the wheat had begun to ripen. Some of the barley grain was threshed during this period, but most of the threshing, storing, and milling into flour was done during the long summer months.

Being a harvest festival, the Feast of Weeks would have no place being celebrated as such in the desert. Although it is not recorded as having been celebrated as such during the first few years of Israel’s entry into Canaan, undoubtedly it was, in fact, observed due to the importance the Lord attaches to it. Three times a year, at the Feast of Passover¹⁰⁷, the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths, all the males of Israel were to appear before the Lord (Exodus 23:14-17, Deuteronomy 16:16) at the place where He would choose; that is, at the Temple in Jerusalem. This was the motivating command for the pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and was why there were so many foreigners in town (Acts 2:5-11) when Peter spoke in Acts 2 on the morning of the Feasts of Weeks (Acts 2:1, 15).

The Feast of Weeks is referred to by other names in the Scripture. On one occasion, it is referred to as the “feast of harvest of the First-Fruits of your labors (Exodus 23:16); on another, as “the First-Fruits of the wheat harvest” (Exodus 34:22); and on another as “the day of the First-Fruits” (Numbers 28:26). It is not, however, to be confused with the Day of First-Fruits that occurred seven weeks earlier. On that day, which was not a Sabbath, a barley sheaf was brought as a wave offering. On this day, which is a Sabbath, two loaves made from the wheat harvest just begun are brought as a wave offering. In one case, the barley sheaf is the First-Fruits of the barley crop; in the other, the two loaves are the First-Fruits of the wheat crop.

The exact day on which the Feast of Weeks occurred cannot be specified under the old Hebrew system since it was based on observational data, not astronomical data. For example, a lunar month is normally 30 days long. But under the Hebrew system, a new month would begin at the observation of the new moon. Therefore, depending on observational conditions, the month could vary by perhaps a day or so; and although the Feast of Weeks can be nominally calculated to fall on the 5th of Sivan, this can be expected to vary by a day or so under the Hebrew observational system.

¹⁰⁶ Hebrews counted the day of the Day of First-Fruits as being the first day after the Day of First-Fruits.

¹⁰⁷ Technically at the Feast of Unleavened Bread; the term “Passover” is used loosely meaning the season of Passover.

1) The Feast of Weeks: Commemorating Event

There are two sides to the events behind the celebration of the Feasts of Weeks: one side concerns historical events that occurred at this time in the year of the Exodus; the other concerns agricultural events taking place every year.

Before mentioning the historical event, a brief mention of the route of the Exodus is important. God, Himself, was leading the people at this point in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22, 14:19). Knowing the heart of the people, God decided not to lead them directly to Canaan; in fact, He decided not even to lead them over a reasonably neutral course in the general direction of Canaan. A direct route, “the way of the land of the Philistines” (Exodus 13:17) would be a route sticking pretty close to the Mediterranean coastline. A reasonably neutral course would be a route through the middle of the Wilderness of Shur, travelling due east roughly parallel to the coastline, but much farther inland. See Figure 4 for details. Opposition could be expected in traveling along the Mediterranean coastline since it was more populated there. But little opposition would be encountered in the middle of the Wilderness of Shur. By traveling this route, they could expect to make good time and not have to be concerned about a major skirmish until they got to the Wilderness of Zin¹⁰⁸ or beyond.

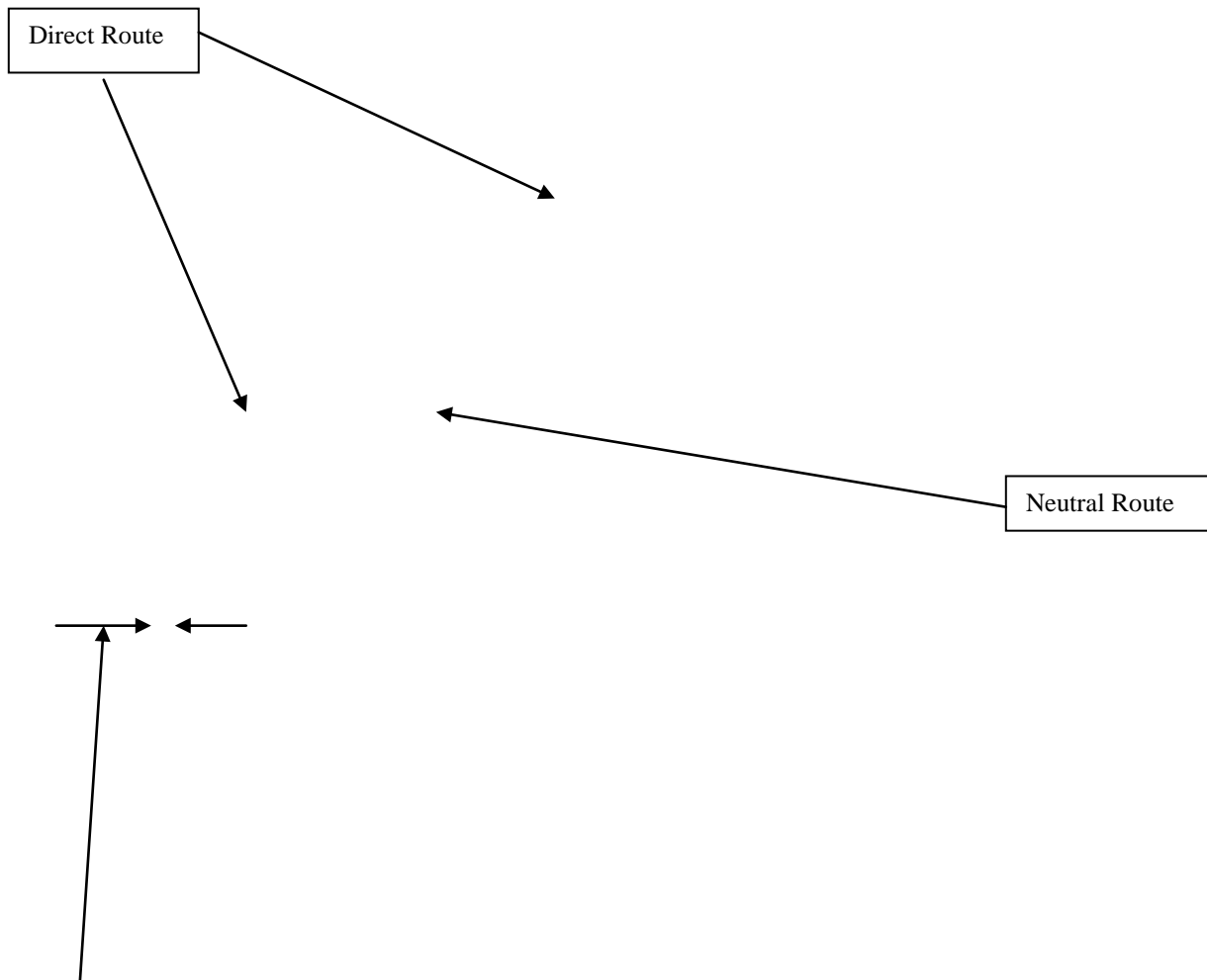
However, the Lord knew that in their hearts, the people were not even apt to trust Him for their food and drink (Exodus 15:24-27, 16:3-12, 17:1-7), never mind trust Him to lead them victoriously over tribes of giants that made them look like grasshoppers (Numbers 13:32-33). Had they believed, they would have had to do nothing but simply occupy the land, and let the Lord push the Canaanites back with swarms of hornets as He said He would (Exodus 23:27-31, Deuteronomy 7:17-24). God, however, knowing their unbelieving heart, let the Israeli nation in a direction approximately 90 degrees off from the way to the land of Canaan. Their route took them by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17), down toward the tip of the Sinai Peninsula such that they arrived at Mount Sinai on the first day of the third month, Sivan (Exodus 19:1).

At this point, it is worth noting that had they instead gone either by the way of the land of the Philistines (i.e., along the coast), or by the way of the Wilderness of Shur (i.e., through the middle of the desert), they would have been in the Wilderness of Zin, beyond Kadesh-Barnea by the Feast of Weeks. In other words, they would have been closer to Canaan than they were almost a year later (Numbers 10:11) when they sent in the twelve spies (Numbers 13). That they weren’t entering Canaan on the Feast of Weeks is again due simply to their lack of faith in their Lord’s leadership.

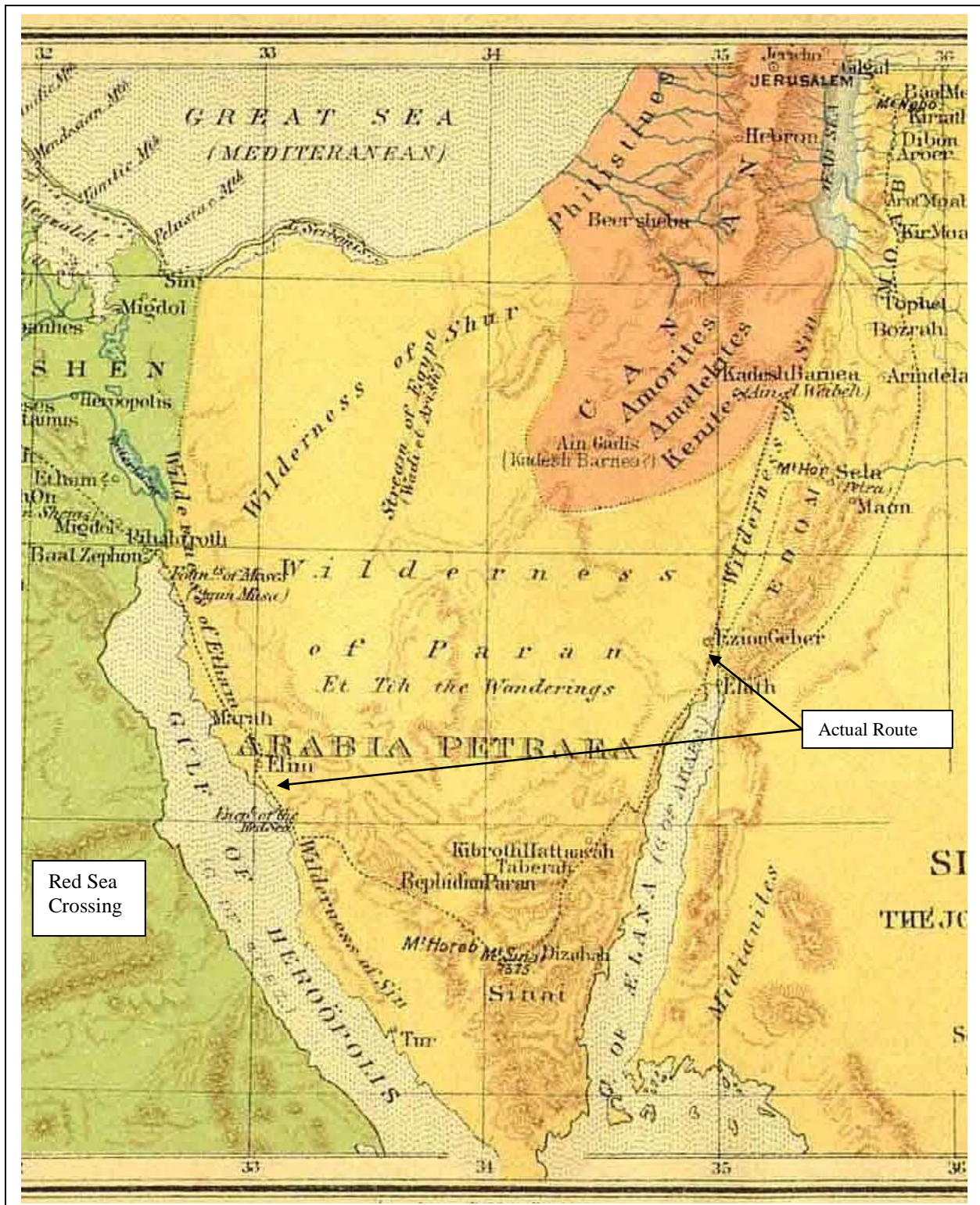
However, the Lord was merciful. He met them where their hearts were at and established a covenant with them, there at Mt. Sinai at the Feast of Weeks in the year of the Exodus. Appendix B summarizes and lists sequentially the events that happened at this time in detail.

¹⁰⁸ The Wilderness of Zin is sometimes spelled in English as the Wilderness of Sin.

Figure 4
Map of the 40-Year Wandering in the Wilderness¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁹ For more details, see <http://mappery.com/map-name/Sinai-Peninsula-Map-Journey-of-Israelites-from-Egypt-to-Promised-Land>.



The agricultural event that took place at this time every year is the completion of the wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22). For this celebration two loaves were baked from the new harvest, not at the Temple, but in somebody's household, and with leaven. This made the bread just plain, ordinary, everyday bread as opposed to the unleavened bread of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the showbread, called "consecrated bread" (1 Samuel 21:4-6), that was prepared by the Levites (1 Chronicles 9:31-32, Leviticus 24:5-9). These two loaves were offered as a wave offering to the Lord (Leviticus 23:20).

2) The Feast of Weeks: In the Lives of the Disciples

Something very dramatic happened on the Feast of Weeks in the year the Lord was crucified. Jesus had just ascended into heaven ten days earlier (Acts 1:3-11). Just before He did, however, He instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem "for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). "For", He said, "John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days" (Acts 1:5).

Furthermore, an event, which was attested to be a very similar and related experience (Acts 11:15-18), happened some years later among a group of Gentiles in Caesarea, and was witnessed by Peter and about six other Hebrew believers (Acts 10:44-48).

What was happening on that Feast of Weeks in Jerusalem was the beginning of a second (or a new) covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:8-13, 1 John 2:27) between God and His people. What happened in Caesarea was God emphasizing that this covenant had two parts (or loaves), Jew and Gentile¹¹⁰. Up until that time and continuing a number of years later, there was a reluctance, if not outright refusal, of the Hebrew believers to accept the Gentile believers unless the Gentile believers began following every statute of the First Covenant (see e.g. Acts 10:28, 11:6-8, 18, 15:4-11; Galatians 2:1-3, 11-14). According to Paul (Romans 2-6, Galatians 2:15-16, Hebrews 9:1-17) this was not necessary because of the differences in the covenants. In Table 2, a generalized point-by-point comparison of the two covenants is presented based mostly on Hebrews 8-10.

But this Feast of Weeks was not just the beginning of a New Covenant between God and His people. It was also a beginning of a harvest. The harvest is represented by the 120 believers who had known Jesus during His 3 ½ year ministry, and who were "together with one accord" on this Feast of Weeks (Acts 1:14-15, 2:1). Seed had been sown in their hearts (see the Parable of the Sower: Matthew 13:3, 8, 18, 23; Mark 4; Luke 8) and it had taken root, grown and was about to be taken and offered to God as a First-Fruit wave offering. Just as the First-Fruit wheat (that was made into loaves) was the staple of the Hebrew diet, so these people (among whom are the Twelve Apostles) are the foundation of the Church that is about to be ordained (Revelation 21:14, 1 John 1:1-5, Acts 2:42).

In contrast with the Day of First-Fruits seven weeks earlier, where a sheaf of individual grains was offered as a wave offering, here two loaves of grain that has been ground, sifted, and blended, is offered as the wave offering. So it was with the disciples. At their Lord's resurrection seven weeks earlier, they were, in a sense, a sheaf of individual grains, held together by seemingly little more than common experiences. They were not of one accord by any means

¹¹⁰ More will be mentioned about this under spiritual application.

as they had difficulty even believing one another's reports on having seen the Lord (cf. Matthew 28:17, Mark 16:8-14, Luke 24:9-13, 36-40, John 20:24-25). But things were different on that Feast of Weeks. Now they were very closely knit together. The sifting that Satan had been allowed to do (Luke 22:31) had taken its toll on their unbelief. And three thousand people were converted as a result of their "wave offering" to the Lord (Acts 2:1-41).

TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF COVENANTS

	FIRST COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
Given at Place	c. 1500 BC at Mt. Sinai	30 AD at Jerusalem
Requirement of Covenant	Obey Lord's voice, keep covenant	Obey Lord's voice
Intended Result of Covenant; people might come to Lord	a. a peculiar treasure b. a kingdom of priests c. a holy people	a. a peculiar treasure b. a kingdom of priests c. a holy people
Mediator of Covenant	Moses & Levitical High Priest	Jesus Christ
Place of Mediation	Tabernacle; later the Temple	Heaven
Time of Mediation	Daily	Once for all time
Terms of Covenant		
a. Written	a. in the Book of the Covenant	a. on minds and in hearts of people
b. Death involved	b. an animal	b. Jesus Christ
c. If Covenant not kept, person must:	c. repent and offer a specified sacrifice, depending on which part violated	c. Repent
Intended result realized	8. Never	8. At death of Jesus Christ
Cleansing effect	9. Outward; cleanse flesh only	9. Inward; cleanse conscience

Further, just as the two wave loaves of the Feast of Weeks are common, ordinary bread baked with leaven, so are the disciples. They are not kings or prophets or might warriors. Some are even relatively uneducated men (Acts 4:13). They are not without sin, where leaven represents sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); they are human beings like everyone else. The difference is the One in their midst, leading them and bonding them together.

Such is the life and immortality, which this flesh may afterwards receive, the Holy Spirit cleaving to it; and no one can either express or utter what things the Lord hath prepared for His elect.

John Chrysostom stated¹¹¹ that Pentecost was the beginning of putting the sickle to the grain harvest. The Word is the seed and the fields were already white for harvest.

“What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest and the ingathering was made! See now the reality, when the time was come to put in the sickle of the Word; for here, as the keen-edged sickle, the Spirit came down. Listen to the words of Christ! ‘Lift up your eyes’, He said, ‘and look on the fields, for they are already white for harvest’ (John 4:35). Again, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few’ (Matthew 9:38). But as the First-Fruits of this harvest, He himself took our nature, and bore it up on high. He Himself first put in the sickle. Therefore He calls the Word the Seed”.

Chrysostom continued¹¹² to say that the setting at Pentecost was different for the Apostles compared to Israel in the wilderness because of willing, submissive hearts. God came down in both cases, but the treasure obtained by the Apostles was greater.

“That Law was given after the destruction of the Egyptians, in the wilderness, on Mount Sinai, when smoke and fire were rising up out of the mountain, a trumpet sounding, thunder and lightning, and Moses entering the depth of the cloud (Exodus 19:20). But in the New Covenant this was not so. Everything took place at the beginning of the day, in a house, while all were sitting together, with great quietness, not in a wilderness or a mountain, not with smoke and darkness, cloud and tempest. To those who were more unreasonable and hard to guide, there was need of outward pomp, like a wilderness, a mountain, smoke, a trumpet sound, and the other like things. But they, who were of a higher character and submissive, required none of these. Even if in their case there was a sound, it was not for the sake of the Apostles, but for the Jews, who were present, on whose account the tongues of fire appeared. Even after this, some said, ‘they are filled with new wine’ (Acts 2:13); much more would they have said, had they seen none of these things. In the Old Testament, it was on Moses’ going up, that God came down; but here, when our nature has been carried up into Heaven, or rather to the royal throne, then the Spirit makes His descent. Had the Spirit been an inferior being, the results would not have been greater and more wonderful. These tablets are far better, and the achievements more illustrious. The Apostles didn’t come down from a mountain, like Moses did, carrying monuments of stone in their hands; they carried about the Spirit in their mind and poured forth a kind of treasure and fountain of doctrines, gifts and all things that are good. So they went everywhere, and became, through that grace, living books and laws. Thus they won over ‘the three thousand’ (Acts 2:41), thus ‘the five thousand’ (Acts 4:4), thus the nations of the world; God, by their tongue, spoke with all that approached them”.

Cyril of Jerusalem wrote¹¹³ that purification must accompany the giving of the Holy Spirit, because man must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:5). A virtuous man who doesn’t receive the seal by water shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Water has been a key part of the salvation of the people of God from the beginning.

¹¹¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, IV.

¹¹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, I, 3.

¹¹³ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, III, 4-6.

“Since man is of twofold nature, soul and body, the purification also is twofold, the one incorporeal for the incorporeal part, and the other bodily for the bodily part. The water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul; we do this that we may draw near to God, having our heart sprinkled by the Spirit, and our body washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22). When going down into the water, don’t think of the bare element, but look for salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit; without both you cannot possibly be made perfect. It is not I that say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the power in this matter. He said, ‘Except a man be born anew (and He adds the words) of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3). He that is baptized with water, but is not found worthy of the Spirit, does receive the grace in perfection; similarly if a man is virtuous in his deeds, but doesn’t receive the seal by water, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is a bold saying, but is not mine, for it is Jesus who has declared it; and here is the proof of the statement from Holy Scripture. Cornelius was a just man, who was honored with a vision of Angels, and had set up his prayers and alms-deeds as a good memorial before God in heaven. Peter came, and the Spirit was poured out upon them that believed, and they spoke with other tongues, and prophesied. After the grace of the Spirit the Scripture said that Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:48); in order that, the soul having been born again by faith, the body also might by the water partake of the grace. If anyone wishes to know why the grace is given by water and not by a different element, let him take up the Divine Scriptures and he shall learn. Water is a grand thing. Heaven is the dwelling-place of angels, but the heavens are from the waters (Genesis 1:6). The earth is the place of men, but the earth is from the waters; before the whole six days’ formation of the things that were made, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water (Genesis 1:2). The water was the beginning of the world, and Jordan is the beginning of the Gospel news; for Israel’s deliverance from Pharaoh was through the sea (Exodus 14:13-31), and for the world deliverance from sins is by the washing of water with the word of God (Ephesians 5:26). Where a covenant is made with anyone, there is water also. After the flood, a covenant was made with Noah (Genesis 9:8-17); a covenant for Israel was made from Mount Sinai, but with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop (Hebrews 9:19). Elijah was taken up, but not apart from water; for first he crossed the Jordan, then in a chariot he mounted heaven (2 Kings 2:8-12). The high-priest was first washed, then offered incense; Aaron was first washed, then was made high-priest (Leviticus 8:6ff); for how could one who had not yet been purified by water pray for the rest? As a symbol of Baptism there was a laver set apart within the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:18). Baptism is the end of the Old Testament, and beginning of the New. Its author was John the Baptist, who was the greatest among them that are born of women (Matthew 11:11). He was the end of the Prophets; for all the Prophets and the Law were until John (Matthew 11:13): but of the Gospel history he was the First-Fruit.

Cyril continued¹¹⁴ in describing the magnitude of what happened at Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit penetrated the disciples like fire penetrates iron. People were aware of the gift due to

¹¹⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, XVII, 14-17.

both the appearance of the fire and the sound of the wind. Whereas a fiery sword barred Paradise, a fiery tongue restored it. This was a vast gift, considering how long people spend in learning to speak a language. This was the opposite of what happened at Babel, where tongues were confused.

“Christ came down to clothe the Apostles with power and to baptize them; for the Lord says, you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence (Acts 1:5). This grace was not in part, but His power was in full perfection; for as he who plunges into the waters and is baptized is encompassed on all sides by the waters, so were they also baptized completely by the Holy Spirit. The water however flows around the outside only, but the Spirit also baptizes the soul within and that completely. Take an example from iron in a fire. Fire passing in through the mass of the iron makes the whole of it like fire, so that what was cold becomes burning and what was black is made bright. If fire which is a substance thus penetrates and works without hindrance in iron which is also a substance, why wonder that the Holy Spirit enters into the inmost recesses of the soul”?

“Lest men should be ignorant of the greatness of the mighty gift coming down to them, there sounded as it were a heavenly trumpet. Suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind (Acts 2:2), signifying the presence of Him who was to grant power to men to seize with violence the kingdom of God (Matthew 11:12). Both their eyes might see the fiery tongues, and their ears hear the sound. It filled the entire house where they were sitting; for the house became the vessel of the spiritual water; as the disciples sat within, the whole house was filled. Thus they were entirely baptized according to the promise, and invested soul and body with a divine garment of salvation. There appeared to them distributed tongues like fire, and it sat on each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They partook of fire, not of burning but of saving fire; of fire which consumes the thorns of sins, but gives luster to the soul. This is now coming upon you also to strip away and consume your sins, which are like thorns, and to brighten that precious possession of your souls, and to give you grace. He sat on them in the form of fiery tongues, that they might crown themselves with new and spiritual diadems by fiery tongues on their heads. A fiery sword barred of old the gates of Paradise; a fiery tongue, which brought salvation, restored the gift”.

“When they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4), the Galilean Peter or Andrew spoke Persian or Median. John and the rest of the Apostles spoke every tongue to those of Gentile extraction. What teacher can be found so great as to teach men all at once things that they have not learned? People spend many years learning by grammar and other arts to speak only Greek well. Yet all do not speak this equally well; the Rhetorician perhaps succeeds in speaking well, and the Grammarian sometimes not well, and the skillful Grammarian is ignorant of the subjects of philosophy. But the Holy Spirit taught them many languages at once, languages, which in all their life they never knew. This is vast wisdom; this is power divine. What a contrast to their long ignorance in time past! Their sudden, complete, varied and unaccustomed exercise of these languages”!

“The multitude of the hearers was confounded; it was a second confusion, in the place of that first evil one at Babylon (Genesis 11:7). In that confusion of tongues there was division of purpose, because their thought was at enmity with

God; but here minds were restored and united, because the object of interest was godly”.

Gregory the Theologian commented¹¹⁵ on Pentecost to say that the Hebrew people observe the Feast of Pentecost, but just bodily, not spiritually. The Gentiles also kept festival, but only to demons. The number seven represents perfection and completion in the Scriptures; Pentecost represents seven sevens. Gregory itemized a number of uses of the number seven throughout the Scriptures (See Appendix C). The Church keeps the Feast of Pentecost as the fulfillment of our hope, where the dispensations of the Body of Christ are ended, and what belongs to Christ’s Bodily Advent, and that of the Spirit is beginning.

“Let us reason a little about the Festival, that we may keep it spiritually. The Jew keeps festival as well as we, but only in the letter. While following the bodily Law, he has not attained the spiritual Law. The Greek too keeps festival, but only in the body, and in honor of his own gods and demons, some of whom are creators of passion by their own admission, and others were honored out of passion. We too keep festival, but we keep it as is pleasing to the Holy Spirit. It is pleasing to Him that we should keep it by discharging some duty, either action or speech. This then is our manner of keeping festival, to treasure up in our soul some of those things which are permanent. We avoid those which will forsake us and be destroyed, and which only tickle our senses for a little while. Therefore we must keep the feast spiritually”.

