

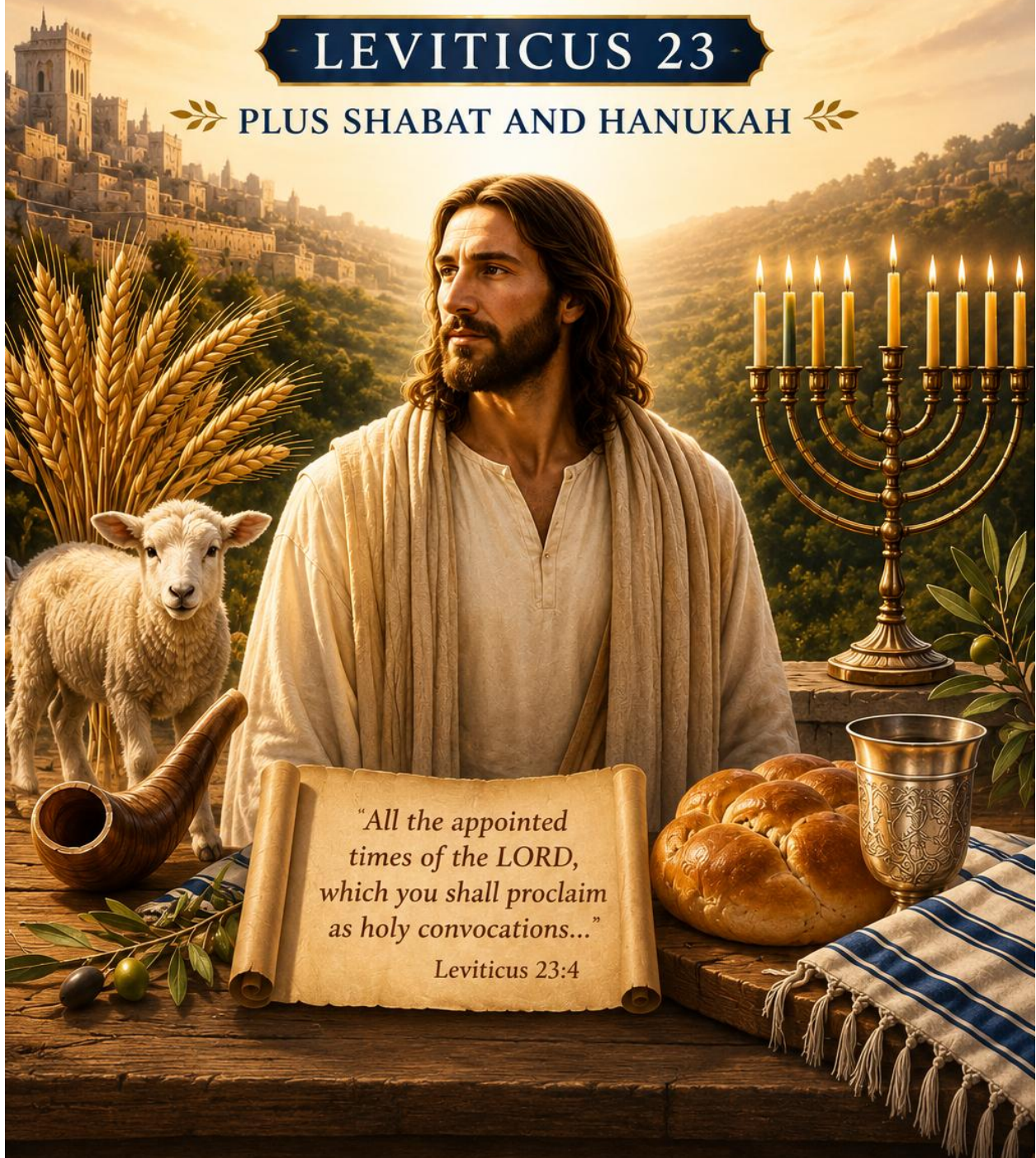
# YESHUA

IN

## GOD'S FESTIVALS

LEVITICUS 23

PLUS SHABAT AND HANUKAH



*"All the appointed  
times of the LORD,  
which you shall proclaim  
as holy convocations..."*

Leviticus 23:4

## **“Mission, Purpose, and Educational Use”**

Blow the Shofar Ministry was born out of a deeply personal burden to confront the growing rise of anti-Semitism and the increasing misunderstanding surrounding Israel and the Jewish people.

This ministry exists to bring truth where there is confusion, prayer where there is silence, compassion where there is division, and unwavering support where it is desperately needed.

Our mission is to educate, equip, and inspire the Church through biblical understanding, historical awareness, and compassionate engagement, encouraging believers to stand boldly, faithfully, and lovingly with the Jewish community while actively confronting anti-Semitism in all its forms.

The educational materials, teachings, and written works produced by Blow the Shofar Ministry are provided for educational, research, and informational purposes, with the goal of promoting historical awareness, religious understanding, and the ongoing fight against anti-Semitism, hatred, prejudice, and intolerance.

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These materials are intended to encourage education, dialogue, compassion, reconciliation, and a deeper understanding of the historical consequences of anti-Semitism and religious intolerance.

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God spoke to Moses, telling him to speak to the Israelites and say to them: There are special times that you must celebrate as sacred holidays to God. The following are my special times.

—Leviticus 23: 1-2

#### Leviticus 23: 1-2

1And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

אֵין־דָּבָר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:

2Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: The Lord's appointed feasts [holy days] that you shall designate as holy occasions. These are My appointed feasts [holy days]:

ב דִּבַּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם  
מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי  
קֹדֶשׁ אֵלֶּה הֵם מוֹעֲדֵי:

## Introduction and Abstract

Every event on God's calendar remains vital for all followers of Yeshua. Although many modern Believers view biblical festivals as relics of ancient Jewish history, these observances are essential to Christian identity today.

Just as Yeshua and the apostles honored these feasts alongside their Jewish communities, these celebrations continue to hold deep spiritual significance for both Messianic Jews and the broader body of believers.

What have been termed "Jewish festivals" are actually God's festivals.

In fact, God Himself described them in these simple terms: "These are *my* festivals" (Leviticus 23:2, emphasis added).

Though God did give His festivals specifically to the Jewish people as a part of the Sinai covenant, he clearly intended them for all of His children, including those non-Jews who would believe upon Him through Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah and the Savior of the world.

However, In order to understand these feasts, we must first look at the three types of law found in the Old Testament:

Understanding the three traditional categories of law in the Bible (moral, civil and ceremonial) is important because it provides a framework for discerning which Old Testament laws are still binding on believers today, how they relate to the New Covenant, and what they reveal about God's unchanging character and redemptive plan.

The primary reason for this distinction is to help believers understand which laws are universal and timeless and which were specific to the historical context of ancient Israel.

Understanding Christ's Fulfillment: The framework clarifies Yeshua's statement that he came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). It helps explain why Believers no longer offer animal sacrifices, follow specific dietary restrictions, or adhere to all the judicial penalties of the Old Testament (e.g., stoning).

Avoiding Legalism and Antinomianism helps Believers avoid the error of legalism (believing they earn salvation by following the law) while also avoiding antinomianism (believing the law is entirely irrelevant). It highlights that salvation is by grace through faith, but the law still serves as a guide for godly living and a response of love to God.

Revealing God's Nature: All laws, regardless of category, reflect aspects of God's character (holiness, justice, love, wisdom). Studying them helps believers gain a richer understanding of who God is and what pleases Him.



**Moral Law:** This law shows us the sinfulness of humanity and how far we fall short of God's holiness.

Judaism's moral law centers on living a holy life by imitating God's attributes (mercy, justice), fulfilling 613 Mitzvot (commandments) from the Torah, and embracing core values like justice, charity (Tzedakah), love for God and neighbor, repairing the world (Tikkun Olam), and upholding the Noahide Laws for all humanity.

It's an action-oriented system focusing on righteous conduct, social responsibility, and building a just society through divine guidance and human action, guided by Halakha (Jewish Law).

In Christian theology, "Christ in the moral law" means Yeshua fulfills, perfectly embodies, and reinterprets God's eternal moral laws (like the Ten Commandments) through love, making them the standard for believers, not as a means of earning salvation (which comes by grace through faith), but as a guide for living, summarized as loving God and neighbor, moving from external rules to internal transformation. While believers aren't "under" the condemning Mosaic Law, they are under the "Law of Christ," which is the perfect expression of God's will found in His teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount.



**Civil Law:** These regulations relate to the polity of the nation of Israel.

Jewish civil law, or *Halakha*, is the body of Jewish law covering daily life, including property, contracts, family, and torts (damages), historically handled by rabbis in community courts, emphasizing mediation and justice, with core principles derived from the Torah and developed through Talmudic and later

interpretations, even interacting with local laws like the principle of *Dina d'malkhuta dina* ("the law of the land is the law").

It integrates religious, moral, and civil aspects, focusing on fairness and repairing harm, often through financial compensation rather than strict punishment.

Christian civil law refers to the laws governing Christian individuals and churches (like marriage/divorce acts in India) and the historical influence of Christian principles on broader secular legal systems, stemming from Old Testament civil law (applicable to ancient Israel) and medieval canon/civil law, with Believers today generally following the *moral law* (Ten Commandments) while secular law adapts societal rules, sometimes drawing from biblical ethics.



**Ceremonial Law:** Biblical statutes, traditionally categorized as Chukkim, form the basis of Jewish ceremonial law.

Ceremonial laws, derived from the Old Testament (Mosaic Law), were specific rituals, sacrifices, dietary rules (like kosher), festivals (Passover, etc.), and purity codes for ancient Israel, designed to set them apart and foreshadow the coming Messiah, Yeshua.

Believers generally believe these laws were fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice and are no longer binding, though their principles (holiness, worship) carry over into New Testament faith, with debates continuing mainly over the Sabbath's observance. A shadow of what is to come, this law points ahead to the fulfillment found in Christ.

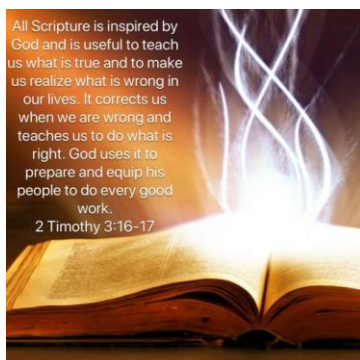
Organization of the laws into categories or topics is not how ancient Israelites, Yeshua, or the apostles talked about the laws. However, it's not "wrong" to categorize the laws into moral, civil, and ceremonial rules—it can be helpful for studying the law.

In the Torah, laws are often intermingled without topical division. For instance, Leviticus 19 blends "moral" commands (honoring parents) directly with "ceremonial" ones (Sabbath observance and dietary rules), all unified under the theme of God's holiness.

The "tripartite division" (moral, ceremonial, civil) is a later theological framework, popularized by figures like Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century and later adopted by Reformers to determine which laws remained binding for Believers.

The division of the Jewish law into different categories is a human construct designed to better understand the nature of God and define which laws church-age Believers are still required to follow. Nothing in the Bible indicates that God intended a distinction of categories.

The phrase "All the law is useful for instruction" comes from the Bible, specifically (2 Timothy 3:16)



**"All Scripture is God-breathed (or inspired) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"**

2 Timothy 3:16 establishes that Scripture is not merely human writing but is divinely inspired and serves as a comprehensive manual for spiritual life, designed to transform a believer's character and actions. In Essence this verse highlights that God's word isn't just for understanding; it's a practical guide for moral and spiritual development, ensuring followers are competent for any good deed.

The final purpose of this instruction is recorded in verse 17: *"so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"*.

For Believers, many believe the ceremonial law is no longer applicable, but we are bound by the Ten Commandments. For others

*"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes,"*

Yahshua fulfilled the law, thus abolishing the difference between Jew and Gentile "so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross..." (Ephesians 2:15-16).

