

97 ISRAEL'S FALL FEASTS IN REVELATION

INTRODUCTION:

1. The seven feasts of Yahweh (see Leviticus 23) were prescribed ceremonies for Israel to enact every year. They were rehearsals symbolic of the events that would occur in the first century to end the Old Covenant and establish the New. The four spring feasts were Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost and are commonly and rightly understood to have been fulfilled with Jesus' death, resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

2. The last three feasts: The feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles were in the fall and occurred over the span of 22 days. They were emblematic of "that day" so often spoken of in the Tanakh (O.T.) and the "time of the end" or "the last days" frequently referenced in the New Testament (See P.P. #5). It was the end of the Old Heaven and Earth, which was the Old Covenant, and the establishment of the New Heavens and Earth, the New Covenant. (P.P. #18)

3. The transition from the Old to the New Covenant overlapped for a 40 year period (about AD 30 to AD 70) reflecting Israel's 40 year Exodus from Egypt. However, this new Exodus was not concerned with physical land. It was the Exodus from sin-death to reconciliation with the Father. We will seek to show that the fulfillment of the last three feasts occurred in the first century and is represented in the Book of Revelation. It split Israel into two distinct populations: the redeemed and the rest of the nation that would suffer the cost of rebellion — the trumpet and bowl judgments.

A. TIMING AND SUPPORTING DETAILS:

1. Jesus was born in the last days of the Old Covenant. "On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son..." Heb 1:1-2

2. The Kingdom of God is spiritual, not material. "Jesus answered, 'My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight.'" Jn 18:36

3. Moses predicted a prophet like himself whom Israel must follow. "Yahweh your God will raise up to you a prophet from among you, of your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him." Dt 18:15.

4. With His death and resurrection, Jesus began leading the 40 year exodus (about AD 30-70) from the slavery of sin to the promised land of reconciliation with God. At the mount of transfiguration: "Two men were talking with Him [Jesus], who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His exodus [Gk exodos] which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Lk 9:30-31. Also: "Behold, I [Jesus] am with you [disciples] always, even to the end of the [Old Covenant] age." Mt 28:20

5. There was a 40 year time period to fulfill the Old Testament and establish the kingdom of God. This accounts for the "already, but not yet" language in the New Testament. For example: "You received the Spirit of adoption..." (Rom 8:15) versus "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption...." (Rom. 8:23) (See P.P. #7 "Already, But Not Yet")

6. The "Coming of the Son of Man" would take place in the disciples' lifetime. "Some standing here who will in no way taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." Mt. 16:28 Also: "Most certainly...this generation will not pass away, until all these things [end times events] are accomplished." Mt. 24:34

7. Revelation states repeatedly that, at the time of its writing (about AD 65), the events would occur shortly. "The things which must happen soon." (Rev. 1:1) "The time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3) "Behold, I come quickly." (Rev. 3:11) "There will no longer be delay." (Rev. 10:6) "The Lord God sent his angel to show...the things which must happen soon." (Rev. 22:6) "Behold, I come quickly." (Rev. 22:7) "The time is at hand." (Rev. 22:10) Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly." (Rev. 22:12) Jesus said, "Yes, I come quickly." (Rev. 22:20)

8. At the writing of Hebrews (about AD 63), the Old Covenant was in the process of becoming obsolete and would soon disappear. "When he speaks of a new covenant, he makes the first obsolete. Now what is growing obsolete and aging is about to disappear." Heb 8:13

9. The temple was symbolic of the Old Covenant. As long as the temple existed, the New Covenant age was not fully realized. "...the way into the Holy Place [reconciliation with God] wasn't yet revealed while the tabernacle [temple] was still standing. This is a symbol of the present [Old Covenant] age, where gifts and sacrifices are offered that are incapable...of making the worshiper perfect." Heb 9:8-9

10. Except for the Tanakh, everything that defined Israel's unique position was destroyed by AD 70 in the Roman and Jewish War: Jerusalem, temple, priesthood, religious rites, and Israel's records of lineage—essential for identity (Neh, 7:5, 64-65). "His disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But he [Jesus] answered them, 'You see all of these things, don't you? Most certainly I tell you, there will not be left here one stone on another, that will not be thrown down.'" Mt 24:1-2.

B. OLD COVENANT AUTUMN FEASTS

1. Feast of Trumpets: Besides offering sacrifices, this feast was simply a day for blowing trumpets. Trumpets could signal war as well as community gatherings. For this special day, the trumpets were traditionally thought to be a call for reflection, repentance, restitution and good works through-out the following ten days. The tenth day was the hallowed Day of Atonement.