“The children of the Hebrews do honor to the number seven, according to the legislation of Moses. In this, one thing indeed is evident. God created matter in six days, and gave it form. Having arranged it in all kinds of shapes and mixtures, and having made this present visible world, on the seventh day, He rested from all His works, as is shown by the name of the Sabbath, which in Hebrew means Rest. But this honor which they pay to seven is not confined to days alone, but also extends to years. This is shown by the seventh year, the year of Release. The tradition consists not only of Sevens, but of Sevens of Sevens, in days and years. The seven sevens of days give birth to Pentecost, a day called holy among them; and those of years to which they call the Jubilee, which also has a release of land, a release of slaves, and a release of possessions bought. This nation consecrates to God, not only the First-Fruits of offspring, but also those of days and years. Thus the veneration paid to the number seven gave rise also to the veneration of Pentecost, as it comes seven multiplied by seven days after the Day of First-Fruits. As to the honor paid to seven there are many testimonies, but we will be content with a few out of the many”.

“Hebrews honor the Day of Pentecost, and we also honor it. Just as there are other rites of the Hebrews, which we observe that were typically observed by them. We are keeping the Feast of Pentecost and of the Coming of the Spirit, the appointed time of the Promise, and the fulfillment of our hope. How great is the Mystery! The dispensations of the Body of Christ are ended; or rather, what belongs to His Bodily Advent, and that of the Spirit is beginning”.

¹¹⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Oration On Pentecost, XLI, 1-5

Gregory also stated¹¹⁶ that the Holy Spirit accompanied Christ as His Equal in three different modes, not as energizing Him, but as revealing Him. The first mode revealed Him indistinctly, the second more expressly, the third more perfectly, since the Holy Spirit is not a rival God.

1. Before Christ was glorified by the Passion, the Holy Spirit revealed Him, but in a fashion veiled by His humanity.
2. After He was glorified by the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit revealed more about Him.
3. After His Ascension, or Restoration to Heaven, the Holy Spirit has given the greatest revelation about Him.

The Holy Spirit came in the form of tongues because of His close relation with the Word; the impact of speaking in tongues is as an accusation to unbelievers. The Apostles spoke in different languages; it was not as some have claimed that the Apostles spoke Hebrew and people heard the words in their own language. This would place the Gift with the hearers. At Babel, an evil intention was broken up; at Pentecost a good intention brought people into harmony.

“The first of these reveals Him -- the healing of the sick and casting out of evil spirits, which could not be apart from the Spirit. So does that breathing on them after the Resurrection, which was clearly a divine inspiration. So also the distribution of the fiery tongues! But the first revealed Him indistinctly, the second more expressly, this present one more perfectly, since He is no longer present only in energy, but substantially associating with us and dwelling in us. It was fitting that as the Son had lived with us in bodily form -- so the Spirit too should appear in bodily form. It was also fitting that after Christ had returned to His own place, He should have come down to us -- coming because He is the Lord; sent, because He is not a rival God. Such words reveal the Unanimity of the Godhead and also mark the separate Individuality”.

“The Spirit came in the form of Tongues because of His close relation to the Word. They were of Fire, because of His purifying, and because of His Substance. Our God is a consuming Fire (Hebrews 12:29), and a Fire burning up the ungodly (Deuteronomy 4:24). The tongues were distributed, because of the diversity of Gifts; and they sat to signify His Royalty and Rest among the Saints, and because the Cherubim are the Throne of God. This took place in an Upper Chamber, because those who should receive it were to ascend and be raised above the earth; for also certain upper chambers (Psalm 104:3) are covered with Divine Waters (Psalm 148:4), by which the praise of God is sung. Jesus Himself in an Upper Chamber gave the Communion of the Sacrament to those who were being initiated into the higher Mysteries, that we might be shown that God must come down to us, as He did of old to Moses. On the other hand we must go up to Him, so that there should come to pass a Communion of God with men. As long as either remains on its own footing, the One in His Glory the other in his lowliness, the Goodness of God cannot mingle with us and His loving kindness is incommunicable. There is a great gulf between, which cannot be crossed; this separates not only the Rich Man from Lazarus and Abraham’s Bosom which he longs for, but also the created and changing natures from that which is eternal and immutable”.

¹¹⁶ Gregory Nazianzen, Oration On Pentecost, XLI, 11-17

“They spoke with new tongues, not those of their native land; and the wonder was great, a language spoken by those who had not learned it. This sign is to those that don’t believe (1 Corinthians 14:22), and not to them that believe, that it may be an accusation of the unbelievers. As it is written, ‘With other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to Me says the Lord’ (Isaiah 28:11). At this point pause a little and raise a question: how you are to divide the words? The expression has an ambiguity, which is to be determined by the punctuation. Did each person hear in their own dialect? Was one sound uttered, but many heard; sounds being produced more clearly than the original sound? Or are we to put the stop after ‘they heard’, and then to add ‘them speaking in their own languages’ to what follows? If so, the Apostles would be speaking in foreign languages to the hearers. I prefer to put it this latter way. If the punctuation goes the other way, the miracle would be with the hearers rather than with the speakers. It was the Apostles who were reproached for drunkenness, because they by the Spirit wrought a miracle in the matter of the tongues”.

“The old Confusion of tongues was laudable, when men who were of one language in wickedness and impiety, were building the Tower (Genesis 11:7). By the confusion of their language the unity of their intention was broken up, and their undertaking destroyed. Much more worthy of praise is the miracle at Pentecost. Being poured from One Spirit upon many men, it brings them again into harmony. There is a diversity of Gifts, which stands in need of yet another Gift, to discern which gift is the best, where all are praiseworthy. The Festival of Pentecost is kept now with our bodies”.

John Cassian wrote¹¹⁷ of the purpose of the Feast Days leading up to Pentecost. These are holy days where we do not bow or kneel in mourning or penitence, but we celebrate them as one continuous Sunday. One might ask whether continuous feasting for seven weeks might produce the sin of gluttony. We have within us the Holy Spirit; He can help us discern whether we have the right limits of indulgence and abstinence.

“After the Ascension of Christ, which took place on the fortieth day after His Resurrection, the Apostles returned from the Mount of Olives, on which He had allowed them to see Him when He was returning to the Father. They entered Jerusalem and are said to have waited ten days for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the fiftieth day they received Him with joy. In this way the number of this festival was clearly made up, which was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. When seven weeks were fulfilled, the bread of the First-Fruits was ordered to be offered by the priests to the Lord on Pentecost. This was shown to be offered to the Lord by the preaching of the Apostles, where they addressed the people on that day. The true bread of the First-Fruits, which when produced from the instruction of a new doctrine, consecrated the First-Fruits of the Jews as a Christian people to the Lord, three thousand men being filled with the gifts of the food. Therefore these ten days are to be kept with equal solemnity and joy as the previous forty. The tradition about this festival, transmitted to us by the Apostles, should be kept with the same uniformity. Therefore on those days they do not bow their knees in prayer, because the bending of the knees is a sign of penitence

¹¹⁷ John Cassian, Conferences III, xxi, 20-22.

and mourning. Also during these days we observe in all things the same solemnities as on Sunday, on which day our predecessors taught that men ought not to fast nor to bow the knee, out of reverence for the Lord's Resurrection".

"Will this emphasis on feasting for seven weeks produce a sin of gluttony? Can the flesh, attracted by the luxuries of so long a festival, fail to produce something thorny from the incentives to sin? If we weigh everything that we do, by a reasonable judgment of the mind, and on the purity of our heart always consult not the opinions of other people but our own conscience, that interval for refreshment is sure not to interfere with our proper strictness. Our pure mind can consider the right limits of indulgence and abstinence, and can evaluate excess in either. With real discrimination we can discern whether the weight of the delicacies is a burden on our spirits, or whether too much austerity in abstaining weighs down the other side. Our Lord would have nothing done to His honor and glory without being tempered by judgment; for 'the honor of a king loves judgment' (Psalm 99:4). And therefore Solomon, the wisest of men, urges us not to let our judgment incline to either side, saying, 'Honor God with your righteous labors and offer to Him of the fruits of your righteousness' (Proverbs 3:9). We have residing in our conscience an uncorrupt and true judge, Who sometimes, when all are wrong, is the only person not deceived as to the state of our purity. We need to preserve a constant purpose in our circumspect heart. We should fear lest if the judgment of our discretion goes wrong, we may be fired with the desire for an ill-considered abstinence, or allured by the wish for an excessive relaxation, and so weigh the substance of our strength in the tongue of an unfair balance."

Pentecost is the Ordination and Revelation of the Church

If Pentecost is the Ordination of the Church, and not the beginning of the Church, some explanation is necessary regarding how we define the Church. Cyril of Jerusalem linked¹¹⁸ Old Testament believers with New Testament believers as being part of the same Church. Jesus is the head -- the first-fruits -- of the Church and He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow so it follows that the church existed in Old Testament times. It just wasn't ordained. "The Church is called Catholic then

- Because it extends over the entire world, from one end of the earth to the other.
- Because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge, concerning things visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly.
- Because it brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned.
- Because it universally treats and heals the whole class of sins, which are committed by soul or body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts".

The word for "Church" makes its first appearance in the Scriptures when Moses calls Israel together. Pentecost wasn't the church's birth but rather its ordination, when ordinary men -- not kings, prophets, warriors or the brother of Moses -- were made its priests! The Church today is part of that except for the Jews and their followers who plotted against Christ. Cyril continues:

¹¹⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XVIII, 23-28.

“It is rightly named *Ecclesia*¹¹⁹ because it assembles together all men (Hebrews 12:23); as the Lord says, ‘Make an assembly for the entire congregation at the door of the tabernacle of witness’ (Leviticus 8:3). The word assemble, is used for the first time in the Scriptures here, at the time when the Lord puts Aaron into the High Priesthood. The Lord also said to Moses, ‘Assemble¹²⁰ the people to Me, and let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me’ (Deuteronomy 4:10). Again he mentions the name of the Church, when he says concerning the Tablets, ‘On them were written all the words which the Lord spoke with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the Assembly’ (Deuteronomy 9:10), in the day in which you were called and gathered together by God. The Psalmist also says, ‘I will give thanks to You, O Lord, in the great Congregation; I will praise You among much people’ (Psalm 35:18, Hebrews 2:12)”.

“After the Jews, for the plots which they made against Christ, were cast away from His grace, He built out of the Gentiles a second Holy Church, the Church of us Christians. Concerning this he said to Peter, ‘And upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’ (Matthew 16:18). David prophesying of the first which was rejected, ‘I have hated the Congregation of evil doers’ (Psalm 26:5). But of the second he says, ‘Lord, I have loved the beauty of Your house’ (Psalm 26:87 LXX). Now that the one Church in Judea has been cast off, the Churches of Christ are increased over all the world; of them it is said, ‘Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the Congregation of Saints’ (Psalm 149:1). Malachi said to the Jews, ‘I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty’ (Malachi 1:10). Also, ‘From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, My name is glorified among the Gentiles’ (Psalm 5:11). Concerning this Holy Catholic Church Paul writes to Timothy, ‘That you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth’ (1 Timothy 3:15)”.

Gregory the Theologian stated¹²¹ that the Church is composed of many workers, both those before and after Christ. Some were disregarded; others manfully resisted evil influences to become a seed and root, to blossom and come to life again amid the streams of the Spirit.

Clement of Rome stated¹²² that the Church was created before the sun and moon, and is a spiritual being with Christ as head. The Church therefore did not begin at Pentecost, but was revealed and ordained at Pentecost.

“Brethren, if we do the will of God our Father, we shall be members of the first Church, the spiritual, that which was created before sun and moon. But if we shall not do the will of the Lord, we shall come under the Scripture which says,

¹¹⁹ The Greek word *Ecclesia* is used for the Congregation of Israel in the Greek Septuagint (Old Testament translation of the 3rd century BC), and is also used for the Church in the New Testament.

¹²⁰ One can look at this as the Ordination of the Old Testament Church which was under the Law, not the grace of the New Testament Church! The church has always been -- it was never “born” -- just as Jesus, its head, has always been. We were a part of it while in the garden but had to wait until that glorious day of Pentecost to be offered this privilege once again.

¹²¹ Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration on the Great Athanasius*, XXI, 24.

¹²² Clement of Rome, “Second Epistle to the Corinthians”, 14, in Allan Menzies, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 9, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

‘My house became a den of robbers’ (Jeremiah 7:11, Matthew 21:13). So, then, let us elect to belong to the Church of life, that we may be saved. I don’t think that you are ignorant that the living Church is the body of Christ, for the Scripture, says, ‘God created man male and female’ (Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:4, Ephesians 5:32); the male is Christ; the female is the Church. The Books (i.e. the Old Testament) and the Apostles teach that the Church is not of the present, but from the beginning. It was spiritual, as also was our Lord Jesus, and was revealed at the end of the days in order to save us (1 Peter 1:20). The Church being spiritual was revealed in the flesh of Christ, signifying to us that if any one of us shall preserve it in the flesh and not corrupt it, he shall receive it in the Holy Spirit. This flesh is the type of the spirit; no one, therefore, having corrupted the type, will receive afterwards the real thing. Therefore He says, brethren, ‘Preserve the flesh that you may become partakers of the spirit’. If we say that the flesh is the Church and the spirit is Christ, then it follows that he who shall offer outrage to the flesh is guilty of outrage on the Church. Such a one, therefore, will not partake of the spirit, which is Christ.”

3) The Feast of Weeks: Spiritual Application

The spiritual application of the Feast of Weeks concerns the Assembly of God’s people, commonly referred to as the Church or the Body of Christ. Because of the events during the year the Lord was crucified and concluding with the Feast of Weeks, those people belonging to this Assembly have a unique relationship with God and a special relationship with one another. Their relationship with God can be illustrated by referring to the covenant God made on that Feast of Weeks. Their relationship with one another can be seen by referring to the agricultural events of the Feast of Weeks.

The key aspect to the relationship of the believer to the Lord is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that was given on that Feast of Weeks and who was referred to by Jesus earlier as the “promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). The Holy Spirit had not been given like this before! (Cf. John 7:39).

According to Paul, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit is within the believer’s body, and thus people were reminded that their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). As such, the Holy Spirit has the effect of:

1. Teaching or instructing the believer in the things he should do (see for example 1 John 2:27, Jeremiah 32:34, Hebrews 8:11); and
2. Putting the Lord’s laws in his mind and writing them on his heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:10, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Romans 12:2).

It is thus the Holy Spirit that makes this New Covenant both possible and practical. The result, the Lord said, is “I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:10).

Mention should be made at this point of the provision for human frailty. The two loaves are baked with leaven just as there will be human sin in the church. But the Lord has already made atonement for that with His own blood at the cross (Hebrews 9:11-14). So long as the members of the body of Christ are willing to confess (1 John 1:9), acknowledge or own up to their sins (i.e., repent), the blood is available for the atonement of their failures. And the Lord

has given grace in abundance to cover even a great deal of human failure. The Lord is really patient with His people!

However, should members of the body of Christ become stiff-necked and refuse to repent, choosing rather to trust in their own capabilities instead of trusting their Lord to overcome their obstacles, they will end up much as the Israelis in the desert who also were too stiff-necked to trust their Lord. And instead of enjoying the blessings of the Kingdom of God (which is their inheritance), they will find themselves spending their lives and finally dying in the desert. All because of unbelief!

Thus the believer's relationship with God is one entailing a great deal of grace and patience on the part of God, for He says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sin and iniquity I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8, Jeremiah 31). And consequently, believers should always be encouraged (see Hebrews 11 & 12) to believe their Lord when He speaks to them; for, "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6, James 2:23).

Another meaning of the leaven in the two Pentecost loaves has to do with the Church's relationship to the world. In a parable, Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman hid in three measures¹²³ of meal till it was all leavened" (Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:21). The message of the parable of the leaven is the same as the message of the parable of the mustard seed that was given at the same time. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which is indeed the least of all the seeds. But when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matthew 13:31-32, Luke 13:18-19). While those in the Church may be only a small part of the population of the world, or a small part of their community, they can have a leavening effect on their community and on the world because of the Holy Spirit who is in them. The effect is that the birds of the air will be attracted to the Church. Thus leaven can be both good and bad depending on a person's choice. Either it is sin or it is grace.

Cyril of Alexandria interpreted¹²⁴ the reference to the birds of the air by saying that the birds represent human things that are small compared to the things of God.

"A grain of mustard seed is far inferior in size to the seeds of other plants, but shoots up to a great height, far beyond what is usual among herbs, so that it even becomes the lodging of many sparrows. So also the Kingdom of Heaven! Being as it were small and limited, it shot up afterwards into rapid growth, and became the refuge of those who fled to it for shelter, and who, because human things are small in comparison with God, may be compared to sparrows".

Regarding the leavening effect on the world, John Chrysostom stated¹²⁵ that believers may be few, but the Lord put unbelievers in their midst intentionally in order that they might become leavened.

"Listen to what Christ said to his disciples, 'The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a woman who took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal'

¹²³ Three measures of meal are about 8 quarts or 2 gallons.

¹²⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 96, Chapter 13, p. 394, Studion Publishers, 1983.

¹²⁵ John Chrysostom, On the Power of Demons III, 2.

(Matthew 13:33). The righteous have the power of leaven, in order that they may transfer the wicked to their own manner of conduct. But the righteous are few, for the leaven is small. But the smallness in no way injures the lump, but that little quantity converts the whole of the meal to itself by means of the power inherent in it. Similarly the power of the righteous has its force not in the magnitude of their number, but in the grace of the Spirit. There were twelve Apostles. Do you see how little the leaven is? The whole world was in unbelief. Do you see how great the lump is? But those twelve turned the whole world to themselves. The leaven and the lump had the same nature but not the same manner of conduct. On this account he left the wicked in the midst of the good, that since they are of the same nature as the righteous, they may also become of the same purpose”.

Chrysostom continued to say¹²⁶ that by clinging to their enemies, the Twelve were able to get the better of them; this is the action of leaven among them.

“‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened’ (Matthew 13:33). Just as this converts the large quantity of meal into its own quality, even so shall you convert the whole world. Notice Christ’s wisdom; He brings in natural things, implying that as the one cannot fail to take place, so neither the other. Don’t say, ‘What shall we be able to do, twelve men, throwing ourselves on so vast a multitude?’ This thing most of all makes your strength conspicuous, that you mix with the multitude and are not put to flight. The leaven raises the lump of dough when it mixed with the meal. When you cling to your enemies, and are made one with them, then shall you get the better of them. The leaven, though it is buried, is not destroyed, but little by little converts all into its own condition. Don’t be afraid because He said there would be much injurious dealing; even so you shall shine out, and get the better of all. By ‘three measures’ here, He meant many”.

To conclude the Feast of Weeks, a brief mention can be made of believers’ relationships with one another. There was a problem in the 1st Century of non-acceptance of Gentile believers by the Jewish believers (Acts 10:45, 11:2). This is something definitely not found in the Feast of Weeks. Not only are there two loaves, but all the grains have been blended very thoroughly to make the loaves. Further, just as each loaf is made of the same stuff, so “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28). The “same stuff” is namely being sons of Abraham and heirs according to promise (Galatians 3:7, 29). Gentiles, like a wild olive shoot (Romans 11:17-21) have been grafted into the main stem and now Jew and Gentile are both joint partakers of the same living organism.

All this should lead one to a great deal of humility. First, much grace has been given to believers in not just forgiving their iniquity but removing the remembrance of it as far as East is from West (Psalm 103:12). This was followed by the giving the Holy Spirit as a down payment or a foretaste of the full inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, Ephesians 1:13-14). One must realize that “if God did not spare the natural branches, but cut them off for their unbelief, neither will He spare you” (Romans 11:20-21). “It is not us who support the root, but the root who supports us!” (Romans 11:18).

¹²⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XLVI, 2.

For we have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, darkness, and a blast of a trumpet, as at the giving of the First Covenant at Mt. Sinai (Hebrews 12:18-21, Exodus 19:12-21, 20:18-21). But we have come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn ones who are enrolled in heaven; and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 12:22-27). Therefore, since we receive a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude by which we may offer to God an acceptable service of reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28-29).

Ambrose of Milan stated¹²⁷ that the coming of the Holy Spirit was both fire and water, and both have a cleansing effect on sin in our lives. As fire, the tongues of fire represent a consuming fire as well as a gift. As water, the gift is the fountain of living water that was promised.

“In the Acts of the Apostles, also, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and those others who were waiting for the Promise of the Father, we read that tongues as of fire were distributed among them (Acts 2:3). The soul of each one was so uplifted by His influence that people thought that they were full of new wine (Acts 2:13), who instead had received the gift of a diversity of tongues. What else can this mean — namely, that fire became water and water called forth fire — but that spiritual grace burns out our sins through fire, and through water cleanses them? Sin is washed away and it is burned away. Paul said, ‘The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is’ (1 Corinthians 3:13). And further on: ‘If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire’ (1 Corinthians 3:15). These, then, we have stated, so as to prove that sins are burned out by means of fire. We know now that this is in truth the sacred fire, which then as a type of the future remission of sins, came down upon the sacrifice. This fire is hidden in the time of captivity during which sin reigns, but in the time of liberty it is brought forth. And though it is changed into the appearance of water, yet it preserves its nature as fire to consume the sacrifice. Do not wonder when you read that God the Father said, ‘I am a consuming fire’ (Deuteronomy 4:24). Again, ‘They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water’ (Jeremiah 2:13). The Lord Jesus, like a fire, inflamed the hearts of those who heard Him, and like a fountain of water, cooled them. He Himself said in the Gospel that He came to send fire on the earth (Luke 12:49) and to supply a draft of living waters (John 7:37-38) to those who thirst”.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹²⁸ that in celebrating Pentecost, the people of his day “show forth through them the world to come”. Comparing the current celebration of Pentecost to the ancient celebration, Athanasius said¹²⁹ that in the former, “They granted forgiveness and settlement of debts; and indeed that day was one of deliverance in every respect. Let us keep the feast on the first day of the great week, as a symbol of the world to come, in which we here receive a pledge that we shall have everlasting life hereafter”. With regard to the current celebration of Pentecost, Athanasius spoke¹³⁰ of the celebration as “This is the day which the

¹²⁷ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy, III, 18, 102-105.

¹²⁸ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, IV, 5.

¹²⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, I, 10.

¹³⁰ Athanasius of Alexandria Festal Letters, V, 6 & XI, 15.

Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it". These days, he said, should be filled with prayer and fellowship with our neighbor, love towards one another, and with the joy which arises from good works.

Basil the Great wrote¹³¹ of Pentecost as a reminder of the age to come. Because of this, we do not pray on our knees during Pentecost, but remain standing during this time.

"All of Pentecost is a reminder of the resurrection expected in the age to come. That one and first day of the Resurrection, if seven times multiplied by seven, completes the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost. And so it is a likeness of eternity, beginning as it does and ending, as in a circling course, at the same point. On this day the rules of the Church have educated us to prefer the upright attitude of prayer, for by their plain reminder they make our mind to dwell no longer in the present but in the future. Moreover every time we fall upon our knees and rise from off them we show by the very deed that by our sin we fell down to earth, and by the loving kindness of our Creator were called back to heaven".

Gregory the Theologian stated¹³² that Jesus brought His disciples along slowly, not giving them more than they could handle at one time. One of these things was the issue of the Deity of the Holy Spirit, which was made clear after Pentecost. In retrospect, we can see this clearly; but this was not obvious to the disciples immediately.

"The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. It was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son, nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further with the Holy Spirit. Like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes too weak to bear the sun's light, people might risk the loss even of that which was within the reach of their powers. By gradual additions, and, as David says, goings up, advances and progress from glory to glory (Psalm 84:7, 2 Corinthians 3:18), the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason He gradually came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him. At the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues. It was little by little that Jesus declared Him. I will ask the Father, He said, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth (John 14:16-17). This Jesus said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to speak to them by another authority. You see lights breaking upon us, gradually, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end".

"He said that all things should be taught us by the Holy Spirit when He should come to dwell among us (John 14:26). One of these things was the Deity of the Spirit Himself, made clear later on when such knowledge should be capable of being received after Christ's Ascension, when it would no longer be received as incredible because of its marvelous character. What greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach".

¹³¹ Basil the Great, On the Spirit, 27, 66.

¹³² Gregory Nazianzen, On the Holy Spirit, 26-29

“If the Holy Spirit is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism? But if He is to be worshipped, surely He is an Object of adoration, and if an Object of adoration He must be God; the one is linked to the other. From the Spirit comes our New Birth, and from the New Birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from Whom it is derived. But now the swarm of testimonies shall burst upon you from which the Deity of the Holy Spirit is most clearly recognized in Scripture. Look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His Forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up (Luke 4:1,18). He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place”.

Our God is such a great Father, who gradually gives us more and more knowledge about Him that we aren't overwhelmed by too much at once and risk falling. The Ascension prepared the disciples for the giving of the Holy Spirit: Seeing Jesus -- his body -- literally lifted up to heaven on a cloud -- an incredible miracle! -- was the greatest way to prepare them for Pentecost ten days later.

Pentecost is the day priests were given to the Church of grace; it is the day humans were again given the Holy Spirit of God.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

It has been shown that the four previous feasts are related. They go together as a unit and are spaced relatively close together. Fulfillment of all four occurred in the year our Lord was crucified.

The following three feasts also go together, and they, too, are spaced relatively close together (see Table 1 at the beginning of the work). Fulfillment of all three will be shown to take place in the same year (compare Numbers 29).

Between the four Spring Feasts and the three Fall Feasts is a long summer (almost four months) that is quite hot in the southern half of the Land. In the northern parts of Israel (e.g. Galilee) and at higher elevations (e.g. Jerusalem), temperatures aren't too unpleasant and work usually continues all day long. But in the southern lowlands today near the Negev, work is often suspended for several hours during the heat of the day. This may not have been the case during Biblical times; people may have had to work through the heat of the day then (Matthew 20:12 ff.).

According to rabbinical traditions¹³³, the Feast of Trumpets was the anniversary of the beginning of the world. In addition, since the Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) was regarded as a day of judgment, the Feast of Trumpets inaugurated a period of repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur.

The first month, Nisan, was proclaimed to be the first month of the year (Exodus 12:2), but the 1st of Tishri came to be referred to as Jewish New Year's Day. This is still the case today. In the Orthodox Church, a similar situation exists. Pascha (or Passover or Easter) is the beginning of the Orthodox lectionary and the chief of the feast days. But yet September 1st is the Beginning of the Indiction or Proclamation.