*<sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

The feasts of Israel are a part of the ceremonial law, looking beyond themselves to the Messiah and his two advents (the incarnation and the second coming)

The feasts of the LORD which are rich with symbolic and prophetic significance, were properly called the feasts of the LORD. They fundamentally belonged to God, and He gave them to Israel as holy convocations, sacred gatherings.

The major theme in all these feasts is *gratitude*, for what God has done and what God continues to give.

Special "displays of the mercy, kindness, and providential care of God should be particularly remembered.

When we recollect that we deserve nothing at his hands, and that the debt of gratitude is all the debt we can pay, in it we should be cheerful, fervent, and frequent.

Before we dive into our study of the feasts, I want to address one final question: are "true believers" actually required to follow these ancient rituals today?

The general consensus across mainstream Christian perspectives is that these rituals are no longer legally binding for salvation, but many find deep spiritual value in them as "shadows" that point to Christ



### Messianic Perspective

From a Messianic and Hebrew Roots perspective it asserts that the biblical festivals are not merely cultural "Jewish holidays" but are defined in Leviticus 23:2 as the "appointed times of the Lord."

Proponents argue that since God Himself designated these dates as "My feasts," they possess an eternal quality that transcends the specific history of the nation of Israel.

This view emphasizes that these days are *moedim*—divine appointments or "set times"—where God invites His people to meet with Him.

By observing them, believers are not attempting to earn salvation through works, but are instead choosing to walk in the same "prophetic rhythm" that Yeshua and the apostles modeled.

This rhythm aligns the believer's life with God's redemptive timeline, where the Spring Feasts celebrate the work accomplished at Christ's first coming and the Fall Feasts provide a "dress rehearsal" for His return.

Furthermore, this movement views the practice of these rituals as a vital way to "train the soul."

Just as a physical athlete follows a regimen to build muscle and discipline, a believer uses the feasts as spiritual liturgies to internalize the character and plan of God.

Each ritual acts as a "convocation" (*miqra*), which can be translated as a rehearsal; by physically participating in things like the Passover meal or dwelling in temporary shelters during Tabernacles, the believer moves the lessons of Scripture from the head to the heart.

This approach reframes the Law not as a burden of legalism, but as a "divine curriculum" that helps the "grafted-in" believer maintain a constant, year-round focus on the Messiah's past, present, and future work.



The ***"Shadow and Substance"*** perspective remains the dominant theological framework for understanding why many believers do not observe Old Testament rituals.

This view is rooted in the belief that the Old Covenant was a preparatory phase designed to point toward a greater reality.

According to **Colossians 2:16–17**,

***16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon***

***celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.***

Just as a shadow has no life of its own and only exists because a real object is blocking the light, the rituals of the Law were intended to provide a silhouette of the Messiah's future work.

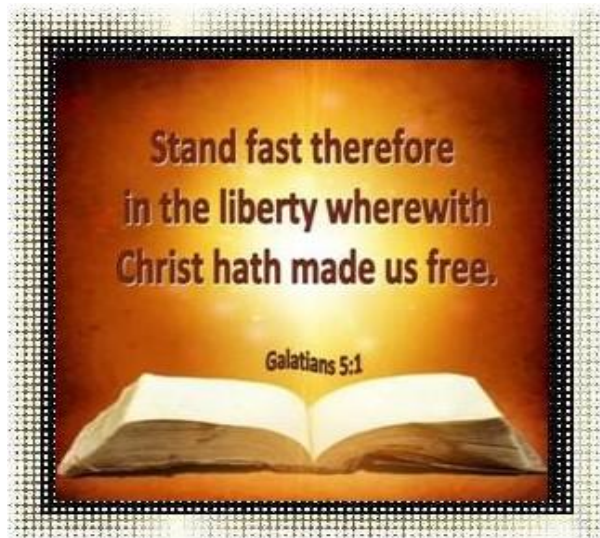
Once the "substance"—Yeshua—arrived and stepped into history, the shadow served its purpose and was eclipsed by the reality of His presence.

Under this New Covenant framework, the requirements of the Law are viewed as fulfilled rather than abolished.

When Yeshua declared "It is finished," theologians argue He satisfied every ritualistic demand, transferring the focus from "doing" to "being."

Consequently, the external ritual of animal sacrifice was replaced by the internal "sacrifice" of a contrite heart, and the physical feast of Passover was elevated to the spiritual reality of Communion.

This shift means that for the believer today, the primary "instruction" (2 Timothy 3:16) found in the feasts is revelatory rather than regulatory. We study the feasts to see the intricate detail of God's plan, but we walk in a freedom where "internal faith" and the guidance of the Holy Spirit take precedence over the observance of specific calendar days.



The principle of **Christian Liberty** serves as a middle ground, shifting the focus from "divine mandate" to "personal devotion."

This perspective is rooted in **Romans 14:5**, where the Apostle Paul writes,

**"One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in their own mind."**

From this vantage point, the biblical feasts are viewed as a matter of individual conscience rather than universal law.

If a believer finds that celebrating the feasts deepens their worship, honors God's history, or helps them understand His character, they are entirely free to participate. The ritual becomes a voluntary expression of love—a "get to" rather than a "have to."

The defining boundary of Christian Liberty is the rejection of legalism. While a believer is free to observe a ritual, they are cautioned not to view that observance as a requirement for righteousness or a metric of "true" spirituality.

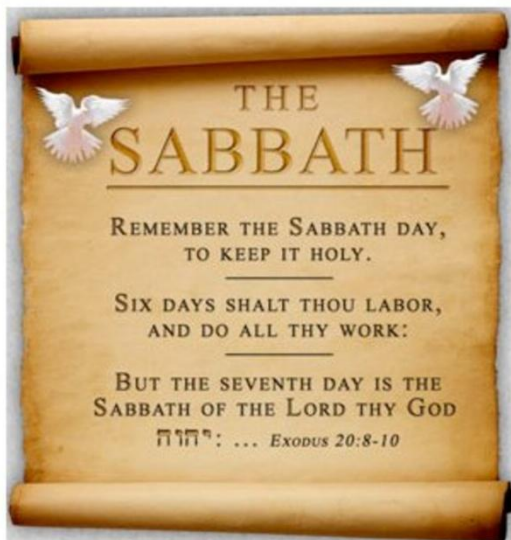
According to this view, our standing before God is based solely on the finished work of Christ, not on which days we keep or which foods we eat.

"The problem with Christian liberty" typically refers to the theological and practical tension between individual freedom in Christ and the responsibility to love others.

While believers are theoretically free from the "yoke of the law," this liberty is often misunderstood or misused, particularly in reference to our Jewish roots .

"Over the last few years, I have seen a disturbing trend of evangelical pastors who completely strip Yeshua of his Jewish identity. By claiming he was raised in a 'Palestinian culture' or was himself Palestinian—a term not applied to the region until a century after his death—they are engaging in blatant historical revisionism. This erasure of Yeshua's Hebraic roots has directly contributed to a toxic rise in antisemitism within our churches.

Now lets take an abstract view into the meaning of God's Festivals



### **Sabbath (Day of Rest)**

The weekly Sabbath is distinct from the seven annual feasts primarily because of its origin, frequency, and symbolic meaning.

The Sabbath was instituted at creation as a weekly, perpetual day of rest.

The seven feasts, however, were annual, seasonal observances commanded specifically for the children of Israel after the Exodus, primarily found in Leviticus 23.

In Leviticus 23, God introduces the Sabbath (verse 3) and then, in a separate section, presents the list of the

annual feasts (verse 4 onwards).

This structural separation in the text suggests they are different categories of "appointed times" or "holy convocations" (miqra).

Sabbath serves as a memorial of God's work of creation and a sign of the covenant between God and His people. It is a reminder of physical and spiritual rest in God.

The seven annual feasts serve as a prophetic foreshadowing of God's redemptive plan through Yahshua, each pointing to specific events in His ministry (e.g., Passover points to the crucifixion, Firstfruits to the resurrection, Pentecost to the giving of the Holy Spirit).

In many theological interpretations, the weekly Sabbath is considered part of the enduring moral law (part of the Ten Commandments), whereas the annual feasts and their associated requirements (like specific animal sacrifices) are considered part of the ceremonial law which was fulfilled by Christ.

Shabbat is Judaism's weekly day of rest, observed from Friday sunset to Saturday nightfall, symbolizing God's rest after creation and offering a spiritual respite from worldly concerns.

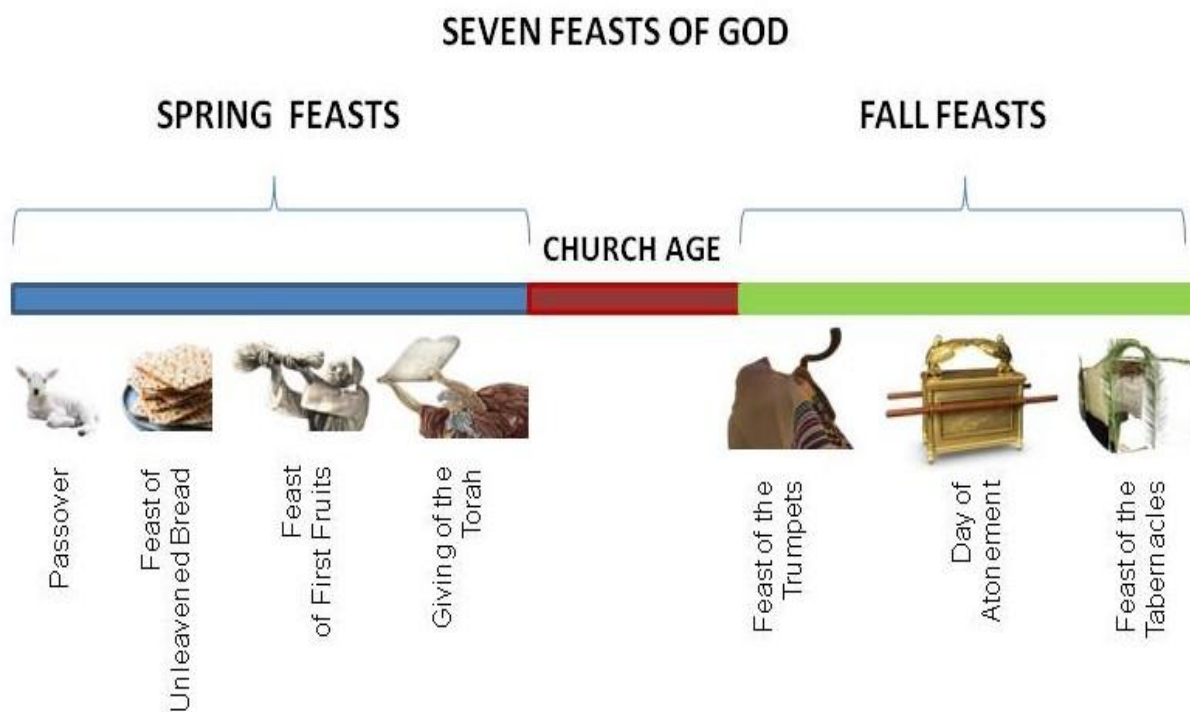
It's a time for prayer, family, community, and feasting, marked by rituals like lighting candles, reciting blessings over wine and challah (braided bread), attending synagogue, and refraining from work and technology, concluding with a ceremony called Havdalah.



The seven feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23) are primarily divided into two groups based on their timing and prophetic fulfillment:

The **Spring Feasts** Fulfilled through Yeshua and the

The **Fall Feasts** to be fulfilled in future events such as the second coming, the millennial reign and the end of the age.



There is a significant gap of approximately four months between these two groups, which many scholars interpret as representing the current "Church Age". The spring feasts of Israel are highly intertwined, forming a compact, continuous season,

Because they occur within a compact 50 day period and are biblically dependant on one another for their timing and significance. In the Hebrew calendar that reflects both agricultural cycles and a connected narrative of redemption.