2. Day of Atonement: The Day of Atonement was the most solemn day of the year. It was the only prescribed day of fasting and the one day the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, representative of God's presence. The corporate guilt of the nation was brought before Yahweh and sacrifices offered. To prepare, the High Priest underwent elaborate ritual washings, dressed in plain white clothing, and had to offer a separate sacrifice for his own sins. First he took incense into the temple, then the bowl of blood from a bull for his own sin and a third time with the bowl of blood from a goat for the sin of the nation. Seven times he sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat for his own sin, and seven times for the nation. The High Priest's exit from the temple was anxiously awaited by the people. His appearance would indicate that the sacrifice had been accepted and the nation's past sins excused.

3. Feast of Tabernacles or Booths: The week-long feast of tabernacles or "Booths" (the fifth day after the Day of Atonement) was the most joyful of the year. The people lived in tents that week, commemorating Yahweh's many provisions for Israel in their wilderness wanderings. They also celebrated the fall harvest and God's merciful dismissal of their sin.

C. JESUS, THE SUPERIOR HIGH PRIEST.

1. The Old Covenant Day of Atonement practices were not sufficient to take away sin. "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins." Heb 10:4

2. Jesus, the great High Priest entered into heaven, the real Holy of Holies. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we profess." Heb 4:14

3. Christ entered the true Holy of Holies, heaven, with the perfect sacrifice of Himself, securing eternal redemption: "But Christ, having appeared as high priest of the good things having come, by the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not of this creation, nor by blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered once for all into the holy places, having obtained eternal redemption." Heb 9:11-12

4. Christ fulfilled the Day of Atonement by entering into God's presence in heaven, having sacrificed Himself to secure eternal salvation. "For Christ has entered not into holy places made by hands, copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear for us in the presence of God, nor that He should offer Himself repeatedly, just as the high priest enters into the holy places every year with *the* blood of another." Heb 9:24-25

5. Jesus came out of the "tabernacle" a second time, for those awaiting salvation. "Christ, having been offered once in order to bear *the* sins of many, will appear for a second time, apart from sin, to those awaiting Him for salvation." Heb 9:28
Also: Some standing here who will in no way taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." Mt. 16:28

6. Jesus exacted justice via the Roman army (AD 67-70). "I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it is called Faithful and True. In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns... He is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood. His name is called 'The Word of God.' The armies which are in heaven, clothed in white, pure, fine linen, followed him on white horses. Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword that with it he should strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He treads the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. He has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, 'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.'" Rev 19:11-16. "For we know him who said, 'Vengeance belongs to me. I will repay,' says the Lord. Again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb 10:30-31

D. THE COVENANT AGREEMENT CAME DUE.

Comment: Israel had entered into a covenant with Yahweh and the agreement was spelled out in Leviticus chapter 26. If Israel were faithful, they would live in the care of and harmony with their Father God. If not, they would suffer the seven-fold plagues spelled out in Leviticus 26. By the time of the onset of the Roman and Jewish War, outcomes had been determined—a remnant was marked for salvation and the rebellious majority for destruction.

Scripture: “Behold, the judge stands at the door.” James 5:9

Scripture: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I would have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house [temple] is left to you desolate.” Mt 23:37-38

E. “THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS” WAS FULFILLED BY THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS EXECUTED ON FIRST CENTURY APOSTATE ISRAEL.

1. Comment: Before the judgments began, the redeemed, true Israel, were sealed.

1. Scripture: “I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.” Rev 7:4

2. Comment: From the seventh seal came seven angels with trumpet judgments.

2. Scripture: “When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.” Rev 8:1-2

3. Comment: The censer, normally used for incense and worship, was filled with fire and cast onto the land. Instead of the ceremonial use of the censer, it was turned to an instrument of divine vengeance.

3. Scripture: “The angel took the censer, and he filled it with the fire of the altar, then threw it on the land. Thunders, sounds, lightnings, and an earthquake followed.” Rev 8:5

4. Abbreviated notes on the trumpet judgments (Rev 8,9,11)

Trumpet #1: Hail, fire, blood on earth. One third of the earth and trees and all green grass burned.

Trumpet #2: Burning mountain thrown into sea. One third of the sea became blood, and one third of sea creatures died. One third of the ships destroyed.

Trumpet #3: Burning star, Wormwood, fell on one third of the rivers, and on the springs of water. One third of the waters became wormwood. Many people died from the bitter waters.

Trumpet #4: One third of the sun, moon, stars struck and darkened affecting day and night time.

Trumpet #5 (first woe): Fallen individual unleashes locusts with sting of scorpion. Unsealed torment for five months. People long for death. Army ruled by Apollyon.