1) The Feast of Trumpets: Commemorating Event

The Feast of Trumpets is sometimes referred to as the Seventh New Moon or Jewish New Year's Day. The Seventh New Moon is a natural appellation since the appearance of the new moon marks the beginning of the lunar month. However, the "Jewish New Year's Day" would seem to conflict with the instructions to Moses (Exodus 12:2), which states that Nisan, not Tishri, shall be the first month of the Hebrew year. The "New Year's Day" appellation came about due to rabbinical tradition regarding this day as the anniversary of the beginning of the world. Also, rabbinical tradition and practice has considered¹³⁴ the Feast of Trumpets as the beginning of a time of repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which was regarded as a day of judgment. This will be mentioned in more detail later.

The distinctive feature about the Feast of Trumpets was simply a day of the blowing of trumpets where only the priests were allowed to blow the silver trumpets (Numbers 10:8). The Shofar, or rams horn trumpets, may have been blown also on this day, and Hebrew tradition today uses the Shofar exclusively for the Feast of Trumpets and especially for the Day of

¹³³ Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p.350

¹³⁴ Buksbazen, The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel.

Atonement.. Nothing is mentioned in the Mosaic Law regarding how to do it, but the day was declared a Sabbath (no matter what day of the week it fell on). Thus it was regarded as an important day.

It might also be pointed out here that there was a certain special significance to every occurrence of the new moon, and a certain sacrifice was required (Numbers 28:11-15). Under Mosaic Law, the beginning of any month was determined by the first sighting of the new moon. But these monthly events were not real feast days, and they were not Sabbaths. The Feast of Trumpets required the same sacrifices as a normal “new moon”, plus some additional sacrifices (Numbers 29:1-6). While this was a Mosaic Law requirement, there were no instructions to answer the question: "Why are we doing this?" However, this can be inferred by comparing the uses of trumpets in the Scripture.

2) The Feast of Trumpets: Various Uses of Trumpets

All the Lord said in connection with the Feast of Trumpets is simply that it is a Sabbath, a memorial of (or reminder by) blowing of trumpets. In order to see clearly the prophetic significance of the Feast of Trumpets, the uses of trumpets, and various historical events occurring on the first day of the seventh month will be traced throughout the Scripture.

To begin, different uses of trumpets will be listed and examples given where available.

1. **Calling the Assembly Together.** At the Lord’s instruction one trumpet blast summoned the leaders and heads of the clans; two blasts summoned the entire assembly of the congregation (Numbers 10:1-4, 7). The Hebrew word *qahal* meaning assembly is translated into the Greek Septuagint sometimes as *sunagoge* and sometimes as *ekklesia* where both mean an assembly. In the New Testament, there was a divergence of these two words as *sunagoge* came to refer to the Jewish assembly and *ekklesia* came to refer to the Christian assembly.
2. **Commencing a Journey.** At the sounding of the first alarm, those camps on the East Side of the tabernacle moved out. As the second alarm, those camps on the South side moved out (Numbers 10:2, 5, 6).
3. **Going into Battle.** Moses was instructed by the Lord that when going into battle, “you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Lord your God and be saved from your enemies” (Numbers 10:9). For example:
 - a) Joshua into battle against Jericho (Joshua 6:5-20)
 - b) Ehud into battle against Moab (Judges 3:14-30)
 - c) Gideon into battle against Midian (Judges 6:34, 7:8-22)
 - d) Saul into battle against Philistia (1 Samuel 13:3-4)
 - e) Abijah of Judah into battle against Jeroboam of Israel (2 Chronicles 13:10-18)
 - f) Nehemiah of the Restoration against those hindering the re-building of the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 4:18-20)
 - g) The Gentile nations (as the Lord’s instrument) into battle against Babylon (Jeremiah 51:27)
 - h) Gentile nations (as the Lord’s instrument) into battle against unrepentant Judah (Jeremiah 4:19)
4. **Warning of an Imminent Battle.** The watchmen blew a trumpet to warn the people of their city that an enemy was near (Ezek. 33:3-6, Amos 3:6).
5. **Proclaiming a New King.** For example, at the time:

- a) Zadok the priest anoints Solomon King (1 Kings 1:34-41)
 - b) Elijah's servant anoints Jehu King (2 Kings 9:1-13)
 - c) Jehoiada the priest anoints Joash King (2 Chronicles 23:9-15)
6. **Leading the Procession of the Ark in its Journey to the City of David** (1 Chronicles 15:24, 16:6)
7. **With Other Instruments.** For example:
- a) With horns, cymbals, harps, lyres, and shouting in the bringing of the Ark to the City of David (1 Chronicles 15:28, 16:42)
 - b) With horns, with a loud voice and with shouting in making an oath to the Lord during the reforms of Asa, King of Judah (2 Chronicles 15:14)
 - c) With cymbals, harps, lyres, and singers at the cleansing of the Temple in the reign of Hezekiah after the abominations of King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 29:25-28).
 - d) With cymbals, voices, and shouting after the foundation of the Temple had been laid under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 3:8-13)
 - e) With two great choirs proceeding along the newly finished wall of Jerusalem, at the dedication of the wall under Nehemiah (Nehemiah 12:31-43)

From all the above references, trumpets were used in a number of different situations either by the Lord's specific command, or with the Lord's approval and blessing. And all of these will be seen to be important later.

Only a few times is mention made in the Scriptures of anything happening on the 1st day of the seventh month. At other times, it is hinted that the Feast of Trumpets may have been observed, but there is no way of knowing for sure, and no details given.

First, following the edict of Cyrus, King of Persia, a large assembly returned to rebuild the Temple. When they had arrived in the land, they gathered together as one man to Jerusalem at the beginning of the seventh month and began by rebuilding the altar. Beginning with the first day of the seventh month, burnt offerings were again offered to the Lord (Ezra 3:6).

Many years later, a few days after the completion of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:15), Ezra the scribe read the book of the Law of Moses publicly on the first day of the seventh month. The people all wept because they realized that they hadn't kept the Law and the Babylonian captivity was the result (Nehemiah 8:1-9). But Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites instructed the people that this day is holy to the Lord, not a day of mourning. "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8: 9-12).

There are several general references to people having "observed all the Appointed Feasts of the Lord." Examples are Solomon (2 Chronicles 2:4, 8:13), Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 31:3), and the people of Nehemiah's day (Nehemiah 10:33). The Feast of Trumpets, as a set feast, would have been observed in these instances but no details are given as to the manner.

Thus even in the face of overpowering guilt over past sins, the joy of the Lord supersedes this. The people of God have been looking forward to the Second Coming for 2000 years; the joy of its occurrence will supersede everything else. The emphasis of this day with the blowing of trumpets all day long proclaims a day of victory and a day of rejoicing.

3) The Feast of Trumpets: Prophetic Significance

In order to understand the prophetic significance of the Feast of Trumpets, the uses of trumpets in the past need to be compared to the use of trumpets in the future. That the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets must be future is evident from the lack of any fulfilling reference to either trumpets or the Feast of Trumpets in the New Testament. The references in Figure 5 below are listed as they appear in the Bible, and no attempt has been made to sort them out chronologically.

FIGURE 5: FUTURE REFERENCES TO TRUMPETS

1. **Psalms 47.** God will mount up with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet. As King over the earth, He will subdue (Gentile) nations under His feet and under His people's feet.
2. **Isaiah 18:1-7.** When a trumpet is blown, and when an ensign (or flag) is raised on the mountains (of Israel), all the earth will hear the trumpet and see the ensign. Birds of prey and beasts of the earth will spend harvest time (the summer) feeding on "the land beyond the rivers of Cush."
3. **Isaiah 27:12-13.** A great trumpet will be blown; the sons of Israel from Assyria to Egypt who were perishing will be gathered up one by one to come worship the Lord in Jerusalem.
4. **Joel 2:1-20.** A trumpet will be blown in Zion in the Lord's Holy Mountain warning inhabitants to repent, for the Day of the Lord is coming as an invading army approaches. There is local (c. 800 BC) imagery but prophetic significance.
5. **Zephaniah 1:14-18.** "The great day of the Lord" will be a day of trumpet and battle cry. The Lord will make a complete end of all the (unrepentant) inhabitants of the earth.
6. **Zechariah 9:10-17.** The Lord God will blow the trumpet in going to war. Because of the blood of His Covenant, the sons of Zion will be saved. The Lord's dominion, centered in Israel, will be to the ends of the earth. There is some local imagery referring to the Maccabean conflict of c. 150 BC.
7. **Matthew 24:30-31.** Christ will return coming on the clouds of the sky (as a horse) with power and great glory. Angels (or messengers) will be sent out with a great trumpet, and will gather His elect from one end of the sky to the other.
8. **1 Corinthians 15:51-54.** At the last trumpet the dead, along with those still living, will be raised to an immortal body. This is called a mystery.
9. **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.** The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, and with the trumpet of God. All believers dead and alive will be raised to meet Him in the air (in the clouds) as He comes.
10. **Revelation 8, 9.** The trumpet that the Lord will sound consists of seven distinct blasts. The first six blasts relate to all kinds of wars and plagues all over the earth.
11. **Revelation 10:5-7, 11:15-19.** At the seventh, or the last trumpet, the kingdom of the world becomes the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, who will rule it forever. At this time, time came for the dead to be judged. The Temple of God in heaven was opened and the Ark of His Covenant appeared.

To summarize Figure 5 and tie it together with the uses of trumpets described previously: on the Feast of Trumpets, an assembly is called together. This assembly is the Church, the believers in Christ who are gathered to be with their Lord on His return (see entries 7, 8, 9 of Figure 5). These believers, collectively the various camps of the nation of Israel according to

God (Galatians 3:6-9, 3:29, 6:16, Romans 9-11), thus are commencing a journey (see entries 7, 8, 9, Figure 5). As the Lord returns at the last (or seventh) trumpet, He returns in battle array to establish and rule His kingdom on earth (see entries 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, Figure 5). Prior to the Lord's return, trumpets of warning will be blown, warning people to repent (see entries 2, 4, 10, Figure 5; see also Revelation 14:6-7). This last trumpet also proclaims a new king to rule over the kingdom of this world (see entries 1, 6, 11, Figure 5). Also at this last trumpet, the Temple of God in heaven is opened and the Ark appears (see entry 11, Figure 5). The Ark is about to move to earth for its marriage with and permanent resting place in the Temple on earth (see Revelation 19:7-9; more will be said about this under the Feast of Booths).

Paul said, "This we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16). Christ had said, "The powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (Matthew 24:29). Why with the trumpet, we might ask? We saw this on Mt. Sinai also, and angels were there (Exodus 19:13, 16-19; 20:18-19).

John Chrysostom stated¹³⁵ that when the Lord returns at the Last Trumpet, His family and friends come out to meet Him first, like a returning king. A little later after His reunion with His family, He will sit in judgment of those who have offended Him. Just as at the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, the angels will blow trumpets at the Second Coming. The intensity of the trumpet blasts will be deafening; just as at Mt. Sinai everyone on earth will be terrified at what is happening. It will also be like the days of Noah just before the Deluge; no one will believe until it happens.

"What does the voice of the Archangel means? As Christ said in the parable of the Virgins, 'Arise! The Bridegroom comes!' (Matthew 25:6) Just as in the case of a king, so also shall it be then, angels serving at the Resurrection. Those who were shut up will go out, and the servants (i.e. angels) will lead them out; the angels don't do this from their own power, but from that Voice. Christ says this again, 'He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other' (Matthew 24:31). Everywhere you see the Angels running here and there. The Archangel is he who is set over those who are sent out, and who shouts, 'Make all men ready, for the Judge is at hand'. What does 'at the last trumpet' mean? Here he implies that there are many trumpets (Revelation 8-9), and that at the last the Judge descends."

"If Christ is about to descend, why shall we be caught up? For the sake of honor! When a king drives into a city, those who are in honor go out to meet him; but the condemned await the judge within the city later. On the coming of an affectionate father, his children, and those who are worthy to be his children, are taken out in a chariot, that they may see and kiss him; but those of the domestics who have offended remain within. We are carried on the chariot of our Father; for He received Him up in the clouds, and 'we shall be caught up in the clouds'" (Acts 1:9).

"When these things are done, then also will be the voice of the Archangel shouting and commanding the Angels, and the sound of the trumpet. What

¹³⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, VIII, vv. 15-17.

trembling then, what fear will possess those that remain on the earth. One woman is caught up and another is left behind; one man is taken, and another is passed over (Matthew 24:40-41; Luke 17:34-35). What will be the state of their souls, when they see some taken up, but themselves left behind? Will not these things be able to shake their souls more terribly than hell? Sudden death, earthquakes in cities, and celestial threatening terrifies our souls; when we see the earth breaking up, and crowded with all these, when we hear the trumpets, and the voice of the Archangel louder than any trumpet, when we perceive the heaven shriveled up, and God the King of all Himself approaching — what will our souls be like?”

“How great will the fear and trembling be then! Have you ever seen men led away to death? What do you think is the state of their souls, as they are going on the way to the gate? Is it not worse than many deaths? What would they not choose both to do and to suffer, so that they might be delivered from that cloud of darkness? I have heard many say, who have been recalled by the mercy of the king after having been led away, that they did not see men as men, their souls being so troubled, so horror-struck, and beside themselves. If the death of the body frightens us, when eternal death approaches, what will be our feelings? Even the crowd that stands around, not even knowing them, has their soul dejected with fear and despair. It is not, believe me, it is not possible to represent this suffering by words!”

“You say, but God is full of love for man, and none of these things will happen! It is only written as a threat, that we may become wise! By what means shall I persuade you? If I say, that ‘the worm will not die, and the fire will not be quenched’ (Mark 9:44); if I say, that ‘they shall go away into everlasting fire’ (Matthew 25:41, 46); if I set before you the rich man already suffering punishment (Luke 16:22-23); will you say that it is all a matter of threatening? This is a Satanic reasoning, indulging you with a favor, and causing you to be slothful.”

“You have heard of the deluge. Were those things also said by way of threat? Did they not actually happen? Those men too said many such things, for a hundred years while the Ark was being built, while the wood was being worked, while Noah was calling out loud; but there was no one who believed. Because they did not believe the threat in words, they suffered the punishment in deed. This will be our fate too, if we do not believe. On this account Christ compares His coming with the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39), because as some disbelieved in that deluge, so some will disbelieve in the deluge of hell. These things were a fact, and He, who then brought punishment on them so suddenly, much more will inflict it again (2 Peter 2:5). The things that are committed now are not less than the offenses of that time. Do you believe that the deluge took place? Or does it seem to you a fable? Even the mountains in Armenia, where the Ark rested, bear witness that this happened.”

Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome referred¹³⁶ to some of the events that will accompany Christ in His Second Coming. At that time there will be the Sign of the Cross in the heavens and the trumpets of God sounding on earth. Everyone will cross the River of Fire and face the awesome Judge.

¹³⁶ Hippolytus, Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus, 36-37.

“When the abomination of desolation has arisen (Matthew 24:15), and the forerunners of the Lord have finished their proper course (Revelation 11:3), the whole world comes to the consummation. What remains but the revealing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from heaven, for whom we have hoped, who shall bring fire and just judgment against those who have refused to believe in Him? The Lord says, ‘As the lightning comes out of the east, and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together’ (Matthew 24:27-28). The sign of the cross shall arise from the east even to the west, in brightness exceeding that of the sun, and shall announce the Advent and revealing of the Judge, to give to everyone according to his works. Concerning the general resurrection and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel said, ‘Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt’ (Daniel 12:2). Isaiah said, ‘The dead shall rise, and those in the tombs shall be raised, and those that are in the earth shall rejoice’ (Isaiah 26:19 LXX). And our Lord said, ‘The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live’” (John 5:25).

“At that time the trumpet of God shall sound (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and awake those that sleep from the lowest parts of the earth, righteous and sinners alike. Every kindred, tongue, nation, and tribe shall be raised in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52); and they shall stand upon the face of the earth, waiting for the coming of the righteous and awesome Judge, in fear and trembling unutterable. The river of fire shall come forth (Daniel 7:10 LXX) in fury like an angry sea, and shall burn up mountains and hills, and shall make the sea vanish (Revelation 21:1), and shall dissolve the atmosphere with its heat like wax (2 Peter 3:12). The stars of heaven shall fall, the sun shall be turned into darkness (Matthew 24:29), and the moon into blood (Acts 2:20). The heaven shall be rolled together like a scroll (Revelation 6:14). The whole earth shall be burned up by reason of the deeds done in it, which men did corruptly, in fornications, in adulteries, in lies and uncleanness, in idolatries and murders, and in battles. There shall be the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1).”

Paul compared the events at the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai with the events of the Feast of Trumpets saying, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven! His voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven’. Now this, ‘Yet once more’, indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God *is* a consuming fire!” (Hebrews 12:25-29)

Chrysostom commented¹³⁷ on the above to say that if everyone was petrified at hearing God speak to them from the fire and the smoke on Mt. Sinai, how much more fearful will they be when they see Him coming in all His glory at the Last Trumpet!

¹³⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XXXII, 3.

“Fearful were those things at Mt. Sinai, but these are far more admirable and glorious. Here there is not ‘darkness’, ‘blackness’, or ‘tempest’. It seems to me that by these words Paul hints at the obscurity of the Old Testament, and the overshadowed and veiled character of the Law. Besides this, the Giver of the Law appears in fire awesome, and apt to punish those who transgress.”

“But what are ‘the sounds of the trumpet?’ It is as though some King were coming. This will also occur at the Second Coming. ‘At the last trumpet’ (1 Corinthians 15:52) all must be raised. But it is the trumpet of His voice which affects this. At the giving of the Law, all things were objects of sense, sights and sounds; today all are objects of understanding and invisible.”

“At the giving of the Law, Mt. Sinai was completely covered with smoke (Exodus 19:18). Since God is said to be fire, and appeared thus in the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2-4), He indicates the fire by the smoke. What is ‘the blackness and the darkness?’ (Exodus 20:21) He again expresses its fearfulness. Thus Isaiah also says, ‘And the house was filled with smoke’ (Isaiah 6:4). What is the object of ‘the thunder and lightning?’ (Exodus 20:18) The human race was careless. It was therefore necessary that they should be aroused by these things. No one was as dull as not to have had his thoughts raised up, when these things were done, and the Law ordained. ‘Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice’ (Exodus 19:19); for it was necessary that the voice of God should be uttered. He was about to proclaim His Law through Moses, therefore He makes him worthy of confidence. The people didn’t see Moses, because of the thick darkness; they didn’t hear him, because of the weakness of his voice. ‘Therefore God answered by a voice’ (Exodus 19:19). ‘Now all the people witnessed the thundering, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die”’ (Exodus 20:18-19).

John Chrysostom emphasized¹³⁸ the dramatic nature of the Resurrection. The Lord calls His elect with great trumpets in order to honor and arouse them and demonstrate the amazement of what is happening.

“The Lord said, ‘He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other’ (Matthew 24:31). When you have heard of this, consider the punishment of those that remain. They shall not only suffer that former penalty only (not being gathered), but this too. They will say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Matthew 22:39); those left will mourn. Christ had spoken to His disciples of terrible wars that they might learn that, together with the fearful things here, the torments there also await them. The others He brings in mourning and separated from the elect, and consigned to hell; by this again rousing the disciples, and indicating from how many evils they should be delivered, and how many good things they shall enjoy.”

“Why does He call everyone by angels, if He comes openly? To honor them in this way also! Paul said, that they ‘shall be caught up together with the angels in the clouds’. Christ said this also, when He was speaking concerning the

¹³⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXVI, 4-5.

Resurrection. ‘The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel’ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). So that when risen again, the angels shall gather them together; when gathered together the clouds shall catch them up; and all these things are done in a moment, in an instant. It is not that He waits above and calls them, but He Himself comes with the sound of a trumpet. What is the meaning of the trumpets and the sound? They are for arousing, for gladness, to demonstrate the amazing nature of the things going on, and for grief to those that are left.”

Gregory of Nyssa stated¹³⁹ that the Last Trumpet is a mystery of the end of time. Human nature will have reached a limit; no one else will be able to be saved; and everyone will be changed in an instant.

“Paul considered the sudden stoppage of time, and the change of the things that now are, ‘Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet’ (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The full complement of human nature will reach a limit of the pre-determined measure, because there will be no longer anything to be made up in the way of increase to the number of souls. The change in existing things will take place in an instant of time, giving to that limit of time, which has no parts or extension, the names of ‘a moment’, and ‘the twinkling of an eye’. It will no more be possible for one who reaches the limit of time to obtain by death this change, which takes place at a fixed period. Only when the trumpet of the resurrection sounds, do the dead awaken, and are transformed at once to incorruptibility. The weight of the flesh will no longer be heavy, nor will its burden hold them down to earth, but they will rise aloft through the air. ‘We shall be caught up’, he tells us, ‘in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord’” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Gregory of Nyssa described¹⁴⁰ how the dead will rise at the Last Trumpet: nothing hinders them in their exit from the tomb.

“In the regeneration of the universe Paul tells us that ‘the Lord Himself will descend with a shout, with the voice of an archangel’ (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and by a trumpet sound raise up the dead to incorruption. He who is in the tomb, at the voice of command, shakes off death as if it were a sleep, and ridding himself from the corruption that had come upon his condition as a corpse, leaps forth from the tomb whole and sound. He is not even hindered in his egress by the bonds of the grave-cloths around his feet and hands.”

Irenaeus of Lyons compared¹⁴¹ strange fire to the strange doctrines of heretics of his day, and the Lord will treat them in a similar fashion to Nadab and Abihu. Others who oppose God, and those in the Church who have positions of responsibility, but who do not act accordingly, will be also treated similar to their Old Testament counterparts.

“We need to obey the presbyters who are in the Church — those who possess the succession from the Apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of

¹³⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, XXII, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, XXV, 11.

¹⁴¹ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, IV, xxvi, 2-3.

the Father. We need also to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, looking on them either as heretics of perverse minds or as a schismatic, puffed up and self-pleasing, or as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of money and vainglory. All these have fallen from the truth. The heretics, who bring strange fire to the altar of God — namely, strange doctrines — shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2). Those who rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, shall remain among those in hell, being swallowed up by an earthquake, just as those who were with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:24-33). Those who cut apart and separate the unity of the Church, shall receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did” (1 Kings 14:10).

“There are those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts and do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts. They conduct themselves with contempt towards others, are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, ‘No man sees us’ (Psalm 10:11 LXX); these shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance, nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart. They shall hear those words, ‘You offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has deceived you and lust has perverted your heart. You old relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgments, condemning the innocent and letting the guilty go free’ (Susanna 1:52, 53, 56 LXX). The Lord said, ‘You shall not slay the innocent and just’ (Exodus 23:7). The Lord also said, ‘But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers’” (Luke 12:45-46).

Ambrose of Milan applied¹⁴² the trumpets of Gideon to the testimony of the saints. The pitchers are our human bodies and the torches represent the Holy Spirit.

“When Gideon was about to overcome the Midianites, he commanded three hundred men to take pitchers, and to hold lighted torches inside the pitchers, and trumpets in their right hands (Judges 7:13-22). Our predecessors have preserved the explanation received from the Apostles, that the pitchers are our bodies, fashioned of clay, which don’t know fear if they burn with the fervor of the grace of the Spirit. They bear witness to the passion of the Lord Jesus with a loud confession of the Voice.

That fire is not certainly one made up of common twigs, or roaring with the burning of the reeds of the woods, but that fire which improves good deeds like gold, and consumes sins like stubble. This is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit, Who is called both the fire and light of the countenance of God; where, “The light of Your countenance has been sealed upon us, O Lord” (Psalm 4:6 LXX). What is, then, the light that is sealed, but that of the seal of the Holy Spirit, believing in

¹⁴² Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, I, xiv, 167-170.

Whom, ‘you were sealed’ he says, ‘with the Holy Spirit of promise’ (Ephesians 1:13).

As there is a light of the divine countenance, so, too, does fire shine forth from the countenance of God, for it is written: ‘A fire shall burn before Him’ (Psalm 50:3 LXX). For the grace of the Day of Judgment shines beforehand, that forgiveness may follow to reward the service of the saints”.

John described the Ark in heaven about to move to earth for its marriage with and permanent resting place¹⁴³ in the Temple on earth (see Revelation 19:7-9). For the time being, it will be helpful to think of the Ark as the dwelling place, or residence (Exodus 25:22) of God. In times of war, the Ark was sometimes carried by the priests into battle (Joshua 6), so that the Lord would go before His people, leading them to victory.

It should be remembered that there were two arks; one in heaven (cf. Revelation 11:19) and a pattern of this on earth. Moses saw the real Ark on Mt. Sinai, because he was told to make everything according to the pattern shown him on the mountain (Exodus 25:40, Hebrews 8:5).

The temple that the Ark is to be united with is mentioned as being the bodies of the believers (1 Corinthians 6:19). On this day, the Feast of Trumpets, these believers’ bodies are resurrected, if dead, and changed from mortal to immortal. Thus, collectively, this group of believers is being prepared for marriage with a holy, immortal God (see Revelation 19:7-9).

The actual marriage or joining of the Ark and the Temple does not take place on the day of the Feast of Trumpets. There is the battle that must happen first (Revelation 16:16, 14:18-20). All that happens here is that the Ark moves out to take its place of command at the head of the Army of God as the army moves toward Armageddon (Jude 1:14-15; Revelation 16:14-16).

From the above references, one can see that on the Feast of Trumpets, an assembly is called together. This assembly is the Church who are gathered together to be with their Lord on His return. Collectively they represent various camps of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16, 3:6-9, 3:29) and they are commencing a journey. The trumpets are blown both to warn of an impending battle (giving people a chance to repent) and to lead the Armies of God into battle (Revelation 19). The last trumpet also proclaims a new King to rule over the Kingdom of this world. The trumpets also precede the Ark of His Covenant which will appear in the Temple in heaven (Revelation 11:19) and which is about to move to the earth for its permanent resting place in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-3).

For the actual marriage of the Ark and the Temple, refer to the chapters on the Feast of Booths. For further details on the significance and history of the real Ark and the model ark, consult Appendix D at the end of this Study).

4) The Feast of Trumpets: Spiritual Application

The spiritual application of the Feast of Trumpets is simply being ready for the Lord’s return. This readiness is illustrated by the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). Just as there has been a long, hot, four-month summer of no festive activity when suddenly comes the

¹⁴³ More will be said about this under the Feast of Booths.

Feast of Trumpets, so the ten virgins had been sleeping. Suddenly, there was a cry that the Bridegroom is coming; all should prepare to meet Him. For some who weren't prepared, they couldn't meet Him. Only those who had been prepared were able.