The connection is sequential and thematic:



**Passover (Pesach):** *Passover*, or *Pesach*, is a foundational festival in Jewish tradition that commemorates the biblical Exodus and the liberation of the Israelites from 400 years of Egyptian slavery.

Central to the holiday is the Seder, a ritual-rich meal where families recount the narrative of the ten plagues—specifically the final plague where the "Angel of Death" passed over houses marked with lamb's blood—through the reading of the Haggadah.

Key symbolic elements include matzah (unleavened bread representing haste), maror (bitter herbs representing the bitterness of bondage), and four cups of wine signifying redemption.

In the New Testament, Passover serves as the theological framework for the ministry and sacrifice of Yeshua, often identified by believers as the "Lamb of God". The Last Supper is traditionally understood as a Passover Seder where Yeshua instituted the New Covenant, redefining the bread and wine as his body and blood.



This Christian perspective views the physical liberation of the Exodus as a "shadow" or precursor to spiritual liberation from sin through the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

The festival also carries an eschatological hope that links the past deliverance to a future, ultimate restoration. This is encapsulated in the traditional Seder-closing phrase,

**"Next year in Jerusalem,"** which expresses a yearning for the Messianic era.

In the context of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21–22), Passover symbols reach their final fulfillment: the need for a sacrificial lamb is replaced by the "Lamb who was slain" on the throne, and the physical city of Jerusalem is superseded by a heavenly one where divine light replaces all earthly lamps.



### **Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag Hamotzi):**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzot*) is a seven-day biblically mandated festival that begins immediately following the Passover Seder.

Established in Exodus 12, the feast commemorates the haste with which the Israelites fled Egypt, leaving no time for their dough to rise.

The central requirement of the week is the total removal of *chametz* (leaven) from the home and the exclusive consumption of matzah, symbolizing both the "bread of affliction" and the purity of a redeemed people.

Theologically, the feast represents a transition from liberation to sanctification. In Jewish tradition, leaven is often viewed as a metaphor for the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) or pride, which puffs up the soul; therefore, the act of eating unleavened bread signifies a commitment to humility and spiritual purging.

In the New Testament, this symbolism is expanded by the Apostle Paul, who exhorted believers to "get rid of the old yeast" of malice and wickedness to become a "new batch" characterized by sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

This links the festival to the concept of the "sinless" life made possible through the sacrifice of Yeshua, whom Believers identify as the "Bread of Life."



Ultimately, the Feast of Unleavened Bread serves as a bridge between the initial act of salvation (Passover) and the journey toward the New Jerusalem.

Just as the Israelites were purified in the wilderness, the removal of leaven points toward the ultimate state of the Heavenly City, described in Revelation as a place where "nothing impure will ever enter" (Revelation 21:27).

The festival remains a perpetual reminder that the journey of faith requires an ongoing dedication to holiness and spiritual transparency.



The **Feast of First Fruits** (*Reishit Katzir*) and Shavuot (*Pentecost*)

represent the two bookends of the biblical spring harvest season, inextricably linked by a 49-day period known as the Counting of the Omer.

While First Fruits marks the initial barley harvest through the waving of a single sheaf, Shavuot celebrates the completion of the wheat harvest with the offering of two leavened loaves.

This progression from a single grain to a completed loaf symbolizes a journey from initial promise to full maturity and communal provision.

Beyond their agricultural roots, these festivals hold deep historical and theological significance regarding the revelation of God's word and spirit. Shavuot is traditionally celebrated as the anniversary of the **Giving of the Torah** at Mount Sinai, marking the moment Israel entered into a formal covenant with God.



This transition from physical liberation at Passover to spiritual instruction at Sinai is often mirrored in the reading of the Book of Ruth, which highlights themes of loyalty and the harvest.

In the Christian tradition, these dates are viewed through a messianic lens: the Feast of First Fruits serves as a type of the Resurrection, while Shavuot—or Pentecost—marks the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, signifying a new harvest of believers and the birth of the Church.



The spring Feasts, or *mo'edim* ("appointments"), were meant to point the children of Israel to their messiah and illustrate the truth of God's plan of redemption and its fulfillment through this promised savior.

The Feast of First Fruits is viewed as a picture of the resurrection of Yeshua, whom the Apostle Paul calls the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep".

And Shavuot/Pentecost is identified as the day the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples in Jerusalem. This event is seen as the "harvest of souls," where 3,000 people were saved, contrasting with the 3,000 who died at the first Shavuot at Sinai.

## The Fall Feasts

The fall feasts of Israel, also known as the **High Holy Days** or *Moedim* (appointed times), occur during the Hebrew month of **Tishrei** (September–October). They consist of three major biblical festivals that follow the spring feasts.



### **Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets / Yom Teruah)**

which literally translates from Hebrew as the "Head of the Year," serves as the Jewish New Year and the traditional anniversary of the creation of the world.

It marks the start of the "High Holy Days," a ten-day period of introspection and repentance known as the Days of Awe (*Yamim Noraim*), which eventually culminates in the solemn fast of Yom Kippur.

Rosh Hashanah is characterized by a blend of festive joy and solemn judgment, as it is theologically viewed as the day when God evaluates the deeds of the past year and determines the "Book of Life" for the year to come.



The most iconic ritual of the holiday is the sounding of the shofar, or ram's horn, which serves as a spiritual wake-up call to the soul and a proclamation of divine sovereignty.

Many believe it foreshadows the Rapture of the Church or the gathering of Israel at the sounding of the last trumpet.

Religious services are extensive, guided by a special prayer book called the *Machzor* that highlights themes of coronation and remembrance.

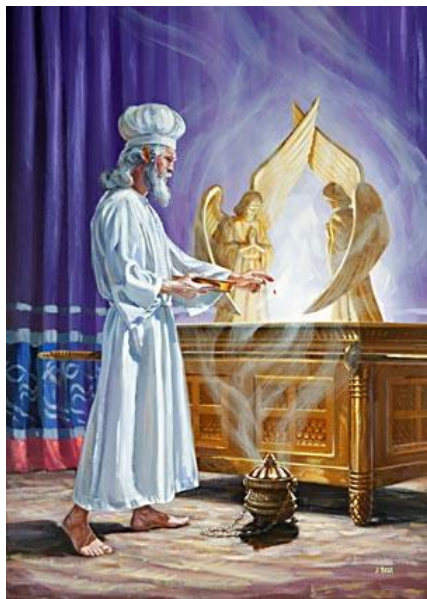


A significant communal custom is **Tashlich**, where individuals gather near a body of water to symbolically cast away their sins. The celebration is also marked by meaningful culinary traditions, such as dipping **apples in honey** to ensure a sweet year ahead and eating **round challah** bread to symbolize the cyclical nature of life and the crown of the Creator.



**Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement**, stands as the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, representing a profound period of **fasting, prayer**, and spiritual purification.

The day is rooted in the biblical narrative of Moses receiving the second set of tablets, symbolizing God's complete forgiveness for the Israelites' worship of the golden calf.



Historically, the holiday centered on an elaborate Temple ritual led by the High Priest, who would enter the **Holy of Holies** only on this day to achieve atonement for the nation through blood sacrifice and the symbolic "scapegoat".

Following the Temple's destruction in 70 CE, the rabbis transformed the holiday into its modern form: a "temple of the heart" where animal sacrifice is replaced by prayer, fasting, and charity (*teshuvah, tefilah, and tzedakah*).

As the culmination of the Ten Days of Repentance, it is a day dedicated teshuvah (repentance) during which individuals seek to reconcile with God and their fellow humans for the transgressions of the past year.

The observance is defined by a strict 25-hour fast and the avoidance of physical comforts—such as bathing or wearing leather—to focus entirely on the soul's elevation and the pursuit of divine forgiveness.

In the New Testament, Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is primarily presented through the lens of Christ's fulfillment of its sacrificial rituals as the "Great High Priest."

The most extensive discussion is found in **Hebrews chapters 8–10**. The author compares the earthly High Priest's annual entry into the Holy of Holies with Christ entering the "heavenly sanctuary" once for all.

Yeshua as the "Ultimate Sacrifice" is viewed as Yeshua fulfilling both roles of the Yom Kippur ritual: The Slain Goat: as well as the The Scapegoat, often viewed as a picture of Judgment Day or the Second Coming of Christ when Israel will recognize Him as Messiah.

**Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)** A day of fasting and prayer focused on atoning for the sins of the nation. Historically, it was the only day the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to make a sacrifice.

Often viewed as a picture of Judgment Day or the Second Coming of Christ when Israel will recognize Him as Messiah.



**Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles / Feast of Booths)** A seven-day joyful harvest festival commemorating God's provision during Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Foreshadows the Millennial Kingdom, a time when God will "tabernacle" or dwell among His people on earth.

In a Christian context, these feasts are seen as prophetic "dress rehearsals" that were literally fulfilled by the events of Yahshua's first coming in the same precise sequence and timing:

Yashua was the **Passover Lamb** sacrificed for the sins of the world.

His sinless body in the tomb during the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**.

His resurrection as the **Firstfruits** from the dead on that specific Sunday.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at **Shavuot/Pentecost**, empowering believers for new life and fulfilling the promise of a new covenant.

This tight, consecutive timing demonstrates how the spring feasts are intricately woven together, forming a single, continuous redemptive narrative.



Hanukkah is known as the Feast of Dedication or the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah isn't mentioned in the Old Testament, as it's origin is in the inter-testamental period, during one of the most courageous episodes in Israel's history.

So to understand the meaning and significance of Hanukkah in both Jewish Tradition and within the New Testament we must understand both the origin of the Menorah and the re-dedication of the Temple during the Maccabee Period.



To truly grasp the significance of Hanukkah across both Jewish tradition and the New Testament, one must first look back to the Menorah's origin as a divine blueprint.

In Exodus, God commanded the creation of a seven-branched lampstand of pure gold, adorned with almond blossoms to mirror the Tree of Life.

This was not merely furniture; it was the *Ner Tamid*, a perpetual light signifying that the Divine Presence dwelt within the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple.

This light established the Temple as the spiritual heart of the nation, making its subsequent desecration by the Seleucid King Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BCE a catastrophic spiritual blow.

By erecting an idol to Zeus and outlawing the Torah, Antiochus attempted to extinguish the "light" of Judaism itself, setting the stage for the Maccabean Revolt.

The Maccabean Period transformed the Menorah from a symbol of quiet presence into a beacon of national and spiritual resistance.

Led by Judah "The Hammer," the Jewish rebels reclaimed the Temple in 164 BCE.

The festival of Hanukkah, or "Dedication," was established to celebrate the cleansing of the altar and the eight-day miracle of the oil, where a single day's supply of sanctified oil sustained the Temple's Menorah until more could be produced.

This historical victory ensured the survival of the Jewish faith and preserved the very Temple where, centuries later, the events of the New Testament would unfold.

Within the New Testament, Hanukkah provides a crucial backdrop for the identity of Yeshua.

In **John 10:22**, Yeshua is recorded walking in the Temple during the Feast of Dedication, a winter festival that celebrated the Maccabean liberation.



Amidst the nationalistic fervor of a holiday honoring a human deliverer, Yeshua chose this moment to declare his divine sonship and his role as the "Light of the World."

This creates a theological bridge: the physical Menorah cleansed by the Maccabees becomes a shadow of the ultimate "Light" found in the Messiah.



This progression reaches its climax in the vision of the New Jerusalem, where the need for a physical lampstand or even the sun is surpassed, as the glory of God provides a direct and eternal radiance for all of creation.

"Now that we've surveyed the landscape of the Appointed Times, it's time to zoom in. We're starting an in-depth Bible study on each individual festival, unpacking the historical context, the sacrificial requirements, and the profound prophetic significance they hold for us today."