Trumpet #6 (second woe): Four messengers will kill one-third of mankind. Out of their mouths proceed fire, smoke, and sulfur which kills one third of people. Deliberately grotesque symbolism. “Measure temple”, two witnesses killed, beast arises from pit, earthquake (See P.P. #92, #34)

Trumpet #7(third woe): No narrative provided as to the substance of the 7th trumpet. Reign of God established. View of the ark (symbol of God's presence) in heavenly temple. Frightful celestial signs.

F. “THE DAY OF ATONEMENT” WAS FULFILLED BY THE “BOWLS OF GOD’S WRATH” JUDGMENTS EXECUTED ON FIRST CENTURY APOSTATE ISRAEL.

1. Comment: The redeemed 144,000 were singing a new song. They were exempt from the coming judgments.

1. Scripture: “They sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand, those who had been redeemed out of the earth.” Rev 14:3

2. Comment: In “The Day of Atonement” ceremonies, the bowls were containers for the blood of animals to offer to Yahweh for the corporate guilt of the nation. But now the bowls would be used to pour out God's wrath. The angels poured out the plagues that Israel had brought on themselves when they rejected their Messiah's sacrifice for sin. Due to their hardness of heart, apostate Israel now had to bear the full weight of the nation's guilt without mediation.

2. Scripture: “I heard a loud voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God on the earth!’” Rev 16:1

2. Scripture: “According to the law, in fact, nearly everything must be purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Heb 9:22

3. Comment: The Day of Atonement changed into the days of vengeance for those in rebellion against God. The scriptures (eg: Lev 26, Dt 32) had to be fulfilled. The redeemed could not yet enter into the presence of God (Feast of Tabernacles) until justice (“The Day of Atonement”) was complete.

3. Scripture: “These are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” Lk 21:22

3. Scripture: “No one was able to enter into the temple [God's presence] until the seven plagues of the seven angels would be finished.” Rev 15:6

4. Abbreviated notes on the bowl plagues (Rev 16:1-20):

Bowl Plague #1: Painful sores on worshippers of the beast.

Bowl Plague #2: Sea became blood and every living thing in the sea died.

Bowl Plague #3: Rivers and springs became blood. The wicked deserved the plagues because they had inflicted pain and death on the Lamb's followers.

Bowl Plague #4: Sun scorched people and they blasphemed God. No repentance.

Bowl Plague #5: Darkness in beast kingdom. People in pain and blasphemed God and no repentance.

Bowl Plague #6: Euphrates River dried up enabling invasion. Three unclean spirits came from the dragon, beast, and false prophet. Leads to the war of Armageddon (See P.P. #92).

Bowl Plague #7: "It is done!" Lightnings, sounds, thunders, great earthquake. The great city [Jerusalem] was divided and fell, islands and the mountains disappeared, great hailstones fell.

G. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES WAS FULFILLED WITH THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Comment: Revelation 21 and 22 convey the promise of God's constant presence with the redeemed. (See P.P. #8 "Revelation 21 and 22 Are Already Fulfilled in Christ".)

Scripture: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth [New Covenant], for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no more. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, God's dwelling is with people; and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'" Rev 21:1-3

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The fundamental conception behind the doctrine of atonement, is the fact that God and man are ideally one in life and interests. Therefore, it is everywhere assumed in the Bible that God and man should be in all respects in harmonious relations, "at-one." This was the primal state of Adam and Eve.

The "Day of Atonement" is often referred to as simply "the day" in the Jewish tradition, highlighting its significance as the holiest day of the year in Judaism. This is of interest because the Tanakh refers to Israel's future judgment and/or salvation as "that day" and the final judgment has everything to do with the nation's rejection of Christ's sacrifice. The judgment of the seven bowls ended Old Covenant Israel. With the seventh bowl, Revelation tells us, "It is done" (Rev 16:17).

Most Christians rightly believe we are in the New Covenant, but wrongly believe the fulfillment of the Old Covenant fall feasts is in the future. This is a logical fallacy. The seven Old Covenant feast days had to be fulfilled before the coming of the New Covenant, therefore the feast days and the book of Revelation are in the past. The Bible we have is the complete story of salvation.

NOTES:

New Heaven and Earth P.P. #8, #18

The Last Days P.P. #5

Rivers and sea become blood P.P. #33

Euphrates dried up, Armageddon P.P. #92

"They did not repent" P.P. #55

Beast P.P. #36, 37, 38

"666" P.P. #39,40

Two Witnesses P.P. #34

101 Preterist Proofs: <https://preteristcosmos.com/preterism101.html>

Josephus, "Wars of the Jews" acts as a commentary on the Book of Revelation and Matthew 24.