Notice that there is a short interval during which the five wise virgins were able to wake up and trim their lamps. In other words, a warning was given and this was one of the uses of trumpets. But only those who were prepared before the warning was given were able to take advantage of the warning because of the nature of what constituted readiness. That is, five virgins had all their materials at hand; the other five had to go out and buy oil for their lamps. John Chrysostom interpreted¹⁴⁴ the oil as good works such as almsgiving, which is something that one cannot just go out and get quickly.

Just as the ten virgins were waiting for a wedding celebration, the Feast of Trumpets is a day of rejoicing (Nehemiah 8:10). It is a day that those who belong to Christ are eagerly awaiting (Hebrews 9:28), for it means the completion of their salvation (Revelation 12:10, 19:1) and the beginning of the reign of their King on this earth (Revelation 11:15-17, 19:15-16; Psalm 2:8-9; Isaiah 9:6-7).

Thus the Feast of Trumpets is a time of rejoicing. We are in the middle of a long, hot summer (2,000 years so far), and the Church is very eager for her Lord to return (Revelation 6:9-11, 3:11; 1 Corinthians 16:22). The Feast of Trumpets thus does begin a "new year" in that it begins the end of time.

Ambrose of Milan stated¹⁴⁵ that the raising of Lazarus foreshadows the future resurrection. Christ raising His voice imitates the peal of trumpets; Lazarus foreshadows us; and the raising of many others addresses the general resurrection at the Last Trumpet.

"Is it a matter of wonder that the sepulchers of the dead are opened at the bidding of the Lord when the whole earth from its utmost limits is shaken by one thunderclap (Matthew 27:52-54)? Finally he, who has believed that the dead shall rise again 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound' (1 Corinthians 15:52), 'shall be caught up among the first in the clouds to meet Christ in the air' (1 Thessalonians 4:17). He who has not believed shall be left, and subject himself to the sentence by his own unbelief. The Lord also shows us in the Gospel after what manner we shall rise again. 'He didn't raise Lazarus alone, but the faith of all; and if you believe, as you read, your spirit also, which was dead, revives with Lazarus'. For what does it mean, that the Lord went to the sepulcher and cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out', (John 11:43) except that He would give us a visible proof, would set forth an example of the future resurrection? Why did He cry with a loud voice? Only that He might show that which is written: 'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet the dead shall rise again incorruptible'? (1 Corinthians 15:52) The raising of the voice answers to the peal of trumpets".

Ambrose continued¹⁴⁶ to say that it is important to understand the significance of trumpets. The Jewish Feast Days are shadows of heavenly festivals; where shadows exist, truth

¹⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXVIII, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ambrose of Milan, Decease of Satyrus II, 76-77.

¹⁴⁶ Ambrose of Milan, Decease of Satyrus, II, 106-114.

also exists, for the Law is spiritual. The most important trumpet is the Last Trumpet, at which time the Body of Christ will be revealed. Spiritual things are revealed now as in a mirror or riddle; then they will be face to face. If anyone wants to see the Image of God, he should make for himself two silver trumpets, namely prayer and understanding, where both are needed to confess with the mouth and believe with the heart. By these two trumpets, we overcome our enemies and rejoice in the Light of Christ.

“We ought with all our power to observe what the significance of the trumpets is, lest we should be in danger from ignoring the dignity of the Scriptures. When we read that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual hosts of wickedness, which are in high places (Ephesians 6:12), we ought not to think of weapons of the flesh, but of such as are mighty before God (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is not enough that one see the trumpet or hear its sound, unless one understands the significance of the sound. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound (1 Corinthians 14:8), how shall one prepare himself for war? It is important that we understand the meaning of the voice of the trumpet, when we either hear or utter trumpet-sounds of this sort. Therefore when we speak, let us pray that the Holy Spirit would interpret them for us”.

“Those festivals, which were commanded for the Jews by the Law, are the shadow of joys above and of heavenly festivals. Here is the shadow; there is the truth. Let us endeavor to attain to the truth by means of the shadow”.

“Shall we value festival days by just eating and drinking? Let no man judge us with respect to eating; ‘for we know that the Law is spiritual’ (Romans 7:14). ‘Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance is of Christ’ (Colossians 2:16-17). Let us seek the body of Christ, which the voice of the Father from heaven, like the last trumpet, similar to when the Jews said that it thundered (John 12:29). The body of Christ will be revealed by the last trumpet; for ‘the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven at the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first’ (1 Thessalonians 4:16). For ‘Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together’ (Luke 17:37); where the body of Christ is, there is the truth”.

“The seventh trumpet seems to signify the Sabbath of the week, which is reckoned both in days, years and periods (for which reason the number of the Jubilee is sacred). This includes also the seventieth year, when the people returned to Jerusalem, who had remained seventy years in captivity”.

“It was necessary that spiritual things should be made known as in a mirror and in a riddle. ‘Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face’ (1 Corinthians 13:12). Let the character of the true Law be expressed by our manner of life, where we walk in the image of God, for the shadow of the Law has now passed away. The carnal Jews had the shadow; the likeness is ours; the reality is theirs who shall rise again. We know that according to the Law there are these three, the shadow, the image or likeness, and the reality; the shadow in the Law, the image in the Gospel, the truth in the Judgment. But all is Christ’s; and all is in Christ, Whom now we cannot see according to the reality. But we see Him in a likeness of future things, of which we have seen the shadow in the Law. Christ is not the shadow but the likeness of God, not an empty likeness but the reality. And so the Law was by Moses, for the shadow was through man, the likeness was

through the Law, the reality through Jesus. For reality cannot proceed from any other source than from reality”.

“If, then, anyone desires to see this Image of God, he must love God, that he may be loved by God; and be no longer a servant but a friend, because he has kept the Commandments of God, that he may enter into the cloud where God is (Exodus 24:15). Let him make for himself two reasonable trumpets of beaten work of pure silver, that is, composed and adorned with precious words, from which not a harsh shrill sound with dread-inspiring voice may be uttered, but high thanks to God may be poured out with continuous exultation. By the voice of such trumpets the dead are raised, not indeed by the sound of the metal, but aroused by the word of truth. It is those two trumpets by which Paul, through the Divine Spirit, spoke. ‘I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding, I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding’ (1 Corinthians 14:15). The one without the other does not have perfect utterance”.

“Yet it is not everyone’s business to sound each trumpet; it is not everyone’s business to call together the whole assembly; that prerogative is granted to the priests alone, and the ministers of God who sound the trumpets. Whoever shall hear and follow to where the glory of the Lord is, and shall with early determination come to the tabernacle of witness, may be able also to see the divine works, and merit that eternal home. Then is the war finished and the enemy put to flight, when the grace of the Spirit and the energy of the soul act together”.

“These are wholesome trumpets also, if one believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth; ‘For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Romans 10:10). With this twofold trumpet man arrives at that Holy Land, namely, the grace of the resurrection. Let them always sound to you, that you may always hear the voice of God; may the utterances of the Angels and Prophets always incite and move you, that you may hasten to things above”.

“David was thinking of this purpose when he said: ‘I will go to the place of thy wondrous tabernacle, even to the house of God, with a voice of exultation and thanksgiving and of the sound of those who keep festival’ (Psalm 42:4 LXX). Not only are enemies overcome by the sound of these trumpets, but without them there could not be rejoicing, festivals or new moons. No one, unless he has received the promises of the Divine Word, and believes the message derived from it, can keep festivals or new moons, in which he desires to fill himself with the light of Christ. Sacrifices themselves cannot be pleasing to Christ unless confession of the mouth accompanies them, which according to custom stirs up the people to implore the grace of God”.

“Let us therefore be preachers of the Lord, and praise Him with the sound of the trumpet (Psalm 150:3), not belittling its power. Let us consider such things as can fill the ear of the mind, and enter into the depths of our inmost consciousness. Let us not think that what suits the body can be applied to the Godhead, or that the measure of the greatness of Divine Power is determined by human might”.

Thus in being ready for the Lord's return, we have things to do. We are waiting for the arrival of the Bridegroom, who will be coming as the Judge, looking for what we have done for the least of these His brethren. Those who are rejoicing at His Coming are those who are called "Blessed of My Father" (Matthew 25:34-36). To help with the readiness of the Church, the Church Fathers have set up two silver trumpets called the Preaching and the Prayers of the Church.

The Beginning of the Indiction

The Orthodox Church does not celebrate the Feast of Trumpets as such, but has transferred this celebration to September 1st, which is called "The Beginning of the Indiction". In choosing this occasion for the beginning of the Church Year, the Church Fathers have directed our attention to the Lord's return in Glory. The Beginning of the Indiction¹⁴⁷ (i.e. the proclamation), celebrated in the Orthodox Church on September 1st, corresponds exactly with the Feast of Trumpets, since this is exactly what trumpets were used for. Two themes are contained in the Beginning of the Indiction as celebrated today: (1) the Preaching of the Church and (2) the Prayers of the Church. Both of these themes underscore the intent of the Feast of Trumpets as it was celebrated annually. The Preaching of the Church is the same as the preaching of Christ: the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:17), which is what the Feast of Trumpets proclaims. In the Prayers of the Church, we pray for all men, that they might be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). By doing so, we imitate God in His concern for all men. We become like Him if we will what He does.

Clement of Alexandria stated¹⁴⁸ that Christ in His Gospel is the trumpet of God, warning the world about the proclamations of the Feast of Trumpets. This is part of the Preaching of the Church.

"It is truth which cries, 'The light shines in the darkness' (John 1:5). Let the light then shine in the hidden part of man, that is, the heart. Let the beams of knowledge arise to reveal and irradiate the hidden inner man, the disciple of the Light, the familiar friend and fellow-heir of Christ; especially now that we have come to know the most precious and venerable name of the good Father. To a pious and good child He gives gentle counsels, and commands what is salutary for His child. He who obeys Him has the advantage in all things, follows God, obeys the Father, knows Him through wandering, loves God, loves his neighbor, fulfills the commandment, seeks the prize, and claims the promise. It has been God's fixed and constant purpose to save the flock of men; for this end the good God sent the good Shepherd. The Word, having unfolded the truth, showed to men the height of salvation, that either repenting they might be saved, or refusing to obey, they might be judged. This is the proclamation of righteousness: to those that obey, glad tidings; to those that disobey, judgment. The loud trumpet, when sounded, collects the soldiers, and proclaims war. Shall not Christ, breathing a strain of peace to the ends of the earth, gather together His own soldiers, the soldiers of peace? By His blood and by the word, He has gathered the bloodless host of peace, and assigned to them the kingdom of heaven. The trumpet of Christ is His Gospel. He has blown it, and we have heard. 'Let us array ourselves

¹⁴⁷ For more details on how the Beginning of the Indiction corresponds to the Feast of Trumpets, see the Study for September 1st at <http://www.stathanasius.org/site/content/biblestudy>.

¹⁴⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen, 11.

in the armor of peace, putting on the breastplate of righteousness, and taking the shield of faith, and binding our brows with the helmet, of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God', let us sharpen. This Paul, in the spirit of peace, commands. These are our invulnerable weapons; armed with these, let us face the evil one. 'The fiery darts of the evil one' (Ephesians 6:16), let us quench with the sword-points dipped in water, that, have been baptized by the Word, returning grateful thanks for the benefits we have received, and honoring God through the Divine Word."

John Chrysostom referred¹⁴⁹ to the Apostle Paul as a trumpet from heaven in his preaching of the Gospel. It both aroused to godliness and calmed perverseness.

"You have heard the Apostolic voice, that trumpet from heaven, that spiritual lyre! Just as a trumpet sounding a fearful and warlike note, it dismays the enemy, arouses the dejected spirits on its own side, fills them with great boldness, and renders those who attend to it invincible against the devil! Again, as a lyre that gently soothes with soul-captivating melody it puts to sleep the agitation of perverse thoughts; and thus, with pleasure, it instills in us much profit."

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁵⁰ that the silver trumpets called Israel to the feasts to worship the Lord, to fasting at the Day of Atonement, and to war against their enemies. Similarly the proclamation of the Gospel at the Beginning of the Indiction calls us to the Church to worship the Lord, to fasting and abstinence in season, and to war against the bodiless powers.

"Paul urged us to note the season, 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Corinthians 6:2). At set seasons He called Israel to the Levitical feasts by Moses, saying, 'Three times a year you shall keep a feast to Me' (Exodus 23:14), one of which is Pascha now at hand, the trumpets of the priests sounding and urging its observance. The Psalmist commanded, 'Blow the trumpet on our solemn feast day' (Psalm 81:3). This sentence commands us to blow the trumpets on the solemn days, which was then a type. At one time, the trumpets called to the feasts; at another time to fasting and to war. This was not done without solemnity, or by chance, but this sound of the trumpets was appointed, so that every man should come to that which was proclaimed. This ought to be learned not merely from me, but from the Scriptures. The Lord spoke to Moses, 'Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation' (Numbers 10:2), very properly for those who love Him. These things had reference to the time of Moses, and were to be observed as long as the shadow lasted, the whole being appointed for use, 'until the time of reformation' (Hebrews 9:10). 'When you go to war in your Land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies' (Numbers 10:9). Such things as these refer to the Land, and no further. Not only in wars did they blow the trumpet, but under the Law, there was a festal trumpet also. The Lord went on to say, 'In the day of your gladness, in your appointed

¹⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, I, 1.

¹⁵⁰ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, I, 2-3.

feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets' (Numbers 10:10). Let no man think it a light matter, if he hears the command of the Law respecting trumpets; it is a wonderful and fearful thing. Beyond any other voice or instrument, the trumpet is awakening and awesome; so Israel received instruction by these means, because Israel was then just a child. In order that the proclamation should not be thought to be merely human, but superhuman, its sounds resembled those which were uttered when they trembled before the very loud sound of the trumpet on the mountain at the Giving of the Law, accompanied by thunder and lightning (Exodus 19:16); they were reminded of the Law that was given them then, and they kept it."

"The Law was admirable, and the shadow was excellent, otherwise, it would not have induced fear and reverence in those who heard; especially in those who not only heard but saw these things. Now these things were types, and done as in a shadow. But let us pass on to the meaning, and come to the truth. Let us look at the priestly trumpets of Christ, which cry out, and call us, at one time to war, 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*' (Ephesians 6:12). At another time the call is made to virginity, self-denial, and conjugal harmony, saying, to virgins, the things of virgins; and to those who love the way of abstinence, the things of abstinence; and to those who are married (1 Corinthians 7:2-5), the things of an honorable marriage; thus assigning to each its own virtues and an honorable recompense. Sometimes the call is made to fasting, and sometimes to a feast. Listen to Paul again blowing the trumpet, 'Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.'⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness' (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). If you want to listen to a trumpet much greater than all these, hear Christ saying, 'In that last and great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If anyone thirst, let him come unto Me and drink' (John 7:37). Christ did not simply to call us to a feast, but to 'the great feast;' if only we will be prepared to hear, and to conform to the proclamation of every trumpet."

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

This day, referred to often as either the Day of Atonement or Yom Hakippurim, is regarded as the holiest day of the year by Hebrew tradition. The name of the Feast Day comes from the Hebrew word *kaphar* meaning to make propitiation, to cover, or to pacify. This word is used two ways in the Old Testament: One use is as a verb meaning to make propitiation. The other use is as a noun, and is always in the plural, *hakippurim*. For example, on the Day of Atonement, *Yom Hakippurim* (Leviticus 23:27-28; 25:9), the sin offering is called “the sin offering of the atonements” (Exodus 30:10, Numbers 29:11). Because of “the atonements”, God is pacified and the sin is covered and forgotten.

An important part of the Day of Atonement, in fact the central focus, is the sacrificial part involving the blood and the scapegoat. It would be good for the reader at this point to read through the accounts of the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16, 23:27-32, Hebrews 9:1-28, 10:1-18).

The Day of Atonement like the Feast of Trumpets ten days earlier remains unfulfilled. One might note that the sacrificial aspect of all the feasts have been fulfilled by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross once for all (see Hebrews 9:19-28). This is, of course, true of the Day of Atonement and results in some minor difficulty in understanding the Day of Atonement because the sacrificial part of the Day of Atonement is such a dominant issue. It is easy for the rest of the events connected with this day to be largely overlooked. They are important! In this part, these events will be considered from the viewpoint of how they fulfill the tenth day of Tishri, where no reference is found in the New Testament as to its fulfillment.

1) The Day of Atonement: Commemorating Event

The event that resulted in the establishment of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-3) on the 10th of Tishri is Nadab and Abihu’s sin (Leviticus 10). In order to bring out all the implications of the significance of the Day of Atonement, however, it is necessary to begin earlier with the consecration of Aaron and his four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, in that order from eldest to youngest (Exodus 6:23, 28:1; Numbers 3:2).

As part of this consecration Aaron as the High Priest, and his four sons as priests were:

1. Washed with water.
2. Clothed in priestly garments.
3. Anointed with oil.
4. Atoned for with a sin offering, etc.
5. Moses applied the blood to their person.
6. They lived in the Tabernacle for 7 days.

Next, they began their service as priests (Leviticus 9). There were specific instructions from the Lord concerning precisely how each of the sacrificial offerings was to be made (Leviticus 1-7). Aaron and his four sons were performing each of these sacrifices for the first time.

With the whole congregation gathered around outside the outer court of the Tabernacle (Leviticus 9:5), Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices, first for themselves, then for the people

(Leviticus 9:7-21). They had been told that when they did this, the glory of the Lord would appear to them (Leviticus 9:6). After finishing the sacrifice for the people, Aaron lifted up his hand and blessed the people (Leviticus 9:22). Moses and Aaron then went into the Tabernacle, came out again and blessed the people again (Leviticus 9:23). At this point, the glory of the Lord appeared and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the fat of the offerings lying on the altar (Leviticus 9:23-24). The people were evidently awestruck for they shouted and fell on their faces before the Lord.

This is the setting for Nadab and Abihu's sin: "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective fire pans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Immediately, Moses quoted something in regard to what Nadab and Abihu had done that the Lord had spoken to him about earlier. "By those who come near me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored" (Leviticus 10:3, Exodus 19:22). Nadab and Abihu had dishonored the Lord publicly, and treated Him as unholy or common.

Moses then commanded Aaron and his two surviving sons to remain in the Tabernacle, where they had been living the last seven days. While in there, the Lord spoke to Aaron telling him not to drink wine or strong drink when coming into the tent of meeting in order:

1. To make a distinction between the holy and the profane.
2. To make a distinction between the clean and unclean.
3. To teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord spoke through Moses.
4. That you may not die like Nadab and Abihu.

The implication is that Nadab's and Abihu's dishonoring the Lord resulted from their drinking during their seven-day stay in the Tabernacle. Otherwise the Lord's command to Aaron to avoid strong drink when coming into the tent of meeting is out of place.

The "strange fire" that Nadab and Abihu offered needs a little explaining. Up to this point, God had not commanded Aaron or his sons to offer incense. Earlier, in the 3rd month, just after the Feast of Weeks, in the year of the Exodus, when Moses was on the mountain talking to God and receiving detailed instructions of the Covenant and blueprints for the Tabernacle, the Lord gave instructions to him concerning incense offerings (Exodus 30:1-9, 34-38). Later, when Moses put the Tabernacle together, *he* offered incense on the incense altar (Exodus 40:27). During the period intervening, Nadab and Abihu (Nadab especially, since he would succeed his father Aaron as High Priest, being oldest) must have heard Moses tell of what the Lord had spoken. They knew that incense was to be offered soon. They knew how incense was to be burned. But the Lord had not yet commanded them to do it (Leviticus 10:1), and He had not mentioned where they should obtain the fire by which the incense was to be burned.

Earlier in the year of the Exodus in the 3rd month, just after the Feast of Weeks when Moses was on the mountain, he had been given the formula for preparing the incense used in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:34-38). He had further been instructed not to offer any "strange incense" in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:9). This "strange incense" is not explained but it would seem to be anything not fitting the formula the Lord prescribed (Exodus 30:34-38). Similarly, "strange fire" would be anything other than the fire the Lord prescribed for offering the incense. Later the

Lord prescribed the source of fire as being the coals from the brazen altar (Leviticus 16:12-13). If the incense represents the prayer of the saints (Revelation 8:3-5), the fire that offers the incense represents the burning of the Holy Spirit within them. Nadab and Abihu's sin therefore represents the offering of prayers without the burning of the Holy Spirit.

From the time of Nadab and Abihu's sin on, Moses was told by the Lord to instruct Aaron not to come into the Holy of Holies frequently (Leviticus 16:1-3 ff.) in order that he may not die, but only once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 16:29-30).

Briefly, the observation of the Day of Atonement every year involves (1) a fast, (2) sacrifices, and (3) the atonement using the blood of the sacrifices. The fast lasted the entire day of the 9th of Tishri from evening until evening (Leviticus 23:32). On the 10th of Tishri, the High Priest offered one sacrifice for himself, then one for the people. With the blood of the people's sin offering, the High Priest then entered the Holy of Holies (the only day all year he is allowed to do so). There, beginning with the mercy seat and continuing to the Holy Place, the tent of meeting, and then the brazen altar, the High Priest would atone for everything using the blood of sacrifice.

The purpose of all this atonement is stated several times. The following quotes all refer to this purpose:

- Cleansing the people: "Because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins; so shall he do for the Tabernacle that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (Leviticus 16:16).
- "Cleansing the brazen altar and making it holy from the uncleanness of the people of Israel" (Leviticus 16:19).
- "Atoning for the people to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30).
- "Atoning for the sanctuary, the tent of meeting, the altar, the priests, and all the people of the assembly" (Leviticus 16:33).
- "Atoning for the people of Israel once a year because of all their sins" (Leviticus 16:34).

Thus, it is the transgressions of the nation of Israel, all their sins that are being atoned for. Since their sin causes them to be unclean, and since anything an unclean person touches also becomes unclean (Numbers 19:22), therefore the entire Tabernacle from the mercy seat to the brazen altar also needs to be atoned.

To stress the significance of the Day of Atonement, Hebrew tradition came to regard this day as a Day of Judgment¹⁵¹. Accordingly the ten days preceding the Day of Atonement from the Feast of Trumpets to the day of fasting were reckoned as the "Ten Awesome Days" or the "Ten Days of Repentance." During this period preceding "judgment", old enemies would make up their differences; gifts would be given to the poor, etc. All this was done in an effort to try to improve one's standing with God. But yet "We are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Even under the Old Covenant, believers were saved through faith (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4) not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:9).

¹⁵¹ Victor Buksbazen, The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel, p. 28.

To understand this Feast Day in more depth, we need to understand more about holiness and about the effect of the peoples' uncleanness on the Lord who was in their midst.

2) The Day of Atonement: Prophetic Significance

To understand the prophetic significance, one needs to see things in perspective. The 10th day of the seventh month, like the first day of the seventh month remains unfulfilled. As with the previous five feasts, it is the Lord Jesus Christ and His people who are involved in the fulfilling. It has been shown that the first four feasts, being related, were fulfilled in the same year (the year Christ was crucified). By analogy, it can be expected that the last three feasts will also be fulfilled in the same year (the year Christ returns). It has been shown that the feast of Trumpets, occurring on the first day of the seventh month, is the day the Lord returns "at the last trumpet." Therefore, the prophetic significance of the Day of Atonement involves something that occurs 10 days after the Lord returns.

It is good to remember that the Feast of Trumpets, ten days earlier, is a time of great rejoicing. Just prior to Christ's return, things had gotten so bad on this planet that all flesh was on the verge of being annihilated (Matthew 24:15-22). Christ's return, then, was the salvation of the people of God from certain death at the hands of the kingdom of this world. Therefore it was a day of great rejoicing!

The Feast of Booths, five days future, will be seen also to be a time of great rejoicing. The Day of Atonement, however, is not a time of rejoicing, but an extremely solemn occasion. It is called a "Sabbath of Sabbaths" (Leviticus 16:31, 23:32). No other Feast Day is referred to this way! The entire day, from evening to evening was declared a day of fasting where the entire nation, native born and stranger alike, would "afflict their souls" by not eating (Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27-32; Numbers 29:7). This is the only fast day that the Lord had prescribed in the Books of Moses. None of the other feasts contain a time of fasting. And the penalty for not doing so here involves being cut off from the nation of Israel (Leviticus 23:29). Therefore, attention is called to the fast as being quite important, and very serious.

With this as a backdrop, the pieces can be brought together and something definite can be said about what is involved in the Day of Atonement. First, the Day of Atonement came into being because of an event that occurred just after the consecration of the priests to perform the service of the Tabernacle and live in the presence of God. A similar situation exists here. Believers are called a kingdom of priests (Revelation 1:6, 20:6; 1 Peter 2:9; Isaiah 61:6, 66:21) and it is His intention that we offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, who is our great High Priest (Hebrews 7, 8). Ten days ago, on the Feast of Trumpets, at the last trumpet, the perishable put on the imperishable, and the mortal put on the immortal (1 Corinthians 15:50-54), as "death was swallowed up in victory" (Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 15:54). With immortal bodies, believers are equipped to minister as priests to God in a far greater capacity, just as Aaron's four sons were after their consecration.

Since the Lord's return at the Feast of Trumpets, Satan, the Beast and False Prophet have found their way to the Pit (Revelation 19:20, 20:1-2). And the armies that assembled together to do battle with the Lord have all been annihilated (Revelation 19:17-21). With the arsenal (Revelation 19:15, 21) at the Lord's disposal, this does not take long, just as it did not take long

to dispatch the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:35). Therefore, there is no deceiver, by whom the people of the earth may be led astray (Revelation 12:9). But there is another matter at hand!

When Nadab and Abihu offered “strange fire” before the Lord, they stepped out from under the covering of the High Priest, the covering of Moses, and the covering of the Lord’s instructions. They didn’t do something that they were expressly forbidden to do. They just didn’t wait for the consent or approval of their covering, but instead, went off and did it on their own. This is an extremely serious thing. It raised the question of who was in command, God or Nadab and Abihu. If God is demonstrated to be not in command, especially in front of all the people who were watching, it is a very dishonoring gesture toward the Lord of the Universe, and it treats Him as common or unholy.

A similar situation occurred when Moses struck the Rock twice instead of speaking to the Rock as the Lord had said (Numbers 20:7-13, Exodus 17:3-7). Since the Rock was Christ, striking the Rock a second time was like crucifying the Son of God a second time (Hebrews 6:4-8). Moses’ punishment was to be forbidden to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12), even though he pleaded with the Lord to reconsider (Deuteronomy 3:23-28).