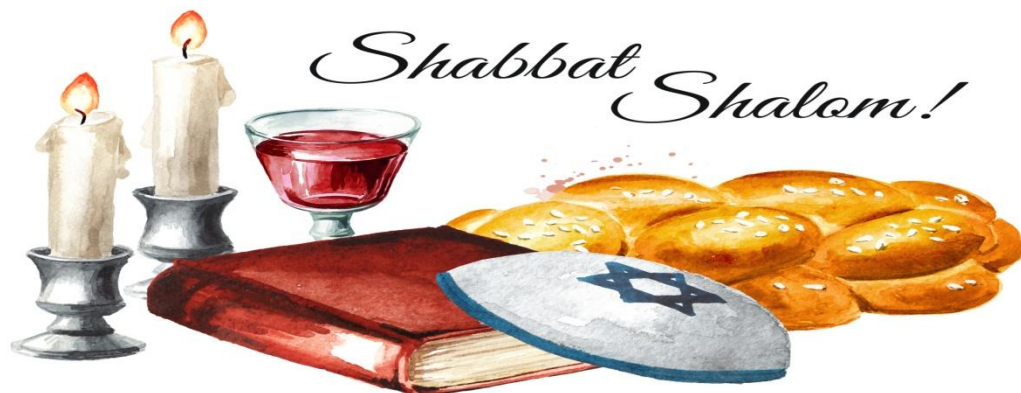
# *Celebrating* SHABBAT



## Leviticus 23:3

3[For] six days, work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places.

גִּשְׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת שַׁבְּתוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ  
כָּל-מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ שַׁבָּת הוּא לַיהוָה  
בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם:



The weekly Sabbath is distinct from the seven annual feasts primarily because of its origin, frequency, and symbolic meaning.

The Sabbath was instituted at creation as a weekly, perpetual day of rest.

The seven feasts, however, were annual, seasonal observances commanded specifically for the children of Israel after the Exodus, primarily found in Leviticus 23.

In Leviticus 23, God introduces the Sabbath (verse 3) and then, in a separate section, presents the list of the annual feasts (verse 4 onwards).

This structural separation in the text suggests they are different categories of "appointed times" or "holy convocations" (miqra).

Sabbath serves as a memorial of God's work of creation and a sign of the covenant between God and His people. It is a reminder of physical and spiritual rest in God.

The seven annual feasts serve as a prophetic foreshadowing of God's redemptive plan through Yeshua, each pointing to specific events in His ministry (e.g., Passover points to the crucifixion, Firstfruits to the resurrection, Pentecost to the giving of the Holy Spirit).

In many theological interpretations, the weekly Sabbath is considered part of the enduring moral law (part of the Ten Commandments), whereas the annual feasts and their associated requirements (like specific animal sacrifices) are considered part of the ceremonial law which was fulfilled by Christ.



# Sabbath

**Sabbath** (Hebrew: שַׁבָּת, also known as "Shabbos") is the Jewish day of rest and celebration that begins on Friday before sunset and ends on the following evening after nightfall.

It is ushered in with (late afternoon) candle lighting, prayers, and feasting on braided bread (challah) and other delicacies. And its end

is marked with a multisensory ceremony as well (Havdalah).

It is the only ritual commanded by God in the Ten Commandments and is at the core of Jewish identity and has served as the anchor of Jewish continuity for thousands of years.

Sabbath A God-ordained day of rest has existed since the creation of earth. The first ever Sabbath took place in the beginning of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible.

After six days of Creation, God rested: *"Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done"* (Genesis 2:3).

Later, in the Book of Exodus, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments atop Mount Sinai.

The Fourth Commandment says to *remember* the day of the Sabbath and to *keep* it holy.

Both of these instructions — to "remember" and to "keep" the Sabbath —have guided Jews for centuries in how they observe the Sabbath.

After six days of labor, the children of Israel were to set aside the seventh day as a day to rest and not to do any work. Furthermore, God told Moses that this commandment applied to the children, the servants, the livestock, and foreigners living in their towns.

*"Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy"* (Exodus 20:11).

More than anything else, the Sabbath is a sacred point of connection with God. It is a time to disconnect from the stresses and distractions of everyday life and focus on relationships — with God, with family, and with the community.

The Sabbath day is a reminder of the importance of rest and taking a needed break from our daily tasks.

It gives the space and opportunity to focus on what truly matters each week and to reset priorities.

It also celebrates Jewish tradition and deepens the connection with the Jewish community and heritage. The Sabbath — having one day a week for rest and contemplation — is one of the greatest gifts that Judaism has given to the world.

The Hebrew word Sabbath is translated as “rest” or “ceasing to work.” A major part of observing the Sabbath involves abstaining from creative work, just as God did on the seventh day in Genesis.



The Bible actually mentions 39 categories of activities that Jews refrain from on the Sabbath.

But as Jewish scholars point out, the prohibitions are not intended to be limiting, but rather to allow people the liberty to spend time with family and friends and engage in prayer and Bible study.

There are several rituals that happen during the Sabbath, including the lighting of the Shabbat candles, reciting traditional blessings, sharing family dinners on Friday night and Saturday, and attending a *Shabbat* morning service at synagogue.

Time in Judaism is based on both the sun and the moon. Each day starts from one evening and ends the following evening.

So as the sun dips into the horizon, a new day has begun.

This is rooted in Genesis: *“God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day”* (1:5).

As a result, Shabbat begins every Friday at sunset and ends the following Saturday at sundown 25 hours in total.

Since the sunset happens at a different time each day due to the tilt of earth’s axis, every Sabbath starts and ends at a different time.

As expected, in the winter months when the days are shorter, the Sabbath begins earlier, while in the summer months as days lengthen, it starts later in the evening.

**Israel** is frequently cited as the only country that undergoes a near-total nationwide shutdown for a religious day of rest.

While many countries observe weekends on Saturday and Sunday, Israel's Shabbat (Friday sunset to Saturday nightfall) is uniquely codified in its "Status Quo" laws

Businesses, shopping malls, markets, restaurants, public transportation, and many other nonessential services close their doors in observance of the Sabbath. As a result, the country of Israel embraces the day of rest and becomes a quieter and more peaceful place.

Shabbat is portrayed in the Bible as a **holy day of rest** and a sign of God's **covenant with the people of Israel**. Its significance stems from two main biblical events:

**Creation:** Following the six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day and made it holy, setting a divine example for humanity.

**Redemption from Slavery:** Deuteronomy connects Sabbath observance to the Israelites' liberation from Egyptian slavery, emphasizing a universal right to rest as a reminder of God's deliverance.

Shabbat is portrayed in the Bible as the pinnacle of the creation of the universe, and its observance can be seen as a reminder of the purposefulness of the world and the role of human beings in it.

The traditional Shabbat is portrayed in Jewish liturgy, song, and story as a day of joy, a sanctuary from travails, and even a foretaste of the perfected world that will someday be attained.

One constant theme in Shabbat observance across time and territory is the centrality of home life with family members and guests.

To enhance the Shabbat atmosphere, consider setting your table with items that elevate the meal into a sacred experience:

Lay a crisp white tablecloth, such as a classic linen or damask style, to signify the day's importance, use heirloom silver candlesticks or a modern silver set to hold the Shabbat candles, arrange your finest china and use silver flatware. Replace everyday tumblers with crystal goblets or Kiddush cups for the wine and grape juice. Place your Challah loaves on a decorative board and cover them with an embroidered Challah cover until the blessing is recited.

### **SETTING THE STAGE FOR A MEMORABLE SHABBAT**



Shabbat dinner is far more than just a meal; it's a cherished Jewish tradition marking the weekly day of rest (Shabbat) with rituals like candle lighting, special blessings (Kiddush), challah, festive foods, songs, and meaningful family time, creating a spiritual sanctuary for connection, reflection, and slowing down from the everyday. It transforms a routine dinner into an occasion for spiritual nourishment, family unity, and building community, combating loneliness and fostering joy.

Shabbat dinner is the Friday evening meal that marks the beginning of Shabbat.

There are several practices and traditions associated with the Shabbat dinner, such as the Blessing on the wine, blessings of the children, and breaking bread.

Each family connects to traditions and timeless values, transforming their meal into a space of spiritual nourishment and family unity.

Shabbat dinner thus becomes more than a routine; it's a weekly renewal of joy, connection, and mindfulness that offers a brief sanctuary from the fast pace of modern life.



### **A White Tablecloth and Your Best Dishes**

Shabbat is often called "the Shabbat Queen" and is compared to royalty.

Just as we'd clean our houses and set a beautiful table if real-life royalty was planning to stop by,

it's customary to prepare for Shabbat as for exalted guests. Even if it's just you and your kids sitting around the Shabbat

table, there's something lovely and magical about sitting down to a beautifully-set table and eating a meal that's more formal than you're used to.

Shabbat meals have a very different feel than week-day meals and give us a chance to interact with one another in a different setting and on a deeper level.



### **The Candles**

It is traditional to light the Shabbat candles during the 18 minute window right before sundown on Friday, which marks the beginning of Shabbat.

One candle symbolizes remembering the Sabbath, as in Exodus 20:8, "remember the Sabbath day," and the other symbolizes observing the Sabbath, as in Deuteronomy

5:12, "observe the Sabbath day." These two verses appear in the two iterations of the Ten Commandments in the Torah.

Friday evening is a time to awaken all your senses around the dinner table. But before we eat, we set two candles out and as we light them we invite Shabbat to enter our home and surround us with rest and joy. Take a deep breath and try to be present for your special Shabbat meal.

Some people observe the custom to light the candles and then cover your eyes while saying the blessing.

***Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.***

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

**Blessed are You, God, Ruler of the universe, Who sanctified us with the commandment of lighting Shabbat candles.**

This gives you a chance to see the world transformed by the light of the candles when you open your eyes at the end of the blessing.

Some wave their hands over the candles as if scooping up the holiness of the flames.

Either way, the physicality of the act can make the moment extra special. One does not need to be Jewish to join in the blessings on Sabbath.



### **Priestly Blessing**

Jewish families all over the world bless their children on the evening of *Shabbatot* and holidays.

The blessings offered here are appropriate and affirming for children of all genders.

Historically, blessings for children were gender specific.

Boys were blessed with the wish that they would be like the biblical brothers Ephraim and Manasseh. Girls were blessed with the wish that they would be like the biblical matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah - and the Hebrew for both blessings was heavily gendered.

Once we welcome Shabbat by lighting the candles, it's traditional to offer blessings to those around us who are sharing Shabbat with us.

While it is customary to bless children on Shabbat, offering your guests a blessing no matter their age is a lovely ritual.

If blessing is for children:

*Y'simkhol Elohim k'Sarah, Rivka, Rakhel, Leah, Ephraim u'Menashe.*

Followed by this for everyone else

*Y'varechecha Adonai v'yish'm'recha. Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka. Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem l'cha shalom.*

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ  
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּנְךָ  
א יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִישׁ

For children:

**May God make you like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Ephraim and Menasheh.**

Followed by:

**May you be blessed and guarded May you know favor and grace May you give and receive kindness and peace**



### **Blessing over the Wine/Grape Juice – The Kiddush**

Judaism often sanctifies and celebrates joyous occasions with wine. Whether with your favorite vintage or a sweet cup of grape juice, we are reminded to always find joy and reasons for gratitude each week.

Many people use a special cup, often called a *Kiddush* cup, for Shabbat wine, as another way to make Shabbat different from other days of the week.

A Kiddush cup is a special goblet used in Judaism to hold wine or grape juice for the Kiddush blessing, sanctifying Shabbat and holidays, often an heirloom made of silver or other materials, held and blessed

before the festive meal.

Kiddush means “sanctification” and is the blessing said over the wine or grape juice. The ritual highlights the holiness of the day, with the cup symbolizing transformation and joy, often passed around for sips after the prayer.

Blessing the wine on Shabbat is done by reciting the **Kiddush**, a prayer sanctifying the holy day, typically before the Friday night and Saturday meals, starting with verses about creation and ending with the specific blessing over wine,

***Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-olam, borei p’ri ha-gafen.***

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן

*Blessed is the Oneness that makes us holy.  
Blessed is the Creator of the fruit of the vine.*



### **Blessing over the Challah – Ha-Motzi**

Challah refers to the special breaded loaf of bread eaten by the Jewish People on Sabbath and other special occasions.

As detailed in the Book of Numbers the first portion of your kneading, you shall separate as a dough offering (challah) .. In all your generations, give the first of your kneading as an elevated gift to God. Numbers 15:20

When preparing challah, it is a mitzvah or tradition to take out a piece of the dough (before braiding and baking) and burn it in the oven.

In ancient times, this small piece of dough was given to the priests – the Kohamin as a reminder that the material things we have are not just for us. By setting something aside for others, we stay humble and are able to give, even as we bake, create and do things for ourselves.

It is traditional for two whole challot to be used on Sabbath, representing the double portion of manna that fell in the desert so that no Israelite would have to gather food on Sabbath.

Before it is served, the challah is covered, often with a special cloth. If a knife is used to cut the challah, it too is covered. These traditions remind us of the importance of both dignity and peace.

**Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,  
Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

**Blessed is the Oneness that makes us holy and brings forth bread from the earth.**

Once the blessings are said, sit back, relax and enjoy your Shabbat meal

**Shabbat shalom and b'tayavon ( bon appétit )**



### **Shabbat at Synagogue**

Saturday morning is the primary public worship event, featuring several key components:

During the Torah Service a portion of the Torah is read aloud from a hand-written scroll as part of a year-long cycle, followed by a *Haftarah* (prophetic reading).

In "addition" ( *Musaf* in Hebrew ) is a supplementary service in Jewish liturgy that takes the place of the extra communal sacrifices once offered in the Temple in Jerusalem.

The **Kiddush Reception** at the end of the service (often referred to simply as "a Kiddush") is a communal gathering that serves as both a religious requirement and the primary social event of synagogue life.

After prayers, we once again pronounce the sanctity of Shabbat over a cup of wine.

The Shabbat day Kiddush follows a similar (though shorter) format as the Friday night version.

Kiddush is followed by the Shabbat day meal, which likewise begins with the ritual washing of the hands and the Hamotzi blessing on two challah loaves, followed by delicious Shabbat food, singing and learning, and Grace after meals.

A unique feature of the Shabbat day meal is cholent—a slow-cooking stew (typically made with meat, potatoes and beans, though versions and varieties abound) that sits on a small covered flame from before Shabbat.

Shabbat afternoon naps are legendary rejuvenators—and utterly in keeping with the spirit of the day.

Our sages count Shabbat sleep as one of the pleasures of the holy day.

Minchah is a short prayer service recited in the late afternoon. On Shabbat it also includes a short Torah reading—the first part of next week's Parshah.



### **Messianic Sabbath Celebration**

Messianic Judaism blends Jewish identity with belief in Yeshua as the Messiah, adopting Jewish practices (Sabbath, holidays, traditions) while accepting the New Testament.

In essence, Messianic Judaism is about being ethnically Jewish while embracing Yeshua as the Messiah, preserving Jewish cultural identity within a faith framework that Christians see as Christian, but which maintains distinct Jewish practices.

Messianic Jews celebrate the Sabbath to honor God as Creator, remember freedom from Egyptian slavery, and experience spiritual rest, viewing it as a core Jewish practice rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh) that

points to the eternal rest in Messiah.

It's a way to connect with Jewish roots, foster family/community, and receive weekly soul refreshment, aligning biblical principles with faith in Yeshua, often without strict rabbinic laws but with deep spiritual meaning.

Though Yeshua himself attended Sabbath services Luke 4:16 however, the meaning and observance of the day sometimes became a bone of contention between Yeshua and his fellow Jews.

Yeshua spoke of Shabbat as a gift that God gave to benefit rather than oppress his people. We read in the Gospel of Mark 2:23-28

<sup>23</sup> One Sabbath Yeshua was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.

<sup>24</sup> The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

<sup>25</sup> He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?

<sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

<sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

In a parallel passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Yeshua offers himself as a source of eternal Sabbath rest:

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Shabbat lasts one day. And a day can only do so much to relieve our lives of the cares that inevitably weigh us down and the obligations that so often cloud our perception of life.

When we sag beneath the weight of the world, and it feels as though it is too much, Yeshua, the Messiah, tells us that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Through him, God gives us access to another source of rest and comfort altogether—Yeshua himself and God’s Spirit, who guide our steps as we seek to enter his rest.

Hebrew 4:9-11

<sup>9</sup> There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;

<sup>10</sup> for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

<sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest,

In Messianic Judaism we understand that God is the redeemer, that through Messiah Yeshua’s sacrificial death of atonement, we are redeemed by accepting the free gift of God and not by any merit of our own.

However, we all can agree that consciously setting apart time to experience rest refreshes us, gives us a taste of what is to come, and helps us focus on the work we are called to do here on earth.

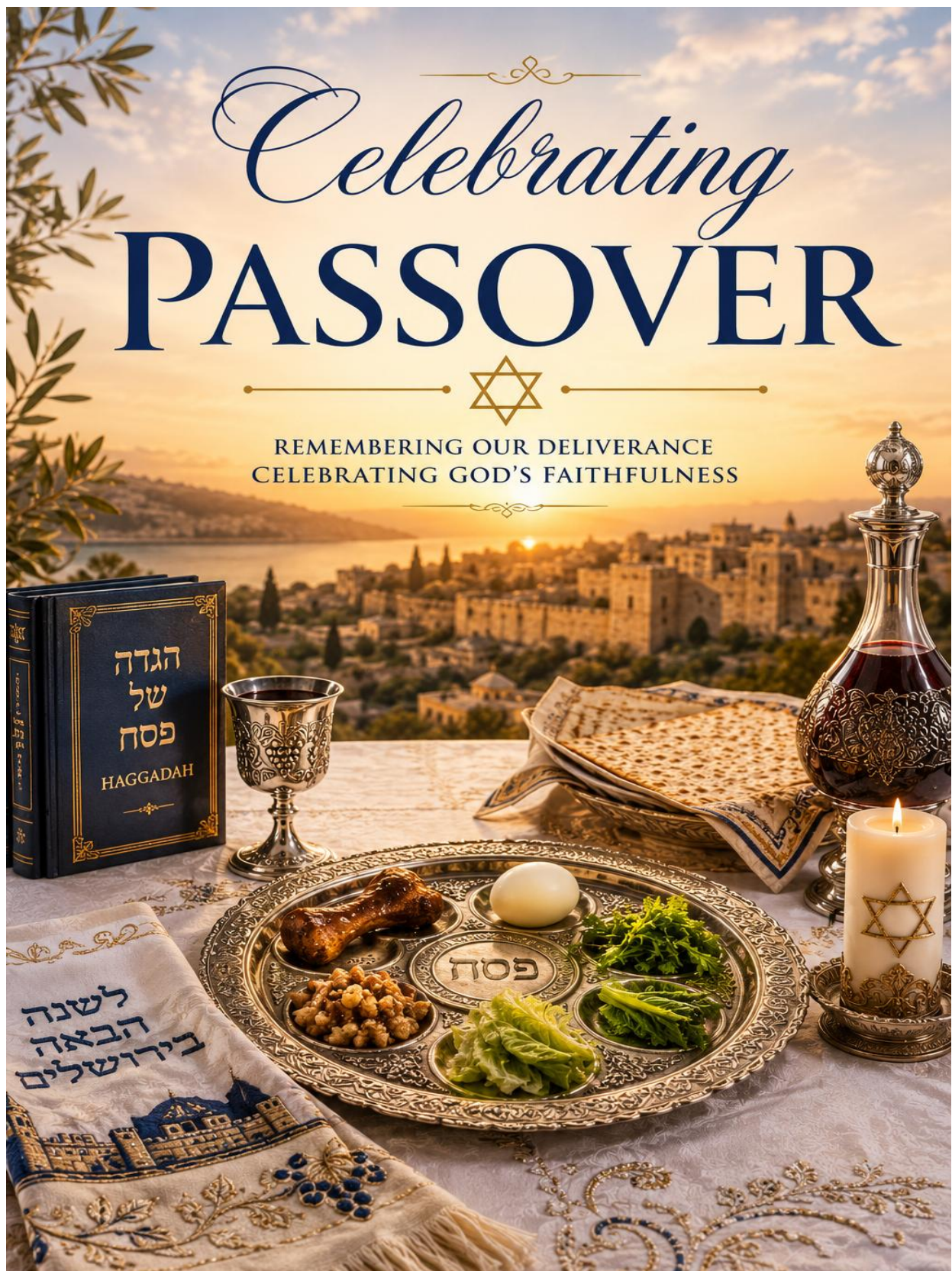
Chapters 3 and 4 of the book of Hebrews weave together the interrelated themes of the Sabbath, entering the Promised Land and entering the Kingdom of God. Each is a type of rest, with the Promised Land an imperfect picture of the future peaceful Kingdom.

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9,)

# *Celebrating* **PASSOVER**



REMEMBERING OUR DELIVERANCE  
CELEBRATING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS



## Leviticus 23: 4-5

4These are the Lord's appointed [holy days], holy occasions, which you shall designate in their appointed time:

5In the first month, on the fourteenth of the month, in the afternoon, [you shall sacrifice] the Passover offering to the Lord.

דאלה מועדי יהוה מקראי קדש  
אשר-תקראו אתם במועדם:

הבחודש הראשון בארבעה עשר לחודש בין  
הערבים פסח ליהוה:



## A STUDY OF THE PASSOVER EXODUS 12



The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, <sup>2</sup>“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

In this passage, God is instructing Moses and Aaron to establish the month of **Nisan** (also known as Aviv) as the first month of the year for the Israelites. This proclamation was given just before the Israelites' departure from Egypt (the Exodus) and the institution of the Passover festival, which begins on the 14th day of Nisan

<sup>3</sup>Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

This instruction is part of God's directive to Moses and Aaron regarding the preparations for the very first Passover Seder. The instruction outlines how the Israelites should select the sacrificial lamb in anticipation of the tenth plague of Egypt, the death of the firstborn:

<sup>4</sup> If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.



<sup>5</sup> The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

This verse provides specific criteria for the animal to be used in the Passover sacrifice, ensuring it was a worthy and pure offering: This is part of the foundational laws given to the Israelites just before they left Egypt. The requirement for the animal to be "without defect" emphasized the holiness of the ritual and the perfection required for a sacrifice to God.

<sup>6</sup> Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

This specific timing—keeping the lamb chosen on the tenth day until the fourteenth, and then slaughtering it "at twilight" (often translated as "between the two evenings")—was crucial for the ritual that preceded the tenth and final plague of Egypt, where the blood of the lamb on the doorposts protected the Israelite households.



<sup>7</sup> Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

This verse describes the pivotal action required of the Israelites that served as a sign for their protection during the final plague God brought upon Egypt:

When the Lord passed through Egypt that night to strike down every firstborn, he saw the blood mark and "passed over" those homes, sparing the lives of the Israelite firstborns. This act is the central event from which the holiday gets its name, Passover.

A brief word is needed about the term "Passover" itself.

This is the common translation of the Hebrew word *pesakh*, which is both the name of the festival and the word for what God does with regard to the Israelites.

Yet it is basically agreed in scholarship that the word does not mean "pass over," as it appears in virtually all translations. It means, rather "protect": "when I see the blood I will protect you so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt"

<sup>8</sup> That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

<sup>9</sup> Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs.