In the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, something similar is involved. There have been numerous instances in their lives where the people of God have acted disrespectful toward their Creator. Now two things happen. First, a great many people who can now see their lives and their walk with God much better in retrospect are saddened, or burdened, if not remorsefully regretful, over the times when they weren’t in tune with their Lord. Second, they are aware that the Lord has promised to bring rewards with Him at His coming (Revelation 22:12; also Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10; Galatians 6:7), and that every idle word will be judged (Matthew 12:36). The dispensing of these rewards is commonly referred to as the Judgment Seat of Christ, at which time believers receive rewards based on their deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10, cf. also 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Here it is not a question of the believers losing their salvation on account of their deeds. That issue has been settled! They have applied the blood of the Passover Lamb to their heart (John 5:24, Romans 8:1, Hebrews 10:17). They have been passed over. The issue here is merely rewards (or lack of them) for those believers whose walk with God was atoned. It is thus a day of “testing the quality of each man’s work” (1 Corinthians 3:13). And just as Nadab and Abihu experienced an ordeal by fire (Leviticus 10:1-2), so believers’ works are revealed “as through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:10-17).

To further illustrate the significance of the Day of Atonement, the Year of Jubilee (every 49 years) and the Year of Release (every 7 years) were proclaimed as beginning on the Day of Atonement. In the Year of Release, all slaves were freed (Exodus 21:2) and the land was allowed to lay fallow (Leviticus 25:1-7). In the Year of Jubilee, in addition, the ownership of all land reverted to the family of whoever originally inherited it at the time of Joshua (Leviticus 25:13-17). Thus even property was released from its burden on the Day of Atonement.

Because of the weightiness and suspense of the matter at hand, this is a day that weighs very heavily on the people of God. For they fast and “afflict their souls” for the 24 hours prior to the 10th of Tishri, the day each has to appear before the Lord to give an account of His life (Romans 14:10-12). This fasting indicates a very dramatic example of the people humbling themselves before their Lord, and declaring their lack of self worth and desire for renewed devotion to their God. And it is undoubtedly not something they do by command; it is

something they do spontaneously because of the relationship that exists between them and their Lord.

The Prophet Daniel had a glimpse of the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. “I watched till Thrones were put in place and the Ancient of Days was seated. His garment was white as snow and the hair of his head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire. A River of Fire rushed forth before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:9-10). The awesomeness of this spectacle is a very humbling experience. Paul wrote of this day, “Each one’s work will become clear, for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work, which he has built on (the foundation), endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). In approaching the Lord, we each must cross that River of Fire.

The fulfillment of this Day of Atonement is one of covering or atonement for all the transgression (resulting in uncleanness) from the nation of Israel. It clears the air! Since there is a marriage at hand between God and His people in five days at the Feast of Booths, this judgment seat, or clearing of the air, is a necessary prerequisite. Shortly before a marriage occurs, both parties to the marriage generally have to face up to the relationship they are about to enter into and re-evaluate the terms of their commitment to each other. God, on the one hand, has to make a distinction between the holy and the profane and between the clean and the unclean as He did at the time of Nadab and Abihu’s sin (Leviticus 10:8-11). The people, on the other hand, need to realize both the holiness of their Lord and the resulting consequences of their actions, and be assured of their Lord’s unfailing mercy and love for them. The result is that the Lord’s bride is made ready and puts on her clothing or covering of fine linen (Revelation 19:7-8).

Paul wrote about each man’s works being tried by fire, where those men’s works that are represented by gold, silver or precious stones will survive the fire test. Works represented by wood, hay or straw will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). This illustration does not have to do with a man’s salvation, but with the quality of his deeds. Deeds done in drunkenness or out of an arrogant, disobedient heart are wood, hay and straw! These things are not the proper clothing for someone who lives in the Presence of God, as Nadab and Abihu were doing when they had their “test by fire.”

The Scapegoat Speaks of the Second Coming of Christ

The sacrificial aspect of the Day of Atonement, and the Scapegoat, address an important aspect of the Second Coming of Christ. Christ did this once for all at Calvary, but its effects carry over to the Day of Atonement. The two goats used at the Day of Atonement are the earthly focus of the Day of Atonement.

The way this worked is this: two identical young goats were selected from the congregation. After purifying himself and his household, the High Priest cast lots for the two goats: one for the Lord and the other for the Scapegoat. First the High Priest offered a bull as a sin offering for himself. Then he put two handfuls of incense on live coals from the Altar of

Burnt Offering and brought this inside the Veil. This created a lot of smoke, such that the cloud of incense covered the Mercy Seat, which is the Presence of God in the midst of His people.

After sprinkling the blood of the bull seven times on the East side of the Mercy Seat, the High Priest proceeded to kill the goat of the sin offering for the people. This goat had been selected for the Lord, but is actually a sin offering for the people. The High Priest then sprinkled the blood of this goat on the Mercy Seat, and all the furniture of the Holy Place, including the Altar of Burnt Offering. In doing this, “He shall make atonement for the Holy *Place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Leviticus 16:16).

After making atonement for all the uncleanness of the people of Israel, the High Priest brought out the live goat. He then “lays both his hands on the head of the live goat, confesses over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sends *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness” (Leviticus 16:21-22).

The rest of the bull and the goat that were offered as a sin offering were taken outside the camp and burned completely¹⁵², rising as smoke to the Lord (Leviticus 16:27). This brings to mind the offering of Manoah, where the Angel of the Lord departed back to heaven by ascending in the flame of the altar (Judges 13:19-20). Similarly Christ, in His Deity, ascended from the Mount of Olives back to His Father in heaven.

The result was that “On this day the High Priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:30). Paul spoke of the meaning of this as follows:

“Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:11-14)

The picture presented by the Scapegoat is the complete removal of the sins of the people once and for all. This is necessary at the Day of Atonement prior to the Marriage of the Lamb.

Justin Martyr interpreted¹⁵³ the two goats from the Day of Atonement as the two appearances of Christ.

¹⁵² Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar ate the meat of the sin offering because its blood had not been brought into the Tabernacle (Leviticus 10:16-18). Nadab and Abihu’s sin had interrupted them. But thereafter, the remainder of the sin offering was later prescribed to be burned if its blood was brought into the Tabernacle (or Temple).

¹⁵³ Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, 40.

“The two goats which were ordered to be offered during the fast of the Day of Atonement, of which one was sent away as the scapegoat and the other sacrificed, were similarly declarative of the two appearances of Christ. The first goat, the elders of the people and the priests, laid hands on Him and sent Him away as the scapegoat. At His second appearance, in the same place in Jerusalem, the Jews shall recognize Him whom they have dishonored (Psalm 22:16). He was an offering for all sinners willing to repent, and keeping the fast which Isaiah speaks of (Isaiah 58:1-7), undoing the heavy burdens, and keeping the other precepts He enumerated, which those believing in Jesus do. Further, the offering of the two goats, which were commanded to be sacrificed at the fast of the Day of Atonement, were not permitted to take place anywhere else; only in Jerusalem.”

Tertullian interpreted¹⁵⁴ the Day of Atonement as speaking of both Christ’s First and Second Advent. The scapegoat was abused like Christ at His First Advent. The other goat was proof of His Second Coming and was offered by the priests, like the Eucharist, as the priests enjoyed the Grace of God¹⁵⁵. The Day of Atonement therefore speaks of the putting away of all sins at the Second Coming of Christ just before the coming of the Kingdom of God in glory.

“The Father made Christ (in His humanity) a little lower than the angels, and ‘crowned Him with glory and honor and put all things in subjection under his feet’ (Psalm 8:5-6, Hebrews 2:7-8). At the Second Coming the Jews shall ‘learn to know Him whom they pierced, and shall beat their breasts tribe by tribe’ (Zechariah 12:10-12, Revelation 1:7). In the former days they did not know Him, when He was in the humility of His human estate, because, ‘who will declare His generation?’ (Isaiah 53:8) So, too, in the mystery of His Name¹⁵⁶, the truest Priest of the Father, His own Christ, is clothed in two kinds of clothing with reference to the Two Advents. First, He was clothed in ‘filthy garments’, that is, in the humiliation of mortal flesh, when the devil opposed Him (Zechariah 3:1, 3) and who after His baptism tempted Him. Subsequently, He was stripped of His former filthy garments, and adorned with a long robe, with a turban and a clean miter (Zechariah 3:4-5), that is, with the clothing of the Second Advent; since He is demonstrated as having attained ‘glory and honor’. No one can say that the man there depicted is ‘the son of Jehozadak’ (Haggai 1:12-2:4, Zechariah 6:11), who was never clad in a filthy garment, but was always adorned with the priestly garment, and was never deprived of the priestly function. But the ‘Jesus’ there alluded to is Christ, the Priest of God the most high Father; who at His First Advent came in humility, in human form, up to the period of His passion; being Himself made, through all stages of suffering, a victim for us all. After His resurrection, He was ‘clad with a long robe’, and named the Priest of God the Father to eternity (Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 5:5-7). So I will make an interpretation of the two goats which were habitually offered on the fast-day of the Day of

¹⁵⁴ Tertullian, *Answer to the Jews*, I, vii, 14.

Tertullian, *Five Books Against Marcion*, II, ii, 3:7

¹⁵⁵ Some early writers refer to the priests eating the goat that was offered to the Lord. For example Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 40; Tertullian, *Five Books Against Marcion*, II, ii, 3:7; and “The Epistle of Barnabas”, 6, *Apostolic Fathers* in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1. However, this is not found in the Scriptures; the Scriptures command that the goat to be slain should be burned outside the camp (Leviticus 16:).

¹⁵⁶ That is, the Hebrew name Joshua (Zechariah 3:1-5) is the same name as the Greek name Jesus.

Atonement (Leviticus 16). They point to each successive stage in the character of the Christ who is already come. The two goats were picked to look identical, because of the identity of the Lord's general appearance, inasmuch as He did not come in some other form, since He has to be recognized by those who hurt Him. One of the goats, accompanied with scarlet¹⁵⁷, with cursing, universal spitting, tearing and piercing, was cast away by the people outside the city into perdition, marked with clear tokens of Christ's passion. Christ was clothed with a scarlet garment, was subjected to universal spitting, was afflicted with great contempt, and was crucified outside the city (Hebrews 13:11-12). The other goat, however, offered for sins¹⁵⁸, spoke of the Second Coming. That is, after the putting an end to all sins, the priests of the spiritual temple (that is, of the Church) were to enjoy a spiritual public distribution of the Lord's grace, while all others are fasting from salvation."

"Therefore, the prophecies of the First Advent obscured what was going to happen with many diverse figures, and debased it with every dishonor. The Second Advent was foretold as clearly and wholly worthy of God. By fixing their gaze on that one alone which they could easily understand and believe, that is, the Second Advent, which is honorable and glorious, the Jews have been deceived as to the more obscure, that is, the First Advent. To the present moment they declare that their Christ has not come, because He has not come in majesty; while they ignore the fact that He was first to come in humility."

Thus the scapegoat represents Christ's First Coming, while the goat of the sin offering represents Christ's Second Coming.

3) The Day of Atonement: Spiritual Application

The spiritual application of the Day of Atonement, as indicated by the day of fasting for preparation, is a very solemn, weighty matter. It involves covering! More specifically, it involves covering for the believer in his walk with his Lord, whether he is praying in his closet, attending a meeting of the whole Church, or performing the work he is called to do.

What is covering? Covering is so ever present in people's lives that they often take it for granted. For example, a person at his job has his supervisor for a covering. A woman in her home has her husband for a covering. The Bishops of the Church have a trust-submission relationship with each other for a covering. Most people have covering in many areas simultaneously. For example, most people have the covering of local and national government, a family, and a job. A believer has the additional covering of the Holy Spirit, the blood of Christ, and his Church government (Bishops, priests, deacons, etc.). A person who has a commitment to

¹⁵⁷ According to The Epistle of Barnabas, 6, the scapegoat had its head encircled with scarlet wool as it was driven into the desert'. He who drove the goat into the desert took the wool from its head, and placed the wool on a shrub which is called Rachia, which is some kind of bramble bush. The wool is placed among thorns that anyone who wishes to carry it away may find it necessary to suffer much; the thorns are formidable, and thus one can obtain it only as the result of suffering.

¹⁵⁸ The blood of the goat of the sin offering that was set aside "for the Lord" (Leviticus 16:8) was applied to the Mercy Seat for the people (Leviticus 16:15). Starting with the Mercy Seat, the High Priest made atonement for all parts of the Tabernacle because of the uncleanness of the people. The fat of the goat of the sin offering was burned on the altar, and the rest of the goat of the sin offering was burned outside the camp.

the members of his local Church and a submissive heart toward the government of his local Church experiences the covering of his local Church.

An example of someone experiencing the covering of his local Church is Paul and Barnabas, and later Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40), who were sent out to do the work the Lord called them to (Acts 13:1-4). Another would be the sending of Barsabbas and Silas to Antioch by the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22). Even archangels have a covering, as Michael demonstrated by not pronouncing a judgment against Satan, but instead deferring to his covering (i.e., the Lord) to pronounce the judgment (Jude 1:9). Examples of people not submitting to their covering are Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and the Jewish exorcists in Corinth (Acts 19:13-16).

When a person walks in the presence of God, there is a special need for covering in order that the holiness and dignity of the Lord may not be offended. Before God, covering is pictured as spiritual clothing, without which one is naked (Revelation 3:17-18, 16:15, 19:7-8). This covering or clothing is put on by an attitude of the heart. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34, 15:11) resulting in blessing or cursing (James 3:8-18, Matthew 12:35-37). It is in the heart that one hears the Lord's voice and either obeys (James 1:22-27, Luke 8:21) resulting in good deeds or righteous acts (Revelation 19:7-8, James 1:22-27, 3:13-17), or goes one's own way (Isaiah 53:6, 56:11-12, 57:17-18, Proverbs 14:12).

Believers have been consecrated, like Nadab and Abihu, as priests to God (Revelation 1:6, 20:6; 1 Peter 2:9; Isaiah 61:6, 66:21). Because of the shed blood of Christ, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). Under the covering of this blood and the Holy Spirit, we can offer sacrifices of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, on a continuous basis (Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 2:5). This fruit of our lips is likened to incense offered up to the Lord (Revelation 5:8). Further, since our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), it behooves us to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1 ff.).

Therefore, in our "temple service", we must be careful to avoid "strange fire" and "strange incense" also. Strange fire has been mentioned as being anything other than the coals from the brazen altar where the sacrifice was made, and where the blood of the Covenant was poured out (Leviticus 8:15, 9:9). This fire was lit by the Lord Himself (Leviticus 9:24, 1 Chronicles 21:26, 2 Chronicles 7:1). Strange incense has been mentioned as anything other than that prescribed by the Lord (Exodus 30:34-38).

"Strange incense", therefore, because its composition is not what the Lord requested, just doesn't "smell" right. Examples may range from a believer praying for great wealth and prestige, to a believer engaging in immorality.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁵⁹ that the fast and the humbling of souls of the people of Israel at the Day of Atonement needs to be according to God's prescription and cannot be just a token fast. It needs to "smell" right! Athanasius applied these words to the Paschal Fast (preceding Pascha or Passover), but his words apply for any fasting time. There is a great benefit to us when we fast as God chooses; that is with body and soul.

¹⁵⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, I, 4-5.

“There are diverse proclamations, such the prophet blowing the trumpet; further, having turned to the truth, be ready for the announcement of the trumpet. He said, ‘Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast’ (Joel 2:15). This is a warning trumpet, and commands with great earnestness, that when we fast, we should make the fast holy. Not all those who call upon God, reverence God as holy, since there are some who defile Him; yet not Him -- that is impossible -- but their own mind concerning Him; for He is holy, and has pleasure in the saints (Psalm 16:3 LXX). Therefore Paul accuses, ‘Transgressors of the Law dishonor God’ (Romans 2:23). So then, to make a separation from those who pollute the fast, he said here, ‘sanctify a fast’. Many, crowding to the fast, pollute themselves in the thoughts of their hearts, sometimes by doing evil against their brethren, sometimes by daring to defraud. There are many who exalt themselves above their neighbors, thereby causing great harm. The boast of fasting did no good to the Pharisee, although he fasted twice a week, only because he exalted himself against the publican (Luke 18:12). In the same manner the Word blamed the people of Israel on account of such a fast as this, exhorting them: ‘This is not the fast and the Day of Atonement that I have chosen where a man should humble his soul. Even if you should bow down your neck, and spread sackcloth and ashes under you, this fast cannot be called acceptable’ (Isaiah 58:5 LXX). That we may be able to show what kind of persons we should be when we fast, and of what character the fast should be, listen to God commanding Moses, ‘The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, On the tenth day of this seventh month is a Day of Atonement; it shall be a holy convocation to you; you shall humble your souls, and offer a whole-burned-offering to the Lord’ (Leviticus 23:26). Afterwards, that the Law might be defined on this point, He proceeds to say; ‘Every soul that shall not be humbled in that day, shall be cut off from among its people’” (Leviticus 23:29 LXX).

“Notice brethren, how much a fast can do, and in what manner the Law commands us to fast. It is required that not only with the body should we fast, but with the soul. Now the soul is humbled when it does not follow wicked opinions, but feeds on becoming virtuous. For virtues and vices are the food of the soul and it can eat either of these two foods, and incline to either of the two, according to its own will. If it tends toward virtue, it will be nourished by virtues, righteousness, temperance, meekness and fortitude; as Paul said, ‘Being nourished in the words of faith’ (1 Timothy 4:6). Such was the case with our Lord, who said, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work’ (John 4:34). But if the soul inclines downwards, it is then nourished by nothing but sin. The Holy Spirit, describing sinners and their food, referred to the devil when He said, ‘You broke to pieces the heads of the dragon; You gave him as meat to the Ethiopian nations’ (Psalm 74:14 LXX). This is the food of sinners! As our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, being heavenly bread, is the food of the saints, according to this, ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you’ (John 6:53); so is the devil the food of the impure, and of those who do nothing which is of the light, but work the deeds of darkness. Therefore, in order to withdraw and turn us from vices, He commands us to be nourished with the food of virtue; namely, humbleness of mind, lowliness to endure humiliation, and the acknowledgment of God. Not only does such a fast

as this obtain pardon for souls, but being kept holy, it prepares the saints, and raises them above the earth.”

Just as the Tabernacle incense was something the priests had to learn how to make (Exodus 30:34-38), so what to pray for, or how to behave is something one has to learn. The Apostles realized this and asked their Lord to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). What followed was Jesus teaching them what we call “The Lord’s Prayer” (Luke 11:2-4).

On the other hand, a “strange fire” offering gives off the correct aroma and by outward appearance might seem all right. But it is offered in the wrong manner, by the wrong fire. If it were lit by the Lord’s fire, it would be offered in a similar manner to the offering on the brazen altar. All the sacrifices on the brazen altar were fulfilled by Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross (Hebrews 9:26-10:10, 7:27) where His sacrifice was characterized by a humble and submissive heart (Matthew 26:39, 42, 45 ff.). Thus, priestly service that is not done with a humble, submissive heart is performed by means of “strange fire.” Examples may range from prayers prayed with a flippant, bossy attitude, to deeds done in a drunken stupor.

The attitude that prevailed when Nadab and Abihu offered the incense with “strange fire” before the Lord was an attitude dishonoring to God and offending His holiness (Leviticus 10:3). Shortly after, the Lord spoke to Aaron about avoiding alcoholic beverage when entering the tent of meeting (Leviticus 10:9-11). Thus, the implication is that Nadab and Abihu had been under the influence when they began their priestly service. Since believers are, like Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, priests to God, and can offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, it behooves them to consider Who it is that they are addressing (Hebrews 12:22-29). He takes no pleasure in fools (Ecclesiastics 5:4)! Priestly service done in a manner unworthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1ff) is just not acceptable. To help us in this life to maintain a humble heart, the Church has provided the Sacrament of Confession. By judging ourselves and humbling ourselves before a judge in this life, we avoid being judged by The Judge in the age to come.

The best way to live in the presence of the God of the Universe is to simply own up to who we are and realize who God is. After all, He looks right through us and sees us as we are (Hebrews 4:13). There is no point in putting on false fronts; they accomplish nothing. And He knows our frame and realizes that we are made of the same dust that He made Adam out of (Psalm 103:14, Genesis 2:7). Our covering then, as we live in His presence, is a humble and submissive heart, and a reverent and respectful attitude toward Him. He is the potter and we are the clay (Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, Jeremiah 18:1-6, Romans 9:19-21).

Thus the Day of Atonement was established to deal with sin, and this is its purpose even at the end of time. God’s holiness is the issue, and we all offend Him in some way; but He is patient with us. This is a day of release in preparation for Eternity with the Lord. In this life, we also obtain a measure of this release little by little through confession.

THE FEAST OF BOOTHS

The Feast of Booths, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, is the last of the seven feasts that the Lord gave to Moses. Later on, other feast days were added; e.g. Chanukah, remembering the Maccabean conflict of c. 150 BC; Purim, remembering the attempt at genocide in the days of Esther; etc.

The Feast of Booths was referred to as a seven day feast, from 15 Tishri to 21 Tishri, with a “solemn assembly” called on the 8th day, the 22nd of Tishri (Leviticus 23:34-36). The first day and the eighth day were Sabbaths, and a “holy convocation.”

Coming in the autumn of the year, the Feast of Booths was *the* harvest festival of the Hebrew year. All throughout the long hot summer, the grain had been threshed and either stored for the winter or ground into fine flour. A wide variety of summer fruits, for example, apples, grapes, cucumbers, figs, dates, olives, watermelons, cantaloupes, pistachio nuts, walnuts, and possibly bananas¹⁶⁰, had been picked during this time also. These are the kinds of fruit that require lots of warm weather and sunshine to mature properly, and which, when picked in the heat of the summer, give good refreshment when it is needed most. Since the Feast of Booths comes in the early autumn (late September-mid October), these summer fruits are common table-fare about this time and make for a feast equipped with an enormous assortment of delicious things to eat.

In the Middle-East, wine was consumed very commonly because of a lack of good tasting drinking water part of the year. Water is usually plentiful during the (rainy) winter, but often becomes stagnant or non-existent during the long, hot summer¹⁶¹. And therefore the treading of the grape crop to make wine (which keeps well for a long time) is an important part of the harvest. By the time of the Feast of Booths, all the grapes have been treaded and the wine stored in casks or jars for either immediate consumption, or use during the coming year. Thus, plenty of fresh wine is on hand for the week-long Feast of Booths.

1) Feast of Booths: Commemorating Event

There were two main things to be remembered during the celebration of the Feast of Booths: the fruit of the land that they have, and are eating now, and the wilderness that they had for 40 years before they came into the Promised Land.

The fruit of the land is remembered in that there is a tremendously joyful celebration after the ingathering from both the threshing floor, and the wine press (Deuteronomy 16:13). Every inhabitant of the land is allowed to participate, native born and sojourner, slave and free, widow, fatherless and Levites (Deuteronomy 16:14). The actual celebration would last seven days (Deuteronomy 16:15). The eighth would not be a day of celebration but a day of solemn assembly (Leviticus 23:34-36). The reason for celebrating is stated as “because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the works of your hands” (Deuteronomy 16:15).

¹⁶⁰ Alexander the Great is credited with bringing bananas from India to the West in the 4th century BC. It is entirely possible that bananas were available in Israel the years before Christ

¹⁶¹ Merrill Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 1163.

The implication is that the Lord instructed them to have a real bash because He'd blessed them so much (Deuteronomy 16:15).

During the seven celebration days of the Feast of Booths, all native born in Israel were to dwell in booths (i.e., huts, shelters) made of tree branches (Leviticus 23:40-42, Nehemiah 8:15). At this time, trees were more plentiful than exists today. The Land at this time was unbelievably lush (Numbers 13:17-27). Later, after the captivity, people had to go up to the mountains to find enough tree branches to make their booths (Nehemiah 8:14-17). Cloth was not allowed because construction materials had to derive their growth from the ground¹⁶².

The reason all native Israelis lived in booths for seven days was to recall to their mind that the Lord made them dwell in the same kind of booths (or temporary shelters) when He brought them out of the land of Egypt (Leviticus 23:43). Thus, emphasis is on the stark contrast between the lush land and the forbidding wilderness of the Negev; and on the abundant variety of the fruit of the land versus the sameness of the manna (Numbers 11:4-6) of the 40 years' wandering. In short, it is a time for Israel not just to rejoice, but also to stop and consider how good the Lord has been to them, having blessed them beyond the dreams of their fathers.

Also during these seven days of celebration, while the people are rejoicing before the Lord (Leviticus 23:40), an unusually large number of burnt offerings were being offered (Numbers 29:12-34), more than on all the other feast days combined (Numbers 28:16-29:11). Also, once every seven years in the Sabbatical year (i.e., the year of rest) during these seven days, the Law was read publicly in order that the common man may succeed in knowing the Lord and His ways (Deuteronomy 31:10-13; compare Jeremiah 31:33-34, Hebrews 8:10-11).

On the eighth day, the day of solemn assembly, no instructions are given concerning what the people are to do, besides some sacrifices, which are almost identical to those offered on the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (compare Numbers 29:2-6, 29:8-11, 29:36-38).

The Hebrew word translated "solemn assembly", however, is used rather sparsely in the Scriptures concerning feast days. Only the 8th day of the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:36, Numbers 29:35, Nehemiah 8:18, 2 Chronicles 7:9) and the 7th day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are referred to by this term (Deuteronomy 16:8).

The solemn assembly was:

1. A Sabbath.
2. A holy convocation.
3. A solemn assembly (Leviticus 23:34-36).

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

There are two different Hebrew words¹⁶³ that are commonly translated "tabernacle":

1. Mishkan (Strong's 4908): meaning 1. a dwelling place, and 2. a tent, or the Tabernacle of God. This refers to the Tabernacle where God dwelt.

¹⁶² Merrill Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 360.

¹⁶³ In the Greek Septuagint, however, two different forms of the same word are used for the Tabernacle and for the peoples' booths. Skenopegia (Strong's 4634) meaning the setting up of tents refers to The Tabernacle. Skenos (Strong's 4636) meaning tent refers to the booths that the people dwelt in.

2. Sukkah (Strong's 5521): meaning a thicket or a booth made with interwoven branches and leaves. This refers to the temporary dwellings that the people lived in.

Here we are concentrating on the first Hebrew word *mishkan*. Moses was commanded to make everything about the Tabernacle according to the pattern that he saw on the mountain. This command applied to everything about the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9), including the Lamp-Stand (Exodus 25:36-40, Numbers 8:4) and the walls with its boards and sockets (Exodus 25:25-30).