<sup>10</sup> Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

The meaning of the instructions is as follows:



"They are to eat the meat roasted over the fire": The primary dish was the lamb, cooked thoroughly by fire, symbolizing a meal prepared in haste and readiness for a journey.



"Along with bitter herbs": These herbs (such as horseradish or romaine lettuce) were to serve as a physical reminder of the bitterness and harshness of their enslavement in Egypt.



"and bread made without yeast": Also known as matzah, the flat, unleavened bread signified the urgency of their departure; they left so quickly that there was no time for the dough to rise .

In Verse 9: The Method of Preparation "Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water": This prohibition specified that the meat must be roasted, ensuring it was properly cooked and safe to eat, distinguishing it from common cooking methods used for other meals .



"but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs": This instruction emphasized that the lamb was to be roasted whole. This method prevented any part of the animal from being separated or saved for later, reinforcing the command that the entire lamb was to be consumed in one night.

In summary, these verses are foundational religious instructions establishing the ritual of the Passover Seder, a meal designed to commemorate God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

<sup>11</sup> This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

The meaning of the specific actions are:



**"with your cloak tucked into your belt":** In ancient times, people wore long, flowing robes that hindered swift movement. Tucking the loose garment into a belt (known as "girding up the loins") was the standard practice for preparing for rigorous work or a journey. This symbolized a state of physical and spiritual readiness for action and immediate departure.



**"your sandals on your feet":** It was customary in ancient Near-Eastern cultures to remove sandals when eating a meal or entering a house. Keeping them on signaled that the Israelites were not settling in for a relaxed feast but were prepared to walk out the door at a moment's notice.



**"and your staff in your hand":** A staff was a necessary item for support and guidance during travel, especially on rough terrain. Holding it reinforced their posture as pilgrims and travelers, ready for the journey that lay ahead, relying on God's provision and direction.

•

- **"Eat it in haste":** This underscored the immediate and non-negotiable urgency of God's deliverance. The Egyptians would soon thrust them out of the land with great urgency, and the Israelites had no time to delay or even wait for their bread dough to rise (hence the unleavened bread).



**"it is the LORD's Passover":** This final statement provides the theological meaning for the entire ritual. The specific attire and speed were temporary requirements for this single, foundational event, designed to commemorate that the Lord would "pass over" their blood-marked homes, sparing them while bringing judgment upon the Egyptians. The meal was a sign of God's protection and the beginning of their new life as a free people



<sup>12</sup> "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

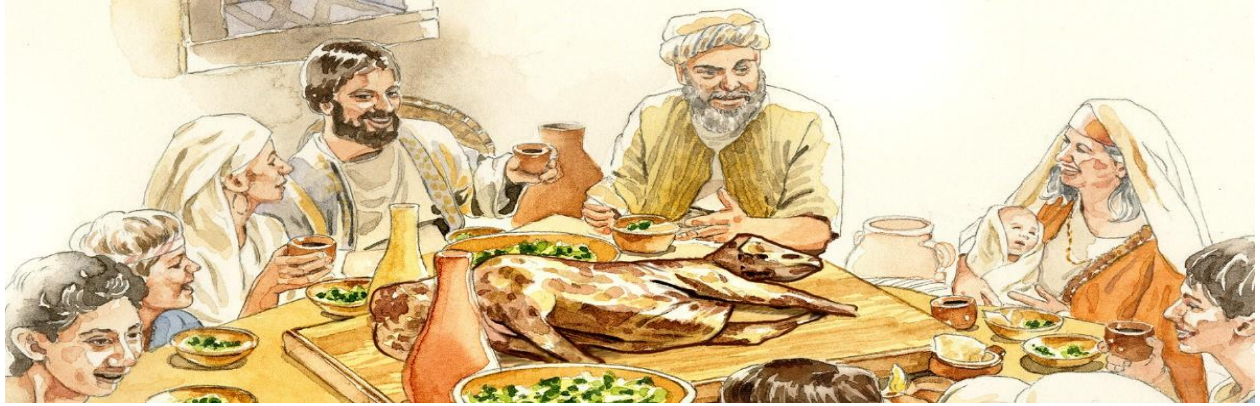
<sup>14</sup> “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. <sup>15</sup> For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup> On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.

<sup>17</sup> “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. <sup>18</sup> In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. <sup>19</sup> For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel. <sup>20</sup> Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. <sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. <sup>23</sup> When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

<sup>24</sup> “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. <sup>25</sup> When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. <sup>26</sup> And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ <sup>27</sup> then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped. <sup>28</sup> The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

<sup>29</sup> At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. <sup>30</sup> Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.



# THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL

Now lets go to Leviticus 25

Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you...

<sup>4</sup>“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: <sup>5</sup>The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. <sup>6</sup>On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. <sup>7</sup>On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. <sup>8</sup>For seven days present a food offering to the LORD. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.”

Passover Festival is one of the most significant festivals on the Jewish calendar, is celebrated with a blend of rich traditions, deep symbolism, and communal gatherings, marking the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.

This holiday, extending over eight days in the diaspora and seven days in Israel, is observed through a series of unique rituals and customs that resonate with the themes of freedom and remembrance.

The observance of Passover begins even before the holiday officially starts, with the meticulous removal of *chametz* (leavened bread and other fermented products) from Jewish homes. This act symbolizes the purging of pride and ego, reminiscent of the Israelites’ hasty departure from Egypt, when they did not have time to let their bread rise.

Many families engage in thorough spring cleaning, ensuring every crumb of *chametz* is discarded or stored away. This preparation culminates in the ritual search for *chametz* on the evening before Passover.

At the heart of Passover is the *seder*, a Jewish ritual service and ceremonial dinner for the first night or first two nights of Passover. The *seder* is an elaborate affair where families and friends gather around the table to retell the story of the Exodus.

The most visible part of the *seder* dinner is the plate of food eaten by those in attendance. The foods eaten at the *seder* all symbolize different parts of the Israelites' escape from Egypt.



The table should be set with the following special items.

The Seder plate, which contains, in clockwise order: 1. Shank bone – zeroa – lamb or roasted chicken leg bone 2. The maror or bitter herb typically red or white horseradish (some people prefer raw horseradish) 3. The charoset – a mixture of nuts, fruit, wine, 4. the Chazaret typically Roman lettuce 5. The karpas – parsley 6. The beitzah Egg – beitzah – a roasted hard-boiled egg

A covered plate that holds three pieces of matzah. And a bowl of salt water.

A wine glass for each person. Each participant will drink four cups of kosher wine or grape juice during the Seder. An extra wine glass for Elijah the Prophet.

Two candle Sticks



Opening the Passover Seder is done by following a specific order of rituals, beginning with the **lighting of the candles**.

The lighting of candles at the start of the Passover Seder is a cherished Jewish tradition that marks the **transition from ordinary time to sacred, festive time**.

Traditionally, the mother or matriarch of the household lights the candles, though any adult can perform the Mitzvah (commandment).

At least two candles are typically lit, symbolizing the two divine commandments to "remember" (*zachor*) and "keep" (*shamor*) the Sabbath and festivals. Some families light an additional candle for each family member.

It symbolizes the spiritual light, the warmth of family, and the enduring flame of freedom that is central to the holiday.

After the Candle lighting the recital of the "Kadesh" (or Kiddush) follows.

The **Kiddush** refers to the Jewish ritual blessing over wine that begins the Passover Seder, marking the beginning of the celebratory meal or service, and also refers to the festive reception held after synagogue services with food and drink. It fulfills the Torah command to "remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it," linking the observance to creation and God's holiness.

בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה.

וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשׁוֹ, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה בָּנוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה  
זָכָר, קָרְאִי קִדְּשִׁי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לָּם. זָכָרוֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ  
וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן. מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ, כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֶרֶת. לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם  
מִקִּדְּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת, יְהוָה, בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה. הִנְחֵלָתָנוּ.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu,  
v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu, zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit. Ki hu yom  
t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh, zecher litziat Mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol  
haamim. V'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu. Baruch atah, Adonai,  
m'kadeish haShabbat.*

Translation:

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who finding favor with us, sanctified us with *mitzvot*. In love and favor, You made the holy Shabbat our heritage as a reminder of the work of Creation. As first among our sacred days, it recalls the Exodus from Egypt. You chose us and set us apart from the peoples. In love and favor You have given us Your holy Shabbat as an inheritance. Blessed are You, Adonai, who sanctifies Shabbat.

וְהַגֶּפֶן פְּרִי בּוֹרֵא, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אַתָּה בָרוּךְ.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

Translation

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

At the Passover Seder, ritual hand washing (Netilat Yadayim) happens **twice**:



first, an unblessed washing called **Urchatz** before eating the Karpas (vegetable),

These washing use a cup to pour water over hands, often alternating, and symbolize purification, with the first washing's lack of blessing highlighting the Seder's unique nature for children to ask "Why?"



Eating a vegetable (often parsley) dipped in saltwater; *Karpas* The ritual serves several symbolic purposes related to the story of the Israelite exodus from slavery in Egypt:

**Tears of Slavery:** The salt water symbolizes the salty tears shed by the Israelite slaves during their bondage in Egypt.



**Spring and Rebirth:** The green vegetable itself represents spring, renewal, and hope, symbolizing the flourishing of the Israelites before their enslavement and their ultimate redemption.



**Breaking of the middle matzah** The **Yachatz** is the fourth step of the Passover Seder, where the middle of the three matzahs is broken into two unequal parts. This ritual is a silent, reflective act performed before the main meal, and carries multiple layers of symbolism in Jewish tradition

The primary explanation is that a poor person eats only a small portion of their bread, saving the rest for later, which is why the smaller piece is the one used when reciting "This is the bread of affliction".also called Bread of Poverty.

The ritual highlights the brokenness of the world and the Jewish people during enslavement, while the hidden piece represents the hope for future wholeness and complete redemption (the coming of the Messiah).

The smaller portion is placed back on the Seder plate, between the two whole matzahs.

The *Haggadah*, the text recited at the Seder, is recited over this piece as a symbol of *lechem oni* (bread of poverty).

Maggid is also the name of the fifth and central section of the Passover Seder ritual, which means "tell" or "narrate".



This is the core storytelling portion of the Seder, where participants retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The entire book used for the Seder is called the *Haggadah*, which means "the telling".

The telling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt. This story begins with the youngest person at the seder asking the four Questions ,

"Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?"

Translated to English as a single question.: "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

The Larger Piece (Afikoman) is wrapped in a cloth napkin and set aside or hidden (often by the children) to be eaten at the end of the meal as the dessert. (*afikoman* )



Allow me to take a moment here and explain the Seder Plate and its meaning.

The Seder plate is the centerpiece of the Passover meal, holding six symbolic foods , in clockwise order that retells the Exodus story:



**The Zeroa is primarily known as the roasted shank bone, symbolizing the ancient Passover sacrifice.**

It is a visual reminder of the *korban Pesach* (Passover sacrifice) offered at the Temple in Jerusalem. It represents God's "outstretched arm" (a interpretation of the Hebrew word *zeroa* meaning "arm, strength, power") in redeeming the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.



**The Maror and Chazeret** are bitter herbs central to the Passover Seder, symbolizing the harshness of Israelite slavery in Egypt.

The **Maror (Horse Raddish)** is eaten first as the main bitter herb, and the **Chazeret** (usually romaine lettuce) used for the Hillel sandwich (Korech) with matzah and charoset (a sweet, symbolic Jewish dish, typically a mixture of fruits and nuts), representing the journey from pain and hardship of slavery to freedom, and God's eventual redemption.



*The Karpas a green herb or vegetable (parsley, celery, watercress) used as part of the Passover seder to symbolize spring and rebirth.:*

Parsley is dipped into salt water during the seder. The salt water serves as a reminder of the tears shed during Egyptian slavery.

The green vegetable symbolizes the arrival of spring and the renewal of hope and life, corresponding to the time of year Passover is celebrated.