John Chrysostom stated¹⁶⁴ that the Original Tabernacle was on Mt. Sinai, and Moses made the prototype according to what he saw. The prototype was there only as a witness against them.

“‘Our fathers had the Tabernacle ‘of Witness’ in the wilderness’ (Acts 7:44). This is why it was there, that they should have God for Witness; this was all. ‘God instructed Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen on the mountain’; so that on the mountain Moses saw the Original. This Tabernacle in the wilderness was carried around, and not locally fixed. He calls it, ‘Tabernacle of witness’; i.e. for witness of the miracles, witness of the statutes. This is the reason why both it and those fathers had no Temple. It was none other than Christ that gave the pattern itself.

2) Feast of Booths: Significant Events that Occurred Then

Several events have occurred as recorded in the Scriptures that shed a great deal of light on the Feast of Booths. The first occurred in the days of Solomon the king, and involved the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant to its permanent resting place within the newly constructed Temple. Ever since the 40 years in the wilderness (over 400 years earlier), the Ark had been residing in the portable and temporary residence of the Tabernacle. The events during this year in connection with the Feast of Booths are summarized in Figure 6 below.

The main focus of the celebration that year was the entry of the Ark into its permanent dwelling place in the Temple. As the Ark came, Solomon sacrificed before it. When it was put down within the Holy of Holies, the glory of the Lord filled the House (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14). When Solomon prayed, he prayed *toward* the Temple containing the Ark, and he stated that everyone in the future would do this also (2 Chronicles 6:20, 21, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34, 38). A similar event is not recorded as being repeated with the construction of the second Temple that was built after the Captivity.

¹⁶⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XVII.

FIGURE 6
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

1. With the help of the craftsman, Hiram of Tyre, tribe of Naphtali, Solomon had the first Temple and all its furnishings constructed in Jerusalem (1 Kings 7:13-51, 2 Chronicles 3, 4).
2. At this time the Ark and the Tabernacle were in the City of David, which is called Zion (1 Kings 8:1, 2 Chronicles 5:2).
3. In the seventh month, all the men of Israel assembled themselves to Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:1, 2 Chronicles 5:3).
4. Beginning seven days before the Feast of Booths, Solomon began dedicating the altar of the new Temple (2 Chronicles 7:8-10, 1 Kings 8:65-66).
5. Sometime during this time (the day is not specified) the priests brought up the Ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy utensils from Zion (1 Kings 8:4, 2 Chronicles 5:4-5).
6. Before the Ark, Solomon and the people sacrificed so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted (1 Kings 8:5, 2 Chronicles 5:6). While it doesn't specify whether these were sin offerings, burnt offerings, or both, the tone of the entire Feast of Booths is one of Burnt Offerings (Numbers 29:12-34).
7. The priests then brought the Ark to its place in the Holy of Holies under the covering of the cherubim (1 Kings 8:6-8, 2 Chronicles 5:7-9).
8. At this point, there was nothing in the Ark except the two stone tablets (1 Kings 8:9, 2 Chronicles 5:10).
9. When all the priests had come out of the Holy place, and when the Levitical singers and trumpeters were raising one voice in praise to the Lord, then the glory of the Lord filled the Temple such that the priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14).
10. Solomon addressed and blessed the people; then kneeling on a bronze platform before the bronze altar with his arms outstretched to heaven, he offered a moving prayer of dedication toward the Temple (1 Kings 8:12-53; 2 Chronicles 6).
11. When Solomon had finished praying and blessing the people, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices (2 Chronicles 7:1).
12. The glory of the Lord again filled the Temple such that the priests couldn't enter (2 Chronicles 7:1-2).
13. The sons of Israel, awestruck, bowed down on the pavement and worshipped (2 Chronicles 7:3).
14. Solomon and the people offered peace offerings of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep, plus other unspecified burnt offerings (1 Kings 8:62-64, 2 Chronicles 7:4-7).
15. On the eighth day of the Feast of Booths, they had a solemn assembly the 22nd of Tishri (2 Chronicles 7:9).
16. On the 23rd of Tishri, Solomon sent the people away back to their tents rejoicing and happy of heart because of the goodness that the Lord had shown. Solomon probably sent them away with a message late on the 22nd, the day of solemn assembly. The people probably didn't actually pick up their things and move out until the next morning, the 23rd (1 Kings 8:66, 2 Chronicles 7:10).
17. In total, they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the Feast of Booths seven days, plus the 8th day of solemn assembly (1 Kings 8:65, 2 Chronicles 7:9).
18. During this celebration, however, Israel did not dwell in booths, or tree-branch huts, as they had in the days of Joshua, and as they would later do in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. (Cf. Nehemiah 8:17)

19. Although the exact day on which everything happened is not specified, from the sheer number of sacrifices offered, they must have been sacrificing virtually continuously day and night.

Another significant event occurring during the Feast of Booths is a word of the Lord coming via the prophet, Haggai, after the second Temple had been constructed (Haggai 2:1-9). The contents of this word are summarized in Figure 7 below. Note that the main focus is on the Lord's house that would exist at the end times (when all the shaking would occur.)

A third significant event regarding the Feast of Booths occurred the year before Christ was crucified (John 7:2). Not too much is mentioned about His activities during the Feast. All that is said is that He was teaching during the seven days of the feast, which is in keeping with the commandment He gave to Moses (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). However, He ran afoul of the religious leaders on what He taught (John 7:14-36). Also worth noting is what He did on the last day, the great day of the feast, which is the 22nd of Tishri. On that day, "Jesus stood up (in the midst of the solemn assembly) and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

FIGURE 7
The Word of the Lord via Haggai

1. The Word of the Lord was directed toward Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah; Joshua the High Priest; and the remnant of the people (Haggai 2:2)
2. Concerning the past, a word of reminder: Comparing the 2nd Temple, then newly completed with the 1st Temple (Solomon's), the second seems as nothing in comparison (Haggai 2:3).
3. Concerning the present: A word of promise of help: Take courage and work, for the Lord is with them and His Spirit is abiding in their midst (Haggai 2:4-5).
4. Concerning the Future: A word of prophecy:
 - (a) Once more in a little while, the Lord will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, the dry land, and all the nations (Haggai 2:6-9). This passage is later quoted as referring to the time immediately preceding Christ's return (Hebrews 12:26).
 - (b) People then will come with the wealth of all nations (cf. also Revelation 21:24-26; Isaiah 60:4-7, 15, 16).
 - (c) The Lord's house will then be filled with glory.
 - (d) The silver and gold is the Lord's (compare Isaiah 60:17).
 - (e) The glory of this latter house, i.e. in the end times when the shaking occurs, will be greater than the glory of the former, i.e. Solomon's Temple.
 - (f) In this place, i.e. at the latter house, the Lord will give peace. (Compare Isaiah 9:6-7, 60:17, 66:12).

The analogy Jesus was referring to was the traditional carrying of a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam to the Temple and pouring out the water at the Temple as a drink offering. This tradition developed sometime after the Captivity. This was done to commemorate the water flowing from the Rock which Moses struck in the wilderness (Exodus 17:1-7), where the Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

The living water flowing from the heart of those who come to Christ refers to the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, 30 AD (Acts 2:17); but this was just a down payment (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:14) of what those who come to Christ will receive at the Second Coming.

3) Feast of Booths: Prophetic Significance

At the point in time that the Feast of Booths sees its fulfillment, Jesus Christ has returned in glory for His people and annihilated the armies gathered against Him in the one decisive battle (Revelation 19:17-21, 16:12-16). This occurred two weeks ago as is revealed by the Feast of Trumpets.

Five days earlier at the Day of Atonement, a very solemn, moving event (accompanied by a fast) occurred when the Lord took care of any remaining guilt or lack of covering that remained among His people. Nothing now inhibits or tarnishes the resurrected bodies of the believers, and they (collectively) have made themselves ready (as a bride) for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7). Everything is thus set for the Feast of Booths.

In this fulfillment year, as our Lord returns, many things come together simultaneously. A great deal has been written about it in the Scriptures that will not be attempted to mention at this time. For the time being, attention will be focused just on imagery used in connection with the Feast of Booths. However, this is not intended to imply that the events described are the only things that will happen.

At this time during Feast of Booths, imagery concerning the first Temple (Solomon's Temple), and the second Temple (Zerubbabel's Temple) are combined. The first Temple speaks of beginnings; that is, the beginning of the Lord's permanent dwelling place on earth. The second temple speaks of restoration; that is, the restoration of the Lord's dominion and rule on earth, which centers on the Lord's dwelling place.

As was the case during the celebration of the Feast of Booths by Solomon the year he finished building the Temple, all attention in this fulfilling Feast of Booths is focused on the Ark of God. It will be recalled that Moses made the Ark of the Covenant after the pattern he saw on the mountain (Exodus 25:40, Hebrews 8:5). This Ark was the residence of God on earth (Exodus 25:22, 30:6; compare Acts 7:44-50). Strictly speaking it was not so much a "residence of God" as a "meeting place with God." While the model Ark on earth may no longer exist, the real Ark is still in heaven waiting for the end times (Revelation 11:19). A brief history of the real Ark and the model Ark is tabulated in Appendix D at the end of this work. Just as the Ark went before the armies of Israel when they went to war against Jericho, so the real Ark has gone before the armies from heaven in leading them to victory on the Day of Trumpets at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:17-21, 16:12-16). And just as there was great rejoicing at the arrival of the Ark from Zion (2 Chronicles 5:2-14, 7:10) for its permanent dwelling in the newly constructed first Temple, so there is great rejoicing here (Revelation 19:7).

In Solomon's day and generally whenever the Feast of Booths was remembered, a great deal of burnt offerings was offered to the Lord. In this fulfillment, there is no longer a need for the sin offerings that always preceded the burnt offerings (Numbers 29:12-38), because Christ

took care of that once for all time (Hebrews 10:10). But true to the Feast of Booths, there is a great deal of burnt offerings. In a burnt offering, as opposed to other offerings, the animal was offered completely (Leviticus 1:5) rather than having just parts of the animal offered (Leviticus 4, 5). These burnt offerings, picturing a complete, consuming devotion, are none other than the adoring devotion of the Lord's people before the Ark as they present their bodies as a living sacrifice in their spiritual service of worship (see Romans 12:1-2; also Revelation 4).

The Lord's house, or the Temple, will then be filled with His glory (as in Solomon's day) as the righteous begin to shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43, Daniel 12:3). This house has only recently been rebuilt when mortality put on immortality at the Feast of Trumpets (1 Corinthians 15:52-54). The union of the Ark with this new house or dwelling place is spoken of as the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9).

Without a question, the glory of this house exceeds that of the first Temple as the sun outshines a light bulb (Haggai 2:9). This house will be like the hub of the universe with the wealth, the glory, and the honor of the kings of the earth being brought to it (Revelation 21:24-26; Psalm 72:10-11; Isaiah 60:15-22). From here, the Lord will speak peace to the nations, and from here the Lord and His bride will rule all creation.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁶⁵ that if Moses made the Tabernacle according to the heavenly pattern, the service performed was a type of the heavenly mysteries.

"If Moses made all things according to the pattern showed him in the mountain, it is clear that the service performed in the Tabernacle was a type of the heavenly mysteries; the Lord, desirous that we should enter, prepared for us the new and abiding way. As all the old things were a type of the new, so the festival that now is (i.e. Pascha), is a type of the joy which is above, to which coming with Psalms and spiritual songs, let us begin the fasts."

John Chrysostom noted¹⁶⁶ that the similarity between heaven and the tabernacle is limited to the imagery, since the power is not equal at all.

"Types contain a figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, but not the power. The reality and the type have something in common with each other. The figure exists equally in both, but not the power. The same is true with respect to Heaven and the tabernacle; the figure was equal, for there was the Holy of Holies in both; but the power and the other things were not the same."

Irenaeus of Lyons criticized¹⁶⁷ heretics of his day who maintained that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance and passion. They sin against their Father rather than giving Him thanks at the Eucharist, where the Eucharist establishes our opinion. The Eucharist is a heavenly mystery; but it is real, not imaginary. Similarly there is a Temple of God in heaven that is also real, where the copies on earth describe and prefigure it. God, who needs nothing, desires our good works in order that we may learn to serve Him.

"How can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body and blood of the Lord goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them

¹⁶⁵ Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, XLV.

¹⁶⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XVII, 5.

¹⁶⁷ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xviii, 5-6.

either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the Eucharist. Our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. We offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. The bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

“We make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created. God does not need our possessions; but we need to offer something to God; as Solomon said, ‘He who has pity on the poor, lends to the Lord’ (Proverbs 19:17). God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things. As our Lord said, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me; in prison, and you came to Me’ (Matthew 25:34-36). Therefore, He does not stand in need of these services, yet He desires that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful. So the Word gave to the people that precept of making oblations, although He stood in no need of them that they might learn to serve God; thus it is also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven, for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed; the temple likewise is there, as John said, ‘And the temple of God was opened in heaven’ (Revelation 11:19). the tabernacle also, ‘For behold the tabernacle of God, *is* with men, and He will dwell with them’” (Revelation 21:3).

Irenaeus of Lyons continued to say¹⁶⁸ that created things cannot be glossed over and spiritualized. The earth will be recalled to its pristine condition as it was in the days of Adam, and Jerusalem will be rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above. The dead will really rise again, judgment will really occur and there will be a new heaven and earth. The old Jerusalem, in which men are disciplined, is an image of the new Jerusalem, which is the Tabernacle of God. All these things are steadfast, true and substantial; this is the subject matter of the Feast of Booths.

“All created things cannot be spiritualized; for God will show to the whole earth that is under heaven your glory. In the times of the kingdom, the earth will be called again by Christ to its pristine condition, and Jerusalem will be rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above. Isaiah said of this, ‘Behold, I have painted your walls on my hands, and you are continually before me’ (Isaiah 49:16). Paul said in like manner, ‘The Jerusalem, which is above is free, which is the mother of us all’ (Galatians 4:26). John saw this new Jerusalem descending on the new earth (Revelation 21:2). After the times of the kingdom, he said, ‘I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them’ (Revelation 20:11). He described the general resurrection and the judgment, ‘The dead, great and

¹⁶⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, V, xxxv, 2; V, xxxvi, 1.

small'. 'The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them; and books were opened' (Revelation 20:12-13). 'The book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and Death and Hades were sent into the lake of fire, the second death' (Revelation 20:14). Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41). 'If anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of fire' (Revelation 20:15). After this, he said, 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away'" (Revelation 21:1-4). Isaiah declares the same, 'There shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall not at all remember the former, neither shall it at all come into their mind. But they shall find in her joy and exultation' (Isaiah 65:17-18 LXX). Paul said this also, 'The form of this world is passing away' (1 Corinthians 7:31). To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away' (Matthew 24:35). When these things pass away above the earth, the new Jerusalem above shall then descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men. Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image — that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. Of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern on the mountain (Exodus 25:40); nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, true and substantial, having been made by God for righteous men's enjoyment. It is God truly who raises up man, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically. As he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, he shall go forward and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. 'He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new"'. The Lord says, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful. And He said to me, "It is done!"' (Revelation 21:5-6). And this is the truth of the matter."

"Since there are real men, so there must also be a real establishment that they don't vanish away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. The substance and the essence of the creation will not be annihilated, for faithful and true is He who has established it, but 'the form of the world is passing away' (1 Corinthians 7:31); that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them. Therefore this present form has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things and the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things. But when this present fashion of things passes away and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, then there shall be the new heaven and the new earth. The new man shall remain continually there, always occupied with God. Since these things shall

always continue without end, Isaiah declares, ‘As the new heaven and the new earth, which I make, remain before me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name continue’” (Isaiah 66:22 LXX).

John of Damascus stated¹⁶⁹ that Christ’s Resurrection is a pattern for our resurrection: as He is, so we shall be. This gives us a glimpse of what life will be like after the Resurrection, which is also illustrated by the Feast of Tabernacles.

“After Christ was raised from the dead He laid aside all His passions, His corruption, hunger, thirst, sleep, weariness, etc. Although He did taste food after the Resurrection (Luke 24:42-43), yet He did not do so because it was a Law of His nature, for He felt no hunger; He did it in order that He might convince us of the reality of the resurrection, that it was one and the same flesh which suffered and rose again. He laid aside neither body nor spirit, but possesses both the body and the soul intelligent and reasonable, volitional and energetic. In this condition He sits at the right hand of the Father, using His will both as God and as man in behalf of our salvation, energizing in His divine capacity to provide for, maintain and govern all things. He remembers in His human capacity the time He spent on earth, while all the time He both sees and knows that He is adored by all rational creation. His Holy Spirit knows that He is one in substance with God the Word, and shares as Spirit of God and not simply as Spirit the worship accorded to Him. Moreover, His ascent from earth to heaven, and again, His descent from heaven to earth (on the Feast of Trumpets), are revelations of the energies of His circumscribed body. For He shall so come again to you, in like manner as you saw Him go into Heaven” (Acts 1:11).

With all these things in mind, it is quite understandable why Christ might have been moved to stand up on the last day (the eighth day) of the Feast of Booths and say (John 7:37-38), “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water” (compare Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, 58:11-12). This statement of Jesus is probably also prophetic of something that will happen during the fulfillment of the Feast of Booths. Exactly what it will be is not clear. However, it is anticipated that, coming on the eighth day (the day of solemn assembly and holy convocation), it will be a time of worship and adoration of the Lamb of God unrivaled in the experience of the people of God. The “living water” spoken of by Christ as coming from the innermost being of the believers will simply gush forth. Such an experience is virtually beyond the power of words to communicate. Perhaps the description of worship in Revelation 4 and 5 comes close. But seeing as how this day is specified as being a Sabbath, while the previous six days are not indicates that there is something truly noteworthy happening here.

In the midst of all the goings-on described so far, the people of God will be experiencing a feast of booths. Logically, one might ask, why should there be a thought given to temporary residences when the Lamb’s reign on the earth, lasting forever, has just begun? For the same reason that people dwelt in temporary residences in the days of Joshua: as a reminder of where they’ve come from. In the days of Joshua, they had just begun a permanent occupation of the Kingdom of God (which was dependent on their obedience) and the wilderness was fresh in their mind.

¹⁶⁹ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, IV, 1.

In the days of this fulfilling Feast of Booths, the experience of life in this vale of tears prior to Christ's return will be fresh in everyone's mind. They will remember how they dwelt in the temporary residence of a mortal body, where Paul and Peter refer to it as a tent (2 Corinthians 5:1-5, 2 Peter 1:13-14). Life prior to the Feast of Trumpets will be regarded as a life in a desert wilderness (spiritually) in comparison to life face-to-face with Christ as His bride. In seeing their Lord face-to-face and living in His Kingdom, His people will surely recall the time when they could see as in a mirror, or in a riddle, dimly (1 Corinthians 13:12). This is the whole point of Israel's dwelling in booths: to bring to mind life prior to entering the Land (Leviticus 23:42-43).

Further, there will be a great deal of (spiritual) fruit available at this time for everyone to taste, just as there generally is a great deal of (physical) fruit available in the Land at this time of year. All the fruit that took the heat of the summer (indicating hard times or persecution) to mature are here. Wine, indicating joy (Psalm 104:15), is available abundantly. All this is because the Lord has blessed His people in all that they produced by the works of their hands and as a result of their deeds (Deuteronomy 16:15, Matthew 25:31-46). And all the righteous participate, both small and great, no matter what his role in life was prior to Christ's return (Deuteronomy 16:14, cf. Also Matthew 19:27-20:16).

On this fulfilling Feast of Booths, however, there will not need to be the public reading of the Law that took place every seventh year at this time (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). The purpose of the public reading was that the common man might succeed in knowing the Lord and His ways, and was necessary under the first covenant. It is not necessary now because everyone knows the Lord, and His ways are in their mind and written on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Hebrews 8:10-11).

4) Feast of Booths: Spiritual Application

There are many applications of the Feast of Booths to our walk with God right now, but perhaps the dominant one concerns the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is here now (Hebrews 12:22-29), not in all its fullness, but as a foretaste (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, Romans 8:23). Reigning over His people is the Lord in His Church as the person of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers and the Lord Jesus as Head of the Body of Christ. Since the Holy Spirit is fully God (as are the Father and the Son), His Presence in the Church means that an Ark, of a sort, is there among the people of God in their Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, there is a government in the Church, accountable to and directed by God, that wields the power and authority of God in various matters (Matthew 16:18-19). Humans of today have been taught to exalt "rule by man." But whether they want it or not the True and Good Theocracy exists!

The Kingdom of God and Our Temporary Residence

It is said that the treasure we have is contained in earthenware vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). Figuratively speaking, the treasure refers to the glory and riches of God. It is the work of His hands, the desire of His heart, and the object of His plan. To Him, it is like gold, silver and precious stones (1 Corinthians 3:10-15), as opposed to wood, hay, and straw. It is not something that is destroyed by fire or human maliciousness, but is only refined and made more striking by

such. Hence the reason, as with Job, evil is allowed to touch God's people during this period of "foretaste" of God's Kingdom on Earth.

The earthenware vessels, on the other hand, are a figurative way of referring to our mortal human bodies. There is sin present, making the vessel that contains the treasure, appear to be crude, dirty, and unpleasant to look at in comparison to the treasure it contains. However, it must be realized that the earthenware vessel is only a temporary container or a booth. And when this aspect of God's working is realized, it leads one to a greater humility, a greater perspective of His frame (Psalm 103:14), and a greater thankfulness for what His Lord has done. From this, one realizes more fully that "He is the potter, we are the clay" (Isaiah 29:16, 64:8; Jeremiah 18:1-6, Romans 9:19-21).

Basil the Great emphasized¹⁷⁰ that our human flesh is a tabernacle of God as we walk through the temporary paths of this life, and we need to treat our tabernacle appropriately.

The flesh, which is given to man's soul for it to dwell in, is called God's tabernacle. Who will be found to treat this flesh as though it was not his own? Sojourners, when they hire land that is not their own, cultivate the estate at the will of the owner. To us the care of the flesh has been entrusted, for us to work with diligence, and make it fruitful for the use of Him Who gave it. If the flesh is worthy of God, it becomes a tabernacle of God, accordingly as He makes His dwelling in the saints. Such is the flesh of the sojourner. 'Lord, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle?' As we do this, we progress and advance to that which is more perfect. 'Who shall dwell in your Holy hill?' (Psalm 15:1) A Jew, in the earthly sense, when he hears of the 'hill', turns his thoughts to Zion. The sojourner in the flesh shall dwell in the holy hill, that heavenly country, bright and splendid, where Paul says, 'You have come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and the church of the first-born, who are registered in heaven'" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

John Chrysostom stated¹⁷¹ that Paul contrasted the temporary dwelling of our bodies with the eternal tabernacle of our dwelling in the Age to Come.

"Paul says, 'We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2 Corinthians 5:1). Some say that the 'earthly house' is this world; but I maintain that he alludes rather to the body. Observe how by the terms he uses, he shows the superiority of the future things to the present. Having said 'earthly' he opposed to it 'the heavenly'. Having said, 'house of our tabernacle', he declared both that it is easily taken to pieces and is temporary; he has contrasted it with the 'eternal', for the name 'tabernacle' denotes temporariness. He said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions' (John 14:2). If He anywhere calls the final resting places of the saints tabernacles; He doesn't call them tabernacles simply, but adds an epithet; for he didn't say that 'they may receive you' into their tabernacles, but 'into the eternal tabernacles' (Luke 16:9). Moreover in that he said, 'not made with hands', he alluded to that which was made with hands. What then? Is the body made with hands? By no means; he

¹⁷⁰ Basil the Great, "Homily 1 on Psalm 15", in Schaff and Wace, Prolegomena, Exegetic, ii.

¹⁷¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, X, 1.

called the body which is not made with hands, 'a house of tabernacle'. He has not used the term in antithesis to this, but to heighten and swell those commendations."

Clement of Alexandria stated¹⁷² that we travel as temporary residents in this body as a tabernacle just like a man on a journey, always mindful that our home is a mansion in heaven. If time calls for us to leave this temporary residence, we have no emotion about doing so.

"The soul of the wise man, as temporarily staying in the body, conducts itself towards its end gravely and respectfully, not with inordinate affections, as about to leave the tabernacle if the time of departure summons. Abraham and David both said, 'I am a stranger in the earth, and temporarily staying with you' (Genesis 23:4, Psalm 39:12). Basilides¹⁷³ says that the elect are strangers to the world, being celestial by nature. But this is not the case; no one is a stranger to the world by nature, their essence being one, and God another. But the elect man dwells as a temporary resident in the world. The body, just as one sent on a distant pilgrimage, uses inns and dwellings along the way at the places where he stops. He leaves his dwelling-place and property without excessive emotion; he readily follows him that leads him away from life; by no means and on no occasion does he turn back; he gives thanks for his sojourn, and blesses God for his departure, embracing the mansion that is in heaven. 'We know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We that are in this tabernacle groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven. Clothed with this, we shall not be found naked. We walk by faith and not by sight'. As Paul says, 'We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord'" (2 Corinthians 5:1-3, 7-8).

John Chrysostom noted¹⁷⁴ Paul's use of words to describe our life in the tabernacle of our physical body. We groan because of the corruption present, just like Israel groaned during their 40 years in the wilderness. Like them also we anticipate the Kingdom of God and the Promised Land.

"Paul said, 'We who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed' (2 Corinthians 5:4). Here he has stopped the mouths of the heretics, showing that he is not speaking of a different body, but of corruption versus incorruption. We do not groan that we may be delivered from the body, for of this we do not wish to be unclothed; but we hasten to be delivered from the corruption that is in it. Paul also interprets it saying, 'That mortality may be swallowed up by life' (2 Corinthians 5:4). Putting off the body appeared to many a painful thing; and Paul was contradicting the judgments of others when he said, 'we groan', not wishing to be set free from it. If the soul, in being separated from the body, suffers and laments, how does Paul say that we groan because we are not separated from it? No one puts it off without pain; Christ even said of Peter, 'They shall carry you, and lead you where you do not wish to go (John 21:18). We wish to be clothed with incorruption. It

¹⁷² Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, IV, 26.

¹⁷³ Basilides was an early religious teacher in Alexandria. He wrote 24 books on the Gospel and promoted a dualism influenced by Zoroastrianism. His followers formed a Gnostic sect, the Basilideans.

¹⁷⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, X, 3.

is in this respect that we are burdened by the body; it is not because it is a body, but because we are enclosed by a corruptible body and liable to suffering, for it is this that causes us pain. When the Life arrives, it destroys and uses up the corruption; it doesn't destroy the body. 'How does this come to pass?' one might ask. Do not inquire; God does it; do not be overly curious."