**The Beitzah** (Hebrew for "egg") primarily refers to the roasted or hard-boiled egg.

It holds several significant symbolic meanings in Judaism. It is a reminder of the *korban chagigah* (festival sacrifice), which was offered daily at the Temple in Jerusalem on holidays, including Passover.

The roundness of the egg symbolizes the continuous cycle of life, death, and rebirth, as well as the springtime renewal that Passover celebrates.

The egg is a traditional food served to mourners after a funeral, and its presence on the Seder plate can symbolize mourning over the destruction of the Temple and the inability to offer the sacrifices today. This is coupled with the hope that the Temple will be rebuilt.

Now lets go back to the Seder.



Washing of the hands Rachtzah (is the second ritual hand washing) just before eating the matzah. It symbolizes spiritual purification, preparing participants to receive the symbolic "Bread of Life" (matzah) with pure hands and hearts, marking the transition from storytelling to the festive meal and emphasizing sanctification before consuming the sacred bread.

A specific blessing is recited:

יְדֵימֵנוּ נְטִילַת עַל וְצִנּוּנוֹ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו קִדְּשָׁנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ.

*"Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim"*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of hands

"Motzi Matzah" refers to the next step in the Passover Seder when two blessings are recited over the matzah (unleavened bread) before it is eaten as the main part of the meal.

### The Two Blessings



The Hamotzi (The blessing over bread) is the standard blessing recited before any meal that includes bread (or, in this case, matzah acting as bread).

The Hebrew word *motzi* means "who brings forth" and refers to God bringing forth food and drink regarded as a source of strength; nourishment. from the earth.

All three matzahs on the Seder plate are held for this blessing.

הָאָרֶץ מִן לֶחֶם הַמּוֹצִיא, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

"Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth".

Al achilat matzah (The specific blessing for eating matzah):

This second blessing is unique to the Passover Seder and is a *mitzvah* (commanded act). For this blessing, the bottom matzah is put down, and the top and broken middle pieces are held, drawing attention to the "bread of affliction".

מַצָּה אֲכִילֶת עַל יְצִיַּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו קִדְּשָׁנוּ אֱשֶׁר, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ.

"Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kideshanu be'mitzvotav ve'tzivanu al achilat matzah"

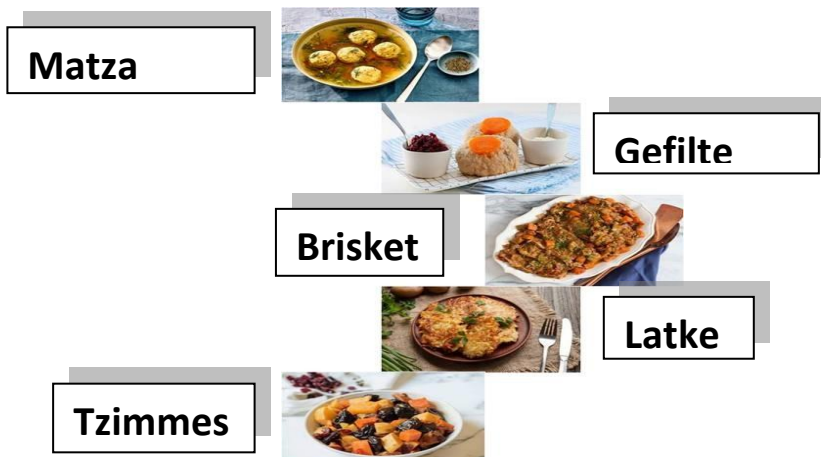
Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of matzah.

During the Seder, the first blessing (*HaMotzi*) is said over all three matzahs on the table, while the second blessing (*Al achilat matzah*) is said while holding only the top whole matzah and the broken middle matzah, as a specific fulfillment of the *mitzvah*.

In ancient times, it was a practice to eat all three symbolic foods (lamb, matzah, and bitter herbs) together so that each mouthful contained all three.

Following the eating of the symbolic foods the *Shulchan Orech* (actual Meal) is served.

Family traditions vary widely, but common Ashkenazi foods for the *Shulchan Orech* meal often include:



The meal is a highlight of the Seder experience, blending delicious food with shared family time before the final blessings and songs of the evening.

Following the meal, the next step involves the eating of the **Tzafun** (the hidden) a piece of matzah that was broken and set aside earlier in the Seder.

Early in the Seder, the middle of three matzahs was broken, and the larger half is wrapped and "hidden" (tzafun) somewhere in the house.

The process of hiding and finding the afikomen symbolizes the hidden nature of God's redemption and the anticipation of future liberation. The children who find it often bargain for a prize, an act that can symbolize taking power and resisting bondage.

The afikomen is brought out of hiding after the main meal, broken into small pieces, and distributed to everyone present. The Seder then continues with the final blessings and songs.

הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ,  
וּבְרַחֲמִים בְּחֶסֶד, בְּחֵן, וּבְטוּבוֹ בָּלוּ הָעוֹלָם אֶת הָזֶן.  
חֶסֶדּוֹ לְעוֹלָם כִּי, בְּשֵׁר לְכָל לֶחֶם נוֹתֵן הוּא.  
לָנוּ חֶסֶר לֹא תָמִיד הַגָּדוֹל וּבְטוּבוֹ,  
וְעַד לְסִלְעוֹ מִזֶּן לָנוּ יְחֶסֶר וְאֵל  
הַגָּדוֹל שְׁמוֹ בְּעִבּוּר.  
לְכָל וּמִיֻּטִּיב לְכָל וּמִפְּרִנֶּס זֶן אֵל הוּא כִּי  
בָּרָא אֲשֶׁר בְּרִיּוֹתָיו לְכָל מִזֶּן וּמִכֵּין  
הַכֹּל אֶת הָזֶן, יְהוָה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,  
hazan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo, b'chein b'chesed uv'rachamim.  
Hu notein lechem l'chol basar ki l'olam chasdo.  
Uv'tuvo hagadol tamid lo chasar lanu,  
v'al yechar lanu, mazon l'olam va-ed,  
baavur sh'mo hagadol.  
Ki hu El zan um'farneis lakol umeitiv lakol,  
umeichin mazon l'chol b'riyotav asher bara.  
Baruch atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.*

Sovereign God of the universe, we praise You: Your goodness sustains the world. You are the God of grace, love, and compassion, the Source of bread for all who live; for Your love is everlasting. In Your great goodness we need never lack for food; You provide food enough for all. We praise You, O God, Source of food for all who live.

The evening is the concluded with songs

*L'Shana HaBa'ah B'Y'rushalayim* [Next Year in Jerusalem].

Take us There, To the Land of Zion

Next Year in Jerusalem

Ushana, Havaha, In Jerushalaim

Next Year in Jerusalem

[Chorus]

O Hear O Israel, O Israel Hear

O Lord Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done This Year

Ushana, Havaha, In Jerushalaim

Next Year in Jerusalem

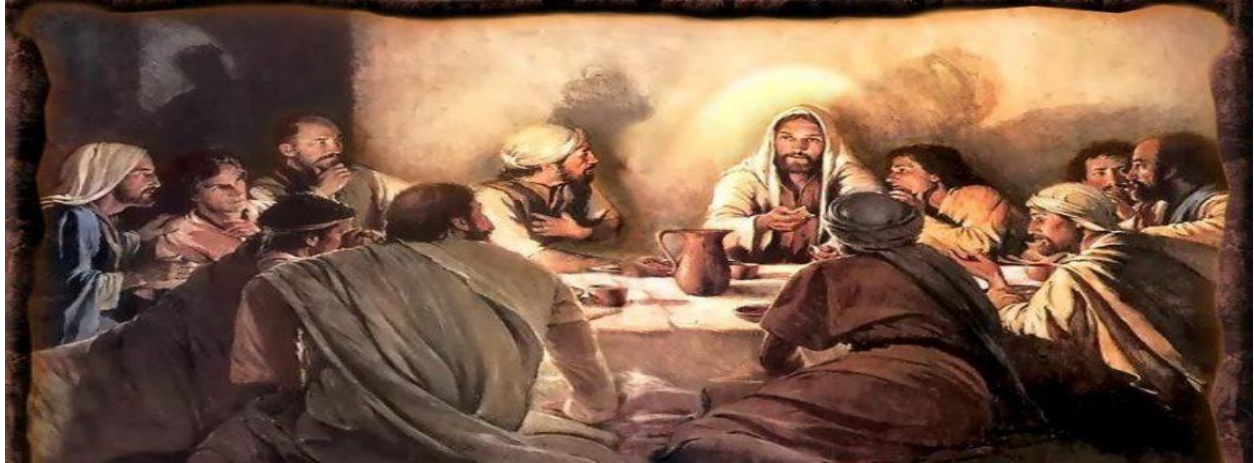
[Verse 2]

Over There, Over There, In the Land of Zion

Next Year in Jerusalem

Ushana, Haraha, In Jerushalaim

Next Year in Jerusalem



**The Last Supper was, in fact, a Passover meal that Yeshua shared with his disciples.**



Yeshua's death and resurrection align with the Passover and the associated Feast of Unleavened Bread and Feast of First fruits, fulfilling their symbolic meanings.

The events beginning with Yeshua's entry into *Yerushalayim* on a Donkey to the last Supper. His Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and His betrayal by Judah for 30 pieces of Silver.



His Arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane by the Religious Authority and His appearance at six trials—three Jewish religious trials and three Roman civil trials.

His **flogging** and His crucifixion by the Romans. His burial, resurrection and Ascension to Heaven – all correspond directly to the Jewish festival timetable of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of First fruits.

## PASSOVER

## PASSION

NEW YEAR

6pm

NISAN 1



SELECTION OF THE PASSOVER LAMB

INSPECTION AND PREPERATION OF THE PASSOVER LAMB



SLAUTER OF THE PASSOVER LAMB



FEAST OF THE FIRST FRUIT

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (PASSOVER SEASON)

COUNTING OF THE SEFIRAT HA OMER  
50 DAYS  
TO SHAVU'OT

The period is seen as a journey from physical redemption to spiritual readiness, providing a framework for daily introspection, character development, and personal growth.

SHAVU'OT  
DAY OF PENTECOST

NISAN 10

NISAN 11

NISAN 12

NISAN 13

NISAN 14

NISAN 15

NISAN 16

NISAN 17

NISAN 18

NISAN 19

NISAN 20

NISAN 21

NISAN 22

IYAR 25

SIVAN 6

SIVAN 7



ENTRY OF YESHUA INTO JERUSALEM

CURSE OF THE FIG TREE  
CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

LAST SUPPER, BETRAYAL  
ARREST OF YESHUA

CONVICTION CRUCIFIXION  
AND BURIAL OF YESHUA



YASHUA'S  
RESURRECTION



40 DAYS TO YESHUA'S  
ASCENSION

During the 40 days Jeshua made numerous appearances to his followers. He spent time teaching his disciples about the nature of God's kingdom and their great commission and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost

10 DAYS TO SHAVU'OT  
DAY OF PENTECOST

SHAVU'OT  
DAY OF PENTECOST

The events from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning were considered "on the third day" in the ancient world, using inclusive counting where any part of a day counted as a full day.

According to Christian theology, **Yeshua** fulfilled a significant number of Old Testament messianic prophecies, with common estimates ranging from **over 300 to more than 400** individual prophecies.

Scholars differ slightly on the exact number, as some lists interpret passages differently or break down single prophecies into multiple points. However, popular counts generally land in the range of 300 to 365 specific fulfillments related to his:

**Birth and lineage** (e.g., born in Bethlehem, of a virgin, from the line of David)

**Life and ministry** (e.g., performing miracles, teaching in parables, being preceded by a messenger like John the Baptist)

**Death and resurrection** (e.g., betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, silent before accusers, hands and feet pierced, buried in a rich man's tomb, and rising from the dead)

The mathematical probability of one person fulfilling even a small number of these predictions by chance is considered staggeringly low, which is often presented as evidence for divine intervention and proof that **Yeshua** is the Messiah.