Gregory the Theologian stated¹⁷⁵ that the Tabernacle of Moses was a figure of all creation, with Holy Place and the Holy of Holies being the incorporeal part of creation. This implies that the priests who serve in the Tabernacle deal with God and His angels in incorporeal matters.

"The Word knows the Tabernacle of Moses to be a figure of the whole creation; I mean the entire system of things visible and invisible. If we pass the first veil, and step beyond the realm of sense, we shall look into the Holy Place, the Intellectual and Celestial creation. But not even this can we see in an incorporeal way, though it is incorporeal, since it is called — and is — Fire and Spirit. He is said to make His Angels spirits, and His Ministers a flame of fire, though perhaps this 'making' means preserving by that Word by which they Came into existence. The Angel then is called spirit and fire; Spirit, as being a creature of the intellectual sphere; Fire, as being of a purifying nature."

Chrysostom also stated¹⁷⁶ that we must consider Apostolic wisdom in understanding what Moses saw on Mt. Sinai. He made everything according to the pattern he saw; but what did he see? The heavenly things he saw were the Church and the things of the Church as she shall be. We now see these things in part as we are given the vision to see; everything has a heavenly origin.

"We must apply our minds attentively, and consider the Apostolic wisdom. Paul shows the difference between the Priesthoods; under the Old Covenant, the priests 'serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things' (Hebrews 8:5). What are the heavenly things he speaks of here? The spiritual things! Although they are done on earth, they are worthy of the Heavens. When our Lord Jesus Christ lies slain as a sacrifice, when the Spirit is with us, when He who sits on the right hand of the Father is here, when sons are made by the Washing of Baptism, when they are fellow-citizens of those in Heaven, when we have a country, a city and citizenship there, when we are strangers to things here, how can all these be other than 'heavenly' things? Are not our Hymns heavenly? Do not we who are below utter in concert with them the same things which the divine choirs of bodiless powers sing above? Is not the altar also heavenly? It has nothing carnal; all spiritual things become the offerings. The sacrifice does not disperse into ashes, smoke, or steamy savor; it makes the things placed on the altar bright and splendid. How can the rites which we celebrate be other than heavenly? When Christ says, 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained' (John 20:23); when they have the keys of heaven; how can everything be other than heavenly?"

"The Levitical priests 'serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things' (Hebrews 8:5); Moses was admonished by God, when he was about to make the

¹⁷⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Second Theological Oration, XXVIII, 31.

¹⁷⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XIV, 3.

tabernacle, 'See to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain' (Exodus 25:40). Our hearing is less ready for belief than our sight, for the things which we hear we do not as readily lay up in our soul, as those which we see with our own eyes. Therefore God showed Moses everything. This is serving the copy and shadow which eventually came to be the Temple in Jerusalem, where all things were made according to the pattern which was shown to Moses on the mountain. Was this only concerning the furniture of the Temple that Moses saw, or was it also what related to the sacrifices and all the rest? One would not be wrong in saying even this; for the Church is heavenly, and is nothing else than Heaven."

John Chrysostom stated¹⁷⁷ that the Holy Place represented the Old Covenant while the Holy of Holies represents the New Covenant. The Holy of Holies is heaven, but it is not yet accessible for us; however it is accessible for our Great High Priest. This mystery is still veiled off from curiosity seekers.

"Paul has shown from the Priest, from the Priesthood, from the Old Covenant, that that dispensation was to have an end. From this point he shows it from the fashion of the tabernacle itself. There was the 'Holy Place' and the 'Holy of Holies'. The Holy Place is a symbol of the former period, for there all things are done by means of sacrifices; but the Holy of Holies is a symbol of the present age. By the Holy of Holies he means Heaven; by the veil, he means Heaven and the Flesh of Christ that 'enters within the veil'; that is to say, 'through the veil of His flesh' (Hebrews 10:20). What then does Paul say? 'Truly the First Covenant had Ordinances of Divine service'. What are 'ordinances?' Symbols or rights! It had this then, but it does not have this now. Paul shows that it had already been replaced; although the Temple still stood, it had at that time lost its function."

"When these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services of God' (Hebrews 9:6). These things indeed were there, but the Jews did not appreciate them; they didn't see them. These things were no more theirs than ours for whom they prophesied."

"At this point Paul philosophizes and says, 'The Holy Spirit indicated this, that the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet made clear while as the first Tabernacle¹⁷⁸ was still standing' (Hebrews 9:8). Paul thus said that for this cause these things been have thus 'ordained', that we might learn that 'the Holy of Holies', that is, Heaven, is as yet inaccessible."

"Paul calls the body tabernacle, veil and heaven; 'By a greater and more perfect tabernacle; through the veil, that is, His flesh' (Hebrews 10:20). Again, 'Our hope enters the Presence *behind* the veil' (Hebrews 6:19); and again, 'Christ has not entered the Holy Place made with hands, *which is a* copy of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Hebrews 9:24). Why then does Paul say this? The Heaven is a veil, for as a veil it walls off the Holy of Holies; the flesh is a veil hiding the Godhead; and the Tabernacle is a veil likewise holding the Godhead. Again, Heaven is a Tabernacle; for the Priest is there inside."

¹⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XV, 1-3.

¹⁷⁸ For Paul to say this while the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing prior to its destruction in c. 70 AD indicates Paul's keen foresight.

This perspective: looking at one's dwelling in this life as one of dwelling in a "booth" or temporary residence can give a great deal of hope to the Church as the end times approach. As things get hot and sticky and uncomfortably tough, one is reminded of the long hot summer of the Israeli lowlands. There is a lot of threshing going on, and a lot of grain being ground into fine flour, continually being sifted. The Lord used this illustration to indicate to Peter how Satan had been allowed to tempt him in order that his zeal might be refined into God's zeal (Luke 22:31).

But Peter is not the only one who was ever tempted; and Peter is not the only one who will ever be refined. The Lord is doing the same thing with His people today. And just as with Peter, the tempting does not last forever. For each temptation, He provides a means of escape (1 Corinthians 10:11-13). Even the times of tempting will come to an end. As the end times get closer, the Feast of Booths calls one's attention more emphatically to what will be forever. Then, with the Lord reigning on the Throne of David, all things having been put under His feet (Psalm 110:1-2), there will come a time of joy, celebration, and abundance for the people of God that this planet has never known. To one who is going through some tough times, it is necessary to have a hope of some joy in one's mind, as Jesus had (Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 2:8), that one might be able to endure patiently to the end.

But yet hope and perspective are not all the feast speaks of. It also speaks of devotion via the very large number of burnt offerings that were offered during this time (1 Kings 8:63, Numbers 29:12-34). This imagery encourages us to "present our body as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is our spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1-2). This is not just something that the bishop, the priests or the deacons should do. It is something that everyone should participate in. Collectively speaking, when a heart to do this pervades a Church, it creates a fragrant aroma to God. Real worship (as opposed to lip service and ritualized formality) increases. Fruit becomes apparent. Somehow a glory (like the Shekinah) is noticed by outsiders as being in the midst of the Lord's people. To insiders, who fellowship in the Presence of their Lord, this surpasses all understanding, and serves to guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

The Transfiguration: a Glimpse of the Future Kingdom

Tradition states that the Transfiguration took place forty days before His Crucifixion. This is why the Transfiguration (August 6th) is celebrated forty days before the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14th). In the West, the forty-days-before the Crucifixion places the Transfiguration just before Lent, since the Western Churches largely do not celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross. One of the themes associated with the Transfiguration in Eastern tradition is fasting in order to draw near to God. This comes from the experience of Moses and Elijah on and around Mt. Sinai.

From the Orthodox Synaxarion¹⁷⁹, "Such are the marvels, truly worthy of God, celebrated in the Feast of the Transfiguration. This is an image and prefiguring of the future state of the righteous, whose splendor the Lord spoke of, saying: 'Then shall the righteous shine

¹⁷⁹ The Orthodox Synaxarion is a brief description of the events that are being remembered on any given Sunday or Feast Day. It is usually read during the Matins service before the Liturgy begins.

forth as the sun' (Matthew 13:43). It is because of this that the Kontakion of this Feast is said daily (when there is not a great feast) in the Service of the Typica in perpetual commemoration of the glory that will be the lot of the Saints.

The Light of God

This light of God is something God possesses by nature as part of His essence. To see the Light of God requires a revelation from God, which Peter, James and John were granted to see at the Transfiguration.

Prior to the events of the Transfiguration, Jesus had stated that some of His disciples would not taste death until they had seen the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1, Luke 9:27). Peter, James and John had this experience on the mountain of Transfiguration. There has been some disagreement as to whether this mountain was Mt. Tabor or Mt. Herman¹⁸⁰. Mt. Tabor is the traditional site of the Transfiguration, but some point out that Tabor is not really a high mountain as the text says (Matthew 17:1), being only 1900 feet whereas Mt. Herman is quite a bit higher (9200 ft.). Also Mt. Herman is much closer to where Jesus was teaching at that time (Caesarea Philippi, Matthew 16:13). Both Tabor and Herman are associated with the Lord's Right Hand and the Light of His Countenance (Psalm 89:11-15).

As Jesus was transfigured, He took on an appearance similar to what He had when others saw Him after His Ascension. For example, the same Apostle John, who witnessed the Transfiguration, later saw the Lord in a vision on the Island of Patmos. The Lord's appearance then, as at the Transfiguration, was an extraordinary brightness (Revelation 1:9, 16). He did not change His nature; and He did not abandon His human body for a while. He was merely revealed as He really is and His disciples' eyes were opened. His human body remained intact, but "As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered and His robe became white and like lightning" (Luke 9:29). "His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). The emphasis seems to be a case of not just brightness, but extraordinary brightness like lightning.

The angels at the tomb are also described as having clothing like lightning (Luke 24:4), and the Lord's appearance at the Second Coming will be "as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven and shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His Day" (Luke 17:24). All these references to "lightning" are translations of the Greek word *astrapto* and its derivatives. Cyril of Alexandria noted¹⁸¹ this:

"He was transformed to so surpassing and godlike a brightness that His garments even glittered with rays of fire, and seemed to flash like lightning".

The Lord had mentioned a few months earlier that all the righteous would also appear this way in the resurrection: "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43, see also Daniel 12:3). The Transfiguration was then a demonstration of what that would be like.

¹⁸⁰ Mt. Tabor is Southwest of the Sea of Galilee while Mt. Herman is Northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

¹⁸¹ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 51, Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983.

According to some of the Church Fathers, Adam and Eve were clothed in light prior to the Fall. Their appearance may have been similar to that of the righteous shining forth as the sun after the resurrection. This would make sense: after they disobeyed God and the lights went out, then they noticed that they were naked!

This light is something God possesses, not something He takes on. For example, when the New Jerusalem comes, “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the Glory of God illumined it. The Lamb is its light” (Revelation 21:23). If everyone shines like the sun, it is easy to see why there is no need for the sun and moon.

Jerome stated¹⁸² that the Lord did not change shape when He was transfigured. He did not become aerial like a ghost. Similarly Moses and Elijah retained their bodily members, as inhabitants of Paradise, and achieved what we aim at when we fast.

“Accordingly, our Lord was not so transfigured on the mountain that He lost His hands and feet and other members, and suddenly began to roll along in a round shape like that of the sun or a ball. But the same members glowed with the brightness of the sun and blinded the eyes of the Apostles. Hence, also, His garments were changed, but so as to become white and glistening, not aerial, for I suppose you do not intend to maintain that His clothes also were spiritual. The Evangelist adds that His face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2); but when mention is made of His face, I reckon that His other members were beheld as well. Enoch was translated in the flesh (Genesis 5:24); Elijah was carried up to heaven in the flesh (2 Kings 2:12-14). They are not dead, they are inhabitants of Paradise, and even there retain the members, with which they were carried away and translated. What we aim at in fasting, they have through fellowship with God. They feed on heavenly bread, and are satisfied with every word of God, having Him as their food, who is also their Lord. Listen to the Savior saying, ‘And my flesh rests in hope’ (Psalm 16:9). And elsewhere, ‘His flesh saw not corruption’ (Acts 2:31, Psalm 16:10). And again, ‘All flesh shall see the salvation of God’ (Isaiah 40:5). Do you always have to make the body a twofold thing (i.e. flesh as opposed to spirit)? Rather quote the vision of Ezekiel, who joins bones to bones and brings them forth from their sepulchers, and then, making them to stand on their feet binds them together with flesh and sinews and clothes them with skin” (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

The Servants and the Master

As He was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared also in glory, talking with Jesus of His exodus (i.e. His crucifixion), which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31) at Passover (March-April) the following year. Since Jesus is the culmination of the Law and the Prophets, it is significant that Moses, the Law-giver, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, appeared with Him. The Lord had said earlier (Matthew 5:17-19), “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For till heaven and earth pass away (that is, the Kingdom comes in glory as we get a glimpse at the Transfiguration), one yod (smallest Hebrew letter) or one portion of a Hebrew letter will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.”

¹⁸² Jerome, “To Pammachius Against John of Jerusalem”, 29, Treatises

John Chrysostom asked¹⁸³ why Christ would bring forward Moses and Elijah. He then responded with four reasons.

1. He brought the leaders of His choir so that His disciples might see the difference between the servants and the Lord, and so that Peter might be rightly commended (Matthew 16:17) for confessing Him to be the Son of God.
2. He intended to expose the blasphemy of the Jewish leaders who had been saying that Jesus was not from God because He did not keep the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2, John 9:16). He brought forward Moses, because he gave the Law that the Jews quoted, and would not have overlooked the Law being trampled on. He brought forward Elijah, who was zealous for the glory of God. Were any man an adversary of God and falsely made himself equal to the Father, Elijah was not the person to stand by and listen to him”.
3. He informed them that He has power over both death and life and is Ruler of both above and beneath (i.e. Heaven and Hades). For this reason, He brought forward both him that died (i.e. Moses, Deuteronomy 34:5-6) and him that didn't (i.e. Elijah 2 Kings 2:11)”.
4. In discussing His Crucifixion, He showed them the glory of the Cross to console Peter and the others in their dread of the Crucifixion and to raise up their minds.

Cyril of Alexandria added¹⁸⁴ to this saying that “the standing of Moses and Elijah before Him and their talking with one another was a sort of representation, excellently displaying our Lord Jesus Christ as having the Law and the Prophets for His bodyguard. He is the Lord of the Law and the Prophets as foreshown in them by those things, which in mutual agreement they proclaimed. For the words of the Prophets are not at variance with the teachings of the Law”.

The Father Speaks

While Peter was still speaking, “behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying: ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him’ “ (Matthew 17:5). Peter, James and John were very fearful as they entered the cloud (Luke 9:34, Matthew 17:6); but after the Father spoke, they found themselves alone with Jesus (Luke 9:36, Mark 9:8). Jesus then instructed them to “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead” (Matthew 17:9).

Ambrose stated¹⁸⁵ that Peter “was corrected by the sovereign voice of God the Father. The Apostle was not dull to understand the rebuke; he fell on his face, brought low by the Father's voice, but he was raised up by the Son. The purpose of that vision, which signified that Christ and His servants were not equals, and suggested a mystery. It should be made plain to us that the Law and the Prophets, in agreement with the Gospel, revealed as eternal, the Son of God Whom they had heralded”.

¹⁸³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LVI, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 51, Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983.

¹⁸⁵ Ambrose, Exposition of the Christian Faith, I, xiii, 81-83.

John Chrysostom pointed out¹⁸⁶ a number of places where God is associated with clouds. In each of these cases, it is the Son of God that is associated with the clouds. For example:

- “Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne” (Psalm 97:2).
- “Behold the Lord is riding on a swift cloud, and is about to come to Egypt” (Isaiah 19:1).
- “He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind; He makes the winds His angels, flaming fire His ministers” (Psalm 104:3-4, Hebrews 1:6-7).
- “He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).
- “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom” (Daniel 7:13, 14).

The same thing occurred when the Son of God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law. “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold I shall come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe in you forever’” (Exodus 19:9). “Then it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there was thundering and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled” (Exodus 19:16). “When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder” (Exodus 19:19).

In all the above references, it is not often easy to distinguish whether the reference refers to the Father, the Son or the Trinity. However, the Son’s role in dealing with man is clarified by Hebrews: “To the Son, He (the Father) says, ‘Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever’ (Hebrews 1:8, Psalm 45:6). And, ‘You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands’ (Hebrews 1:10, Psalm 102:25). And, ‘Sit at My Right Hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool’” (Hebrews 1:13, Psalm 110:1). If the Son created the heavens and the earth, it is quite reasonable that many of these lesser activities such as riding a swift cloud to Egypt, making clouds His chariot, etc., refer to the Son’s activities also. After the Incarnation, the Son no longer needed a cloud to make His Presence visible to man. But the Father did.

John Chrysostom also noted¹⁸⁷ that the Father spoke from a bright cloud (Matthew 17:5) and not from a dark cloud. The dark clouds at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law (Exodus 19:19-20) and in delivering David in battle (Psalm 18:6-13) spoke of His threatening. At the Transfiguration, it was a bright cloud because His desire was not to alarm but to teach.

The Father’s voice from heaven occurred on two other occasions also. At Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist, the Father said the same things He did at the Transfiguration: “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). At that time, the entire Trinity was apparent as the Father spoke concerning the Son and the Spirit descended like a dove (Matthew 3:16).

¹⁸⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LVI, 5.

¹⁸⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LVI, 5.

Another occasion occurred at the beginning of Holy Week. Jesus was approaching the hour of His Crucifixion and said, “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify Your Name” (John 12:27). “Then a voice came from heaven saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again’” (John 12:28). Some people thought it had thundered; others thought an angel had spoken to Him. Jesus simply said that the Father’s voice came for their sake (John 12:29-30).

Occasions When the Father Spoke

Occasion	Date	Reference
Jesus’ Baptism	Early 27 AD	Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22
Transfiguration	August 29 AD	Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35
Before Crucifixion	Monday of Holy Week 30 AD	John 12:27-28

Cyril of Alexandria noted¹⁸⁸ that when the Father spoke at the Transfiguration, Jesus was found alone. The Father did not command them to listen to Moses (the Law) or to Elijah (the Prophets), but to His Son.

“Moses is there and does the Father command the Holy Apostles to hear him? Had it been His will that they should follow the commandments of Moses, I suppose He would have said, ‘Obey Moses; keep the Law’. But this is not what God the Father here said; but in the presence of Moses and Elijah, He commands them rather to hear Him.”

“For He is the end of the Law and the Prophets, for which reason He cried aloud to the multitudes: ‘If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?’ (John 5:46-47). But as they persevered even to the end in despising the commandment given by the most wise Moses, and in rejecting the word of the holy Prophets, they have justly been alienated and expelled from those blessings that were promised to their fathers”.

The Transfiguration Prefigures Tabernacles

As Peter, James and John were coming down the mountain with Jesus, “He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what ‘the rising from the dead’ meant” (Mark 9:9-10). The reason He told them not to reveal this “vision” (Matthew 17:9) is so that men would not stumble at having heard such glorious things about Him, and then seeing Him crucified.

The Uncreated Light of Divinity exhibited at the Transfiguration speaks of eternity when we all will be transfigured. This is the meaning of the 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is why the Lord spoke up on the 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles. “On the last day, that Great Day of the feast (i.e. of Tabernacles), Jesus stood and cried, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would

¹⁸⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily xx, chapter 9, Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983.

receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39). For more discussion on this see the study for Pentecost.

In the Orthodox Church, Pascha is also referred to as “the 8th day”, coming on the Sunday after the Sabbath (i.e. Saturday), which was the 7th day of the week. We now live in the Light of His Resurrection, and therefore we have a foretaste of the prophetic meaning of the 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

As we do so, we live in a tent or temporary residence just as the faithful believers did during the Feast of Tabernacles. Paul referred to our human body as being a tent or temporary residence (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). While we are in the tent, booth, tabernacle or temporary residence, we look forward to our dwelling place that comes out of heaven (2 Corinthians 5:2, Revelation 21:2).

When that occurs, it will not be just the Lord who shines like the sun; we will do so also as will all the righteous (Matthew 13:43). The Prophet Daniel, in his vision of the end times, referred to this (Daniel 12:3). As we get closer to God, we take on His characteristics. Thus, Moses’ face shone as he came down Mt. Sinai with the Law after meeting with God (Exodus 34:29-35, 2 Corinthians 3:7, 13). We have light within us also. Our faces may not glow physically like Moses’, but we are still instructed to let our light shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). The light that we will one day exhibit is already here.

Tertullian stated¹⁸⁹ that something can undergo a complete change, yet remain the same. Moses’ hand became leprous and his face became radiant, but both were restored to their prior state. Stephen looked like an angel and the Lord put on a robe of light; but they didn’t change and Peter could still recognize Him.

“A thing may undergo a complete change, and yet remain the same thing. In like manner, a man also may be quite himself in substance even in the present life, and undergo various changes — in habit, in bodily bulk, in health, in condition, in dignity, and in age — and still lose nothing of his human nature, nor to be made another man. This form of change the Holy Scriptures gives us instances of. The hand of Moses is changed, and it becomes like a dead one, bloodless, colorless, and stiff with cold (Exodus 4:6-7). But on the recovery of heat, and on the restoration of its natural color, it is again the same flesh and blood. Afterwards the face of Moses is changed; with brightness which eye could not bear (Exodus 34:29-35). But he was Moses still, even when he was not visibly glowing. So also Stephen had already put on the appearance of an angel (Acts 6:15), although they were none other than his human knees (Acts 7:59-60), which bent beneath the stoning. The Lord, again, in the retirement of the mount of transfiguration, had changed His clothing for a robe of light; but He still retained features, which Peter could recognize (Matthew 17:1-4). In that same scene Moses and Elijah gave proof that the same condition of bodily existence continues even in glory. Moses appeared in the likeness of a flesh, which he had not yet recovered (i.e. the glorified body he will receive at the Second Coming). Elijah appeared in the reality of a flesh, which he had not yet put off. Being aware of this splendid example, Paul said: ‘Christ will transform our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body’” (Philippians 3:21)

¹⁸⁹ Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, II, vi, 55.

Tertullian also stated¹⁹⁰ that the Son, in His Deity, is invisible. When He appeared to Moses, the Prophets and the Patriarchs – and it was always the Son who did so -- he did so in a vision, in an image or enigmatically. He reserved to a future time – at the Transfiguration -- to appear to Moses face to face. Since His flesh veiled His Deity at the Transfiguration, Peter, James and John could see Him and not die.

“We declare that the Son, considered in Himself, is invisible, in that He is God, and the Word and Spirit of God. But He was visible before the days of His flesh, in the way that He says to Aaron and Miriam, ‘And if there shall be a prophet among you, I will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream. Not so with Moses; with him I shall speak mouth to mouth, that is to say, in truth, and not enigmatically’ (Numbers 12:6-8); that is, in image. The apostle also expressed it, ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly or enigmatically, but then face to face’ (1 Corinthians 13:12). Therefore, He reserved to some future time for His presence and speech face to face with Moses — a promise, which was afterwards fulfilled in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3, Mark 9:4). It is evident that in early times it was always in a glass and an enigma, in vision and dream that the Son of God, appeared — to the prophets and the patriarchs, and also to Moses indeed himself. And even if the Lord did possibly speak with him face to face, yet it was not as man that he could behold His face, unless indeed it was in a glass and by enigma. Besides, if the Lord so spoke with Moses, that Moses actually discerned His face, eye to eye, why immediately afterwards, on the same occasion, did Moses desire to see His face, when he had already seen it? And how, in like manner, does the Lord also say that His face cannot be seen, because He had shown it, if indeed He really had. Or what is that face of God, the sight of which is refused, if there was one, which was visible to man? ‘I have seen God’, says Jacob, ‘face to face, and my life is preserved’ (Genesis 32:30). There ought to be some other face, which kills if it were only seen. Well, then, was the Son visible? Certainly not, although He was the face of God, except only in vision and dream, and in a glass and enigma, because the Word and Spirit (of God) cannot be seen except in an imaginary form”.

“If Peter, James and John would have seen the Father at the Transfiguration, they would have died then and there: ‘For no man shall see God, and live’ (Exodus 33:20). The One who was always seen from the beginning, became visible in the end. It was the Son, therefore, who was always seen, and the Son who always conversed with men, and the Son who has always worked by the authority and will of the Father. Because ‘the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do’ (John 5:19) — that is, in His mind and thought. For the Father acts by mind and thought; while the Son, who is in the Father’s mind and thought, gives effect and form to what He sees. Thus the Son made all things, and without Him was not anything made”.

Maximos the Confessor observed¹⁹¹, “The Lord does not appear in glory to all who stand before Him. He appears to some in one way and to others in another way according to the

¹⁹⁰ Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, II, vii, 14-15.

¹⁹¹ Maximos the Confessor, *Second Century on Theology*, 13.

measure of each person's faith. When the Logos of God becomes radiant in us, then the words of the Gospel will be clear and distinct with nothing concealed".

The Eucharist: a Foretaste of the Kingdom

As the Church gathers to worship the Lord throughout the world, the central focus is on the Lord's Table. Like the manna in the wilderness, the Eucharist is the true food that carries us through this life.

The mystery of the Lord's Table translates us to Eternity. As we gather around the Lord's Table, in a mystical way we do so in the presence of the saints who have gone before us. If the Lord's Table in this life is the type, the Great Supper that Jesus referred to in a parable (Luke 14:15-24, Matthew 22:1-14) is the reality. All are invited, but not all choose to come.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). Was He referring to sometime after the Second Coming, or to this present age? John Chrysostom stated that Christ's statement refers to this present age, where the Church is "His Father's Kingdom". Chrysostom used¹⁹² this text as proof of the Resurrection, where the Apostles were witnesses to Jesus drinking wine with them prior to His Ascension.

Chrysostom also stated¹⁹³ that when Jesus instituted the Eucharist the evening before the Crucifixion, "drinking the fruit of the vine new with you" refers to the forty days of appearances to His disciples, where He ate and drank with them. This was "new" because His human body was changed into an immortal, incorruptible body that did not need nourishment to survive. This was a foretaste of the restored Kingdom when He returns.

"Christ continually reminds us of the passion even by the mysteries of the Eucharist, so that no man should be deceived. He both says and teaches by means of that sacred table, which is the chief of the blessings; Paul also presses this in every way."

"When Christ instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper before His Crucifixion, He said, 'I will not drink of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom' (Matthew 26:29). Because He had spoken with them concerning passion and cross, He again introduces what He has to say of His resurrection, having made mention of a kingdom before them, and so calling His own resurrection."

"Why did He drink after He was risen again? Lest the common man might suppose the resurrection was an appearance! The common man made this an infallible test of His having risen again. The Apostles also persuaded men concerning the resurrection; they said, 'We ate and drank with Him'" (Acts 10:41, Luke 24:42).

"To show that they would see Him clearly risen again, that He would be with them once more, and that they themselves would be witnesses to the things that are done, both by sight and by act, He said, 'Until I drink it new with you'. You will bear witness, for you shall see me risen again".

¹⁹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXII, 2.

¹⁹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXII, 2.

“But what does the word ‘new’ refer to? It refers to a new and strange manner, not having a passable body, but now immortal, incorruptible, and not needing food. It was not then for hunger that He both ate and drank after the resurrection, for neither did His body need these things any more, but for the full assurance of His resurrection”.

In the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles¹⁹⁴, we have instructions for the prayer before (1st paragraph below) and the prayer after (2nd paragraph below) partaking of the Eucharist. Noteworthy is the attitude of transition to the Kingdom of God: “tabernacle in our hearts”, “gather it from the four winds”, “let this world pass away”.

“Now concerning the Thanksgiving (Eucharist), give thanks like this. First, concerning the cup: ‘We thank You, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your servant, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever’. And concerning the broken bread: ‘We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever’. But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but those who have been baptized into the Name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, ‘Give not that which is holy to the dogs’” (Matthew 7:6, 15:26-27).

“After you are filled, give thanks like this: ‘We thank You, holy Father, for Your holy Name which You caused to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. You, Master almighty, created all things for Your name’s sake. You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to You. But to us You freely gave spiritual food, drink and life eternal through Your Servant. Before all things we thank You that You are mighty; to You be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love. Gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom which You hast prepared for it; for Yours is the power and the glory forever’. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha¹⁹⁵! Amen! But permit the prophets to make Thanksgiving as much as they desire.”

Irenaeus made¹⁹⁶ a point that drinking the fruit of the vine is something human and physical that will be done on earth, not in heaven. The new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup.

“When Jesus was about to undergo His sufferings, He declared to Abraham and those with him the good news of the inheritance being thrown open. After He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it

¹⁹⁴ “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”, Chapters 9-10, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7. This document dates from the mid to late 1st century.

¹⁹⁵ Maran Atha is a word that was transliterated from Hebrew (Aramaic) to Greek meaning “The Lord comes” or “The Lord will come”.

¹⁹⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, V, xxxiii, 1.

to the disciples, He said to them: ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom’ (Matthew 26:27-29). Thus He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will reorganize the mystery of the glory of His sons; as David says, ‘He who has renewed the face of the earth’ (Psalm 104:30). He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. The new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup. He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his disciples in a super-celestial place in heaven. Nor are they who drink it devoid of flesh; for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not to spirit.”

John of Damascus referred¹⁹⁷ to the bread of the Lord's Table as a First-Fruit of that future bread that is necessary for existence. It purifies us from diseases and calamities just like gold is purified by fire. The Eucharist thus points to the future Kingdom of God restored.

“The body and blood of Christ make a protection against all kinds of injury, a purging from all uncleanness, for the support of our soul and body. Should one receive gold, it gets purified by critical burning; we do this also lest in the future we be condemned with this world (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). The bread of the Lord's Table purifies us from diseases and all kinds of calamities, according to Paul (1 Corinthians 11:30); for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. This too is what he says, so that he who partakes of the body and blood of Christ unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Being purified by this, we are united to the body of Christ and to His Spirit and become the body of Christ. This bread is the First-Fruits of the future bread which is necessary for existence. It is fitting to speak so of the Lord's body, for the Lord's flesh is life-giving spirit because it was conceived of the life-giving Spirit. For what is born of the Spirit is spirit. I do not say this to take away the nature of the body, but I wish to make clear its life-giving and divine power”.

When we eat and drink at the Lord's Table “In remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:25, Luke 22:19), what we are remembering is the future Kingdom of God. Whenever the Lord's Table is described¹⁹⁸, there are the words, “This IS My body” and “This IS My blood”. Thus there is the real Presence of Christ, just as there is the real Presence of Christ in the future Kingdom of God. This is our focus at the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 10:21); we remember what it will be like to see the Lord face to face. Thus we are instructed to examine ourselves so that we do not eat and drink damnation on ourselves. We need to respect the Lord's body and blood; Paul warned the Corinthians that because they hadn't done this, some of them were sick and others had died (1 Corinthians 11:27-31). Some Christians today regard the Lord's Table as a remembrance of what He has done, where the emphasis is on preaching and repentance.

¹⁹⁷ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith IV, 13.

¹⁹⁸ See Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25

Preaching and repentance are important, but the goal of the Christian life is the Kingdom of God. This was the primary message of the Lord (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15), John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2) and the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:7): the Kingdom of God is at hand!

Manna

We are involved in the great wilderness of this life, full of scorpions and adders. Just as Israel in the wilderness needed the manna to carry them for forty years, so we need the Eucharist, which is our provision for true food in this life. The manna was a miraculous food, called the food of angels (Psalm 78:24-25) that appeared every day as the dew evaporated (Exodus 16:14-16).

Jesus said that He is the “true bread from heaven who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:32-33). He then went on to say, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). Here He is speaking of the Lord’s Supper, which is God’s special provision for the wilderness of this life.

Joshua’s encounter with Christ at Jericho gives us some illumination about this present life. As Joshua led the people into the Promised Land, the Lord spoke to him, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you” (Joshua 5:9). As they celebrated their first Passover in the Promised Land, the manna ceased on the Day of First-Fruits (which wouldn’t be commemorated until the next year) as suddenly as it started (Joshua 5:12).

Manna was God’s special provision to get His people through the wilderness (Exodus 16:35, Numbers 11:7). Jesus called the manna “bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4). Once we have arrived in the Promised Land at the Second Coming, the manna (Eucharist) will not be necessary. At that time, everyone will know the Lord (Jeremiah 31:34), and everywhere will be holy ground (Joshua 5:15). And we will all join the saints and angels in worshipping the captain of the host of the Lord.

Israel was commanded to eat the Passover lamb with their loins girded, with their sandals on their feet, and with their staff in their hand (Exodus 12:11). John Chrysostom stated¹⁹⁹ that we need to be ready for our Exodus at any moment as we prepare for our death. Leaving our Egypt, we live as travelers on a journey, where our citizenship is in heaven. We face a desert without virtue in our life on earth, filled with snakes and scorpions in the form of demons. Yet our leader is not just Moses, but Christ.

We are going to depart, and many are the difficulties that intervene. When we have crossed this plain, immediately the devil is on us, doing everything, contriving every trick. Those who have been saved out of Egypt, those who have passed the Red Sea, those who are delivered from the evil demons, and from unnumbered plagues, may be taken and destroyed by him. But, if we are vigilant, we too have a pillar of fire, the grace of the Spirit. The same both enlightens and overshadows us. We have manna; actually far more than manna. We have spiritual drink, not water that springs from the Rock. We also have our encampment (Revelation 20:9), and we dwell in a desert; for a desert without virtue is the earth, even more desolate than that wilderness. Why was that desert

¹⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XXIII, Moral.

so terrible? Because it had scorpions and adders (Deuteronomy 8:15)! ‘A land which no one passed through’ (Jeremiah 2:6). Yet that wilderness is not so barren of fruit, as is this human nature. How many scorpions, how many asps are in this wilderness; how many snakes, how many ‘offspring of vipers’ (Matthew 3:7) are these through whom we pass! Yet let us not be afraid; for the leader of this our Exodus is not Moses, but Jesus”.

Thus the Feast of Booths to us today is prophetic of Eternity. This is the time when “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze together; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Paradise will have been restored on earth, and everyone will shine forth as the sun²⁰⁰ in the Kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43). Clothed in light, we will be like Adam and Eve were in Paradise before the Fall. But now there will be no serpent to lead us into sin, because sin was dealt with at the Day of Atonement.

Life in Paradise will be like the life of the angels; we neither marry nor are we given in marriage, but are equal to the angels as sons of God and sons of the Resurrection (Luke 20:35-36). But yet we will remember our days in this life now, just as the Hebrew people were taught to remember their days in the wilderness when they lived in booths.

²⁰⁰ Compare also Daniel 12:2, Matthew 17:2, Revelation 1:16, 10:1.

CONCLUSION

The seven “Appointed Feasts” given to Moses by the Lord are very applicable today and summarize not just the entire Christian life, but also the entire life of the people of God. These Feasts describe where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. They give us depth of understanding, and a perspective on where we fit in. From them we can see the Hand of God in everything around us. Understanding these Feasts leads us to understand what will happen in the future, and also gives us a perspective and appreciation for what has happened in the past. Celebration of these Feasts is an Eternal event; the angels celebrate them in heaven now, and we will celebrate them when we arrive at our Eternal destination also. Table 3 (repeated from the Introduction) summarizes these Feasts.

At the Day of the Lord’s Passover, the people of God in the days of Moses each killed the Paschal lamb, one per household, and applied the blood to their door using a motion that traced the outline of a Cross. Seeing the blood, the angel of death passed over that household as He came through Egypt to slay the firstborn of each family. This was done annually since then²⁰¹, but only in Jerusalem. About 1500 years later, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was crucified in Jerusalem at the same hour of the day that the lamb was being slain at the Temple. Today we remember this event as Good Friday, where Jesus took away the sin of the world. By His blood on our heart, we are passed over from death.

Following the Day of the Lord’s Passover is the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread, which can be called a feast of separation, and which commemorated the Exodus from Egypt. People ate unleavened bread, called the “bread of affliction”, from having to leave Egypt quickly with little notice. Today we celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread as Bright Week, but the fasting is flipped around and fasting is forbidden because of the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. We celebrate our return to Paradise and we are separated from the things of the world.

On the 1st Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the people of God in the days of Moses were released from bondage to Egypt, which represents sin. Today we celebrate this 1st Sabbath as Holy Saturday, which is the day that Christ descended into Hades to release all those who had been imprisoned there awaiting Messiah.

On the 2nd Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the people of God were trapped between the mountains, the Red Sea and Pharaoh’s 250,000-man army, which represents the power of sin coming to bring them back into bondage. Baptism first in the pillar and the cloud, then in the Red Sea freed the people of God once and for all time from the power of Egypt. Today we celebrate this 2nd Sabbath as Holy Baptism, which frees us from the power of sin.

The day after the 1st Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the Day of First-Fruits, which is the Day Christ rose from the dead. Today we celebrate this Feast Day as Pascha (Easter) and this day is the high point of all Christian celebrations throughout the year. This day was also the first day of the barley harvest, and the first-fruit sheaf of barley was waved before the Lord at the Temple to indicate that the harvest is beginning. As Jesus rose from the dead, He brought the souls of those in Hades with Him to Paradise as the first-fruits of those that slept.

²⁰¹ Passover was celebrated the following year and after crossing into the Holy Land 39 years later. God didn’t allow them to celebrate Passover while in the Wilderness after their rebellion.

Exactly 7 weeks after the Day of First-Fruits is the Feast of Weeks, called Pentecost. In the wilderness, this was the day of the Giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai from the midst of a huge column of fire, smoke, thunder and lightning. About 1500 years later, this was the day of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church. In Moses' day, the people were terrified at the events at Mt. Sinai; in Jesus' day, the people were puzzled at how uneducated men could suddenly speak many different languages. A unique feature of Pentecost was the offering to the Lord of two loaves of bread, baked with leaven, which represents the Jews and the Gentiles together in the Kingdom of God.

Table 3

Appointed Feast Day	Celebration Today
Day of Passover	Good Friday and the Cross
Unleavened Bread	Bright Week
First Sabbath	Holy Saturday
Second Sabbath	Holy Baptism
Day of First-Fruits	Pascha and the Resurrection
Feast of Pentecost	Pentecost and the Church
Feast of Trumpets	Beginning of the Indiction & Christ's Return
Day of Atonement	Sacrament of Confession & Judgment Day
Feast of Tabernacles	Holy Eucharist & the Kingdom of God

Exactly 7 weeks after the Day of First-Fruits is the Feast of Weeks, called Pentecost. In the wilderness, this was the day of the Giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai from the midst of a huge column of fire, smoke, thunder and lightning. About 1500 years later, this was the day of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church. In Moses' day, the people were terrified at the events at Mt. Sinai; in Jesus' day, the people were puzzled at how uneducated men could suddenly speak many different languages. A unique feature of Pentecost was the offering to the Lord of two loaves of bread, baked with leaven, which represents the Jews and the Gentiles together in the Kingdom of God.

Pentecost is the last of the Spring Feasts, all of which are related, and where all four of the Spring Feasts were fulfilled in the same year. Between the Spring Feasts and the Fall Feasts, there is a long hot summer, during which the harvesting continues. At the end of the summer, the Fall Feasts speak of events that will occur in the same year also, but at the end of time.

The Feast of Trumpets is a day of blowing trumpets all day long. It was not fulfilled in ancient Israel, but will be fulfilled at the end of time at the Second Coming of Christ, when the angels of God will blow the trumpets. Everyone who has ever lived will be raised to life again, where some will come with Him as He returns in glory, and others will meet Him as He comes. It is important to be ready for Christ, the Bridegroom, when He returns, and the Church has established the Preaching and the Prayers of the Church to help us be ready.

10 days after the Feast of Trumpets comes the Day of Atonement, which represents the Day of Judgment. It is a day of strict fasting in Hebrew tradition, and the days preceding the Day of Atonement are referred to as the "Ten Awesome Days". For the people of God, this is the day when sin is put away and sent to an uninhabited place with the scapegoat. The enemies of God that brought sin into the world have found their way to their permanent abode, and

everyone else is separated by the Good Shepherd as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those who haven't shown love to their Lord are sent away to join the enemies of God, while His elect enter into the joy of their Master. To help us prepare for this event, there are four seasons of fasting and there is Confession of Sins available continuously in order that we might judge ourselves now and avoid judgment later.

5 days after the Day of Atonement is the Feast of Tabernacles, which represents Eternity in the Kingdom of God. In ancient Israel, everyone lived in booths or huts for the week-long Feast as a reminder of their life in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. The people of God do this again as they remember their life living in the "tent" or temporary residence of this body in the wilderness of this present life. Paradise has returned and everyone will live like Adam and Eve did before the Fall – except we will all have a body that is incorruptible. The Peace of God will be everywhere and life will stretch out into Eternity as illustrated by the 8th day of the Feast. To give us a foretaste of Eternity, we are given the Holy Eucharist, which is a mystery that we partake of in faith in the wilderness of this life, just like the manna was a mystery that the people of God partook of in faith to carry them through their wilderness.

Appendix A: Sequence of Events of the Crucifixion

Roman		Hebrew Day	Name of Feast	Jewish Customs	Events Taking Place for Jesus and the Twelve
Day	Time				
Wednesday	0000	12 Nisan			
	0600				
	1200				
	1800				
Thursday	0000	13 Nisan	“First Day of Unleavened Bread”	Houses were searched for the presence of leaven (Exodus 12:15).	
	0600				
	1200				The Twelve Prepare the Passover (Last Supper)
	1800				The Last Supper 1800-2100; Gethsemane 2100-2400
Friday	0000	14 Nisan	“Day of Preparation”	Preparations were made for the Feast Day following, including the slaying of the Passover Lamb at 1500.	Jesus’ “Trial” Before the Sanhedrin
	0600				Peter’s Denial; Jesus Delivered to Pilate, Crucified 0900
	1200				Jesus Died 1500
	1800				Jesus Buried 1800
Saturday	0000	15 Nisan Sabbath	“Feast of Passover” or “Passover”	The big celebration	Jesus in Hades, Having Descended into Hell
	0600				
	1200				
	1800				
Sunday	0000	16 Nisan	“The First Day of the Week”		Jesus Rose from the Dead
	0600				
	1200				
	1800				Jesus Appears to the Ten Apostles in the Upper Room
Monday	0000	17 Nisan			
	0600				
	1200				

Appendix B: Sequence of Events at Mount Sinai

DAY	MONTH	EVENT	REFERENCE
			Exodus
1 st	Sivan	Arrival at Mt. Sinai	19:1
1 st	Sivan	Moses went up mountain; given a message for people	19:3-6
		Message #1: Conditions of Covenant; you have seen:	
		1. What I did to Egyptians	19:4
		2. How I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you here	19:4
		If you: 1. Obey my voice	19:5
		2. Keep my covenant	19:5
		Then you will be to the Lord:	
		1. A peculiar treasure above all people	19:5
		2. A kingdom of priests	19:6
		3. A holy nation	19:6
1 st	Sivan	People said OK	19:7-8
2 nd	Sivan	Moses went back up; given a message for people	19:9-13
		Message #2: God will speak His covenant:	
		1. Lord coming in thick cloud & trumpet sound that;	19:9
		2. The people may hear God & believe what Moses says	19:9
		Therefore 1. Wash your clothes	19:10, 14
		2. Get sanctified by Moses	19:10, 14
		3. Don't go near a woman	19:15
		4. Set up a fence around the mountain so no one touches it	19:12, 13
3 rd	Sivan	People followed instructions	19:14-15
4 th	Sivan	The Lord came on the top of Mt. Sinai	19:16
4 th	Sivan	Moses brought people out to meet God	19:17-19
4 th	Sivan	Lord called Moses to top of Mt. Sinai; given message	19:20-25
		Message #3: Charge the people:	
		1. Not to break through the fence to gaze	19:21, 23, 24
		2. Sanctify priests to come part way up mountain	19:22, 24
5 th	Sivan	Moses and people did so	19:25
5 th	Sivan	God spoke words of His covenant to Moses & people:	20:1-17
		Message #4A: Content, the Ten Commandments	20:1-17
5 th	Sivan	People trembled, begged Moses to speak to God alone & tell them	20:1-17
6 th	Sivan	Moses went into cloud; God spoke details of Covenant	20:22-
		Message #4B: God's Covenant, details:	
		1. Relationships between people	21:1ff
		2. Dealings with property	
		3. Sabbath and feast days	23:14-19
		4. Angel lead into Canaan; obey Him and:	
		(a) enemies driven back by fear, confusion and hornets	23:22-31
		(b) no sickness	23:25
		(c) your provisions will be ample	23:25
		(d) no miscarriages or barren women	23:26
DAY	MONTH	EVENT	REFERENCE

			Exodus
7 th	Sivan	Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, 70 elders come up to worship	24:1-2
7 th	Sivan	Moses OK'ed covenant with people; Moses wrote it all down	24:3-4
8 th	Sivan	Moses read the Book of the Covenant; people said O.K.	24:7
8 th	Sivan	Moses sprinkled people with blood of Covenant; sprinkled book	Hebrews 9:19
9 th	Sivan	Moses, priests, 70 elders went up mountain, worshipped, ate, drank	24:1, 9-11
10 th	Sivan	Moses, Joshua to top of Mt. Sinai for stone tablets; priests down	24:12-18
11 th	Sivan	Moses received Tabernacle Instructions	25:1-31:18

Appendix C: Hebrew Use of Sevens

Summarized by Gregory the Theologian²⁰²

1. Seven precious spirits are named; for I think Isaiah loves to call the activities of the Spirit, spirits (Isaiah 11:2).
2. The Oracles of the Lord are purified seven times according to David (Psalm 19:7-10), and the just is delivered from six troubles and in the seventh is not struck down (Job 5:19).
3. But the sinner is pardoned not seven times, but seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22).
4. We may see it by the contrary also, for the punishment of wickedness is to be praised. Cain being avenged seven times, that is, punishment being exacted from him for his fratricide, and Lamech seventy times seven (Genesis 4:24).
5. Wicked neighbors receive sevenfold into their bosom (Psalm 79:12).
6. The House of Wisdom rests on seven pillars (Proverbs 9:1) and the Stone of Zerubbabel is adorned with seven eyes (Zechariah 3:9).
7. God is praised seven times a day (Psalm 119:164).
8. The barren bears seven, the perfect number (1 Samuel 2:5); she who is contrasted with her who is imperfect in her children.
9. Enoch, the seventh among our ancestors (Jude 1:14), was honored by translation
10. The New Adam, my God and Lord Jesus Christ, Who is counted the Seventy-seventh from the old Adam who fell under sin, in the backward genealogy according to Luke (Luke 3: 23-38).
11. The seven trumpets of Joshua, the son of Nun, and the seven days of procession, by which the walls of Jericho were shaken down (Joshua 6:4ff).
12. The sevenfold looking for the cloud imposed upon the young servant (1 Kings 18:43); and Elisha stretching himself that number of times on the child of the Shunammite, by which stretching the breath of life was restored (2 Kings 4:35 LXX).
13. The seven-stemmed and seven-lamped candlestick of the Temple (Exodus 25:32, 37)
14. The ceremony of the Priests' consecration lasted seven days (Leviticus 8:33); and seven that of the purifying of a leper (Leviticus 14:8), and that of the Dedication of the Temple the same number (1 Kings 8:1-6).
15. In the seventieth year the people returned from the Captivity (2 Chronicles 36:21).

²⁰² Gregory Nazianzen, Oration On Pentecost, XLI, 1-5

Appendix D: History of the Real and the Model Ark

- I. The real Ark; what is it?
 - A. The real tabernacle or temple²⁰³ is in heaven (Hebrews 8:1-2).
 - 1. The Lord dwells in this tabernacle in heaven (Psalm 11:4, Acts 7:44-50; also Psalm 18:6, Micah 1:2, Habakkuk 2:20).
 - 2. Jesus as Messiah is High Priest therein (Hebrews 8:1-13).
 - 3. There are 24 elders²⁰⁴ who serve in a priestly fashion (Revelation 4, 5, 7:11, 13; 11:16).
 - 4. Associated with this tabernacle is an altar with its equipment (censers, etc.) and fire (Revelation 8:3-5).
 - 5. Also associated with this tabernacle are seven lamps which are said to be the seven spirits of God (Revelation 4:5) or the seven eyes of the Lamb (Revelation 5:6). These relate to (at least) seven Lamp-Stands on earth (Revelation 1:4, 20; 3:1).
 - 6. Also within this tabernacle is the Throne of God (Psalm 11:4, Isaiah 6:1-4, Revelation 7:15).
 - 7. The Ark is also there (Revelation 11:19).
 - B. The real Ark has the glory and presence of God. The real Ark is thus another way of referring to the throne of God, since it is from the throne (or from the Ark) that God by His word exercise His authority and dominion (Revelation 15:5-8, 11:15-19, 19:11-16).
- II. History of the real Ark.
 - A. It has been from of old; from eternity past (Psalm 93:2, Lamentation 5:19).
 - B. It has spent most, if not all, of its time in heaven.
 - 1. It is debatable whether the real Ark was actually in the Holy of Holies with the model Ark.
 - 2. This debate would hinge on the interpretation of one of the prophet Ezekiel's visions where the glory of God left the Holy of Holies and moved to the door of the Temple, then in steps out to the Mt. of Olives and away (Ezekiel 9, 10, 11).
 - a. If this multi-wheeled, cherubim-carried thing is the throne of God (or the real Ark), then the real Ark was in residence in the 1st Temple prior to the Babylon Captivity.
 - C. It is now in heaven and will remain there until Jesus the Messiah returns at the Right Hand of power to set up the throne of God on earth (Matthew 26:64, Psalm 110:1).
 - D. The throne of God (the Ark) will then remain on earth forever (Revelation 21:3, Revelation 19:11-21, 11:15; Daniel 2:44, 7:14 God might be all in all).
- III. History of the model Ark.
 - A. It was made by Betsalel under Moses' direction during the 40 years wandering (Exodus 31).
 - 1. It was made of acacia wood and gold (Exodus 25).
 - 2. It was made according to the pattern shown Moses on the mountain (Sinai) (Exodus 25:9, 40; 39:32, 43; Hebrews 8:5).
 - B. As Israel wandered in the Negev wilderness, the model Ark was carried (covered) by priests ahead of the people (Numbers 10:33).

²⁰³ It is referred to as both a tabernacle and a temple (Revelation 15:5, Hebrews 8:2, Revelation 11:19).

²⁰⁴ This is like the 24 elders or heads of the priestly families of Eleazar and Ithamar (1 Chronicles 24:1-19).

- C. When Israel camped, the model Ark was set up in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle (Exodus 16:33, 34).
- D. Nothing is mentioned of the Ark's presence in battles against Amalek (Exodus 17), Bashan (Deuteronomy 3, Numbers 21), the Amorites (Deuteronomy 2, Numbers 21) prior to crossing the Jordan into Canaan. (Also no mention of its presence in the battles with the Midianites [Numbers 31]).
- E. The waters of the Jordan parted before the Ark as it was leading the people into Canaan (Joshua 3, 4).
- F. The model Ark led the siege of Jericho (Joshua 6).
- G. Shortly thereafter, the tent of meeting was set up at Shiloh where it remained until the days of Eli, Samuel's father (Joshua 18:1, 1 Samuel 4:3).
- H. Defeated in battle against Philistia, Israel tried to use the model Ark as a good-luck charm and took it into battle without the Lord's direction (1 Samuel 4:1-3).
 - 1. Israel was again defeated and Philistia captured the model Ark (1 Samuel 4:17).
 - 2. However, things did not go well in Philistia. Everywhere the Ark was taken, people were smitten with hemorrhoids (1 Samuel 5).
 - 3. The Philistines thus sent the Ark back to Israel along with a guilt offering (1 Samuel 6).
- I. When the model Ark returned, it was taken to Kiriath-jearim, where it remained for 20 years until the time of David (1 Samuel 7:2).
- J. As David was bringing the model Ark from Kiriath-jearim to Mt. Zion (or the City of David), some careless handling caused it to remain in the house of Obededom for three months (2 Samuel 6:1-11).
- K. Thereafter, it was taken to Mt. Zion with great rejoicing (2 Samuel 6:12-19).
- L. When the temple was completed under Solomon, the model Ark was moved from Mt. Zion to Jerusalem into the Temple (1 Kings 8, 2 Chronicles 5, 6).
- M. For some reason it was moved later, perhaps to make room for Manassah's carved image (2 Chronicles 33:7), and it was moved back later under Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:3).
 - 1. Possibly the model Ark had been moved to make repairs to the Temple under Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:8-13).
- N. There the model Ark remained until the Babylonian captivity, when it was carried off and the Temple burned (2 Kings 25).
- O. The model Ark did not return with the returning exiles. It is not known what happened to it. Modern Ethiopians claim to have it, but are very secretive about where it is kept.