While the exact number is difficult to pinpoint due to different scholarly interpretations of what constitutes a distinct prophecy, Christian sources indicate that **Yeshua** fulfilled as many as **28 different prophecies** on the day of the crucifixion alone, and more than 50 across the entire Passion Week (from his entry into Jerusalem to his resurrection).

### **YESHUA THE PASSOVER LAMB**

Moses instruction to the Israelites in Exodus 12:



“The animals you choose must be a year-old males without defect , and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.



Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs”

Prophetic Fulfillment:

In **John 1:29** John the Baptist makes this declaration about **Yeshua**:

The next day John saw **Yeshua** coming toward him and said, "Look! The **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!

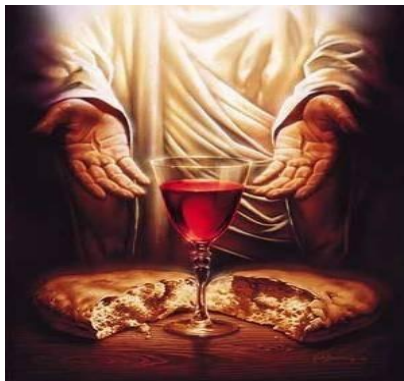
And in **1 Peter 1:19-20**

It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but he has now revealed him to you in these last days

1 Peter 1:18-19

"You know that you were redeemed ... with precious blood like that of a lamb without defect or spot, the blood of Messiah"

Just like the Passover lamb, **Yeshua** was without defect (sin). This is why he could make atonement with his death and resurrection in a way that no lamb or imperfect human intercessor ever could. The lamb's blood was a covenant—an agreement and a sign between God and those who used it that the blood would protect them. In the same way that the blood covered our ancestors from the wrath of God, **Yeshua** sacrifice offers the same covering. In fact, he instituted the renewed covenant promised to the Jewish people with a cup representing his blood



Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

In the 1 Corinthians passage, Paul says that "**Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.**" This is an explicit parallel to John the Baptist calling Christ "**the lamb of God.**"

Yeshua was the sacrificial offering, and the parallelism is clear. His blood, and our faith and obedience to God's commandments, provides a way for us to be saved from the spiritual destruction that will otherwise come upon all the world,

just as the blood of the Paschal lamb, and their faith and obedience to God's instructions through Moses, allowed the Israelites to be saved from the physical destruction that would otherwise come upon all the land of Egypt.

## YESHUA ENTERS YERUSHALAYIM ON A DONKEY

Zechariah 9:9



Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah predicted that the Messiah would be recognized by arriving in the holy city of Jerusalem on a donkey. Five days before Passover began, on the day that the lambs were selected for sacrifice, Yeshua rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Joyful crowds greeted him, throwing their coats on the road and waving palm branches in praise. They recognized the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy and heralded Yeshua as the anointed king Messiah.

**Yeshua** entered Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan (Palm Sunday), the day the Passover lambs were selected by Jewish families.

Prophetic Fulfillment: Matthew 27

<sup>1</sup>And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

<sup>2</sup>And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

<sup>3</sup>And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

<sup>4</sup>And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

<sup>5</sup>And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

<sup>6</sup>And they said unto them even as **Yeshua** had commanded: and they let them go.

<sup>7</sup>And they brought the colt to **Yeshua**, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

<sup>8</sup> And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.

<sup>9</sup> And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

<sup>10</sup> Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

### **YESHUA WOULD BEAR OUR SINS AND SUFFER SILENTLY IN OUR PLACE**

#### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>1</sup> Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?



<sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

<sup>9</sup> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

<sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

### Prophetic Fulfillment

The staggering reality is that this precise prophecy concerning Isaiah's suffering servant is literally and specifically fulfilled in the crucifixion and death of Yeshua as recorded in the four canonical gospels

The detailed characteristics of Isaiah's suffering servant match the New Testament details of **Yeshua's** passion and death:

**1.Struck:** The gospel accounts reveal that **Yeshua's** torture included, among other things, being struck (Matthew 26:67–68)



<sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him <sup>68</sup> and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"

and flogged (John 19:1) Then Pilate took **Yeshua** and had him flogged.

**2. Suffering and pain:** The Gospel of Luke describes **Yeshua's** extreme anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, where his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:44), a rare medical condition called hematidrosis caused by extreme mental and physical stress that made his skin very tender.

<sup>44</sup> And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

**3. Beatings and Scourging:** Following his arrest, **Yeshua** was beaten, mocked, and severely scourged with a Roman whip called a *flagrum*. This whip had metal balls and sharp bone fragments designed to tear the skin and muscle, causing deep lacerations and significant blood loss.

Matthew 27: <sup>26</sup> Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Yeshua flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.



**4. Crown of Thorns:** Soldiers pressed a crown made of sharp thorns into his scalp, causing profuse bleeding and intense nerve pain to his head and face.

<sup>29</sup> and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said.

**5. Bore suffering and punished by God:** The cross of Christ involved a penal, substitutionary atonement (Galatians 3:13).

<sup>13</sup> Yeshua has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

**6. Pierced and crushed:** Both descriptions apply to Roman crucifixion (Matthew 27:32–37).

<sup>34</sup> Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Yeshua's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

**7. Bore iniquity of all:** In the great exchange, Yeshua took human sin on himself and gave believers his righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

<sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**8. Slaughtered lamb and silence:** Yeshua is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Yeshua coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

and he remained silent before his accusers—the chief priests, Pilate, and Herod (Matthew 27:12–14; ).

<sup>12</sup> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” <sup>14</sup> But Yeshua made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

**9. Punished for transgressions:** In his atoning death Yeshua suffered for the sins of others (1 Peter 3:18).

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.



**10. Grave and death:** The Roman soldiers intended to bury Yeshua among the criminals he was crucified with. But the rich man Joseph of Arimathea intervened and gave Yeshua an honorable burial in his own tomb (Matthew 27:57–60).

**11. Offering for sin:** Yeshua as the redeeming substitute bore the sins of people on the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

**12. Justify many:** Yeshuah’s atoning sacrifice and death justified many (Romans 5:19).

<sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.



**13. Numbered with transgressors:** Yeshua was crucified between two criminals (Matthew 27:38; Luke 22:37).

<sup>38</sup> Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

**14. Intercession for the transgressors:** From the cross Yeshua prayed for the people who crucified him (Luke 23:34).

<sup>34</sup> Yeshua said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”<sup>[a]</sup> And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

This above narrative seems to have been precisely fulfilled in Yeshua Christ's passion and death as recorded in the gospels.

Its force was not lost on missionary and Messianic leader David Baron:

It is impossible to believe that the detailed similarities between centuries-old prophecies in every feature and minutest detail and the gospel accounts of Yeshua' life, death, and resurrection as narrated in the gospels are a mere accident or coincidence.

### **DAVID DESCRIBED YESHUA'S DEATH IN DETAIL A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE**

Psalm 22

Psalm 22:1-2 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me. Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

Psalm 22:7-9 <sup>7</sup> All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; <sup>8</sup> He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him! <sup>9</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

Psalm 22:15-18 <sup>15</sup> my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones - they stare and gloat over me; <sup>18</sup> they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

Prophetic Fulfillment: Matthew 27



<sup>39</sup> And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." <sup>41</sup> So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

<sup>46</sup> And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>47</sup> And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah."

John 19 <sup>23</sup>“When the soldiers had nailed Yeshua to the cross, they took His clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier, with the under-robe left over. Now the under-robe was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom; so they said to one another, ‘We shouldn’t tear it in pieces; let’s draw for it...

<sup>28</sup> After this, Yeshua, knowing that all things had accomplished their purpose, Yeshua, in order to fulfill the words of the Tanakh, said, I am thirsty

<sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

<sup>30</sup> When Yeshua had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **THE MESSIAH WOULD BE RESURRECTED**

Psalm 16:10

<sup>10</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

Prophetic Fulfillment:

After witnessing (along with many others) the resurrection of Yeshua three days after his death at Passover, Peter points to David’s words and proclaims that Yeshua was the Holy One, the anointed one of God who would not be overcome by death.

As David’s descendant, Yeshua embodied the Psalm’s prophetic power and offered the ancient hope we have in an inheritance of eternal

<sup>29</sup> “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup> Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup> God has raised this Yeshua to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

# THE PASSOVER SEDER SYMBOLS



## ZEROA OR SHANKBONE



The lamb is one of the three items to be eaten at the Passover meal. In the original Passover in Egypt, the entire lamb was central to the observance. The Israelites took the lamb, sacrificed it, placed the blood of the sacrifice on the doorposts of their homes, and then ate the lamb as their main course. At the first Passover, the angel of death “passed over” the homes marked by the blood of the lamb during the final plague.

The word used today for the lamb “shankbone,” Zeroa, is used not only to remind us of the Passover lamb but also as a symbol of God’s “outstretched arm” with which He delivered us from Egypt.

The same word (Zeroa) is used to pose a question in Isaiah 53, a key messianic prophecy “Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the Zorea (Arm) of the LORD been revealed?” (verse 1).

Then Isaiah continues in verse 2, to describe the servant who would suffer and for the sin of his people “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter”

Yeshua is the Passover Lamb who was slaughtered to take away the sins of the world  
1 Corinthians 5:7

<sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

John the Baptist affirmed this when he saw Yeshua and said of him, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” in John 1:29

### **THE BEITZAH OR ROSTED EGG**



Although the Beitzah does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures in Rabbinical Tradition it represents the discontinued korban chagigah (“festival sacrifice”) that was offered at the Temple in Jerusalem. The egg evokes the idea of mourning over the destruction of the Temple and our inability to offer sacrifices at Pesach.

With no Temple, no altar, and no sacrifice, how is it possible to atone for sins? The rabbis say that forgiveness from sin is obtained through repentance, prayer, and good deeds. But the Law of Moses states that atonement must be made through blood, and our good deeds can’t save us.

Atonement through the blood of Yeshua is a core Messianic / Christian belief that Yeshua sacrificial death, specifically the shedding of His blood on the cross, pays the penalty for humanity's sins, offering forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation with God, fulfilling the requirements of the Old Testament law for blood sacrifice but doing so "once for all". It's seen as the ultimate covering for sin, cleansing believers and making eternal life possible through faith in His perfect, substitutionary offering.

**Hebrews 9:12:** "He did not enter by the blood of goats and calves, but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus securing eternal redemption".

**Romans 3:25:** "God presented Him as the atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness...".

**Ephesians 1:7:** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace".

**1 John 1:7:** "...the blood of Yeshua Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"

In essence, the "blood of Yeshua" signifies His voluntary, violent, substitutionary death, which is the powerful, definitive means by which God provides salvation and cleanses people from sin.

### **MAROR OR BITTER HERBS**



*The maror or bitter herb is another one of the three items to be eaten at the Passover meal as commanded in Exodus 12:8*

The maror represents the bitterness of Egyptian slavery. Each Passover, as we eat the maror, we remember the toil and burden of slavery that our ancestors endured.

Maror is still eaten at the contemporary Seder and is given the same significance as in rabbinic tradition. The natural reaction to eating the bitter herbs (usually fresh ground horseradish) is to cry, which is a physical reminder of the sadness of life without redemption.

At the Last Supper, Yeshua says, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.'

And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon". John 13:26

While this is often translated as the unleavened bread that is dipped, it could also be the bitter herbs, since after the first cup, the Passover ceremony commences with bitter herbs dipped into a vinegar sop. (karpas)

### **THE UNLEAVENED BREAD MATZAH**



The “unleavened bread” is the last of the three items commanded for the Passover in Exodus 12:8, typically called Matzah

The unleavened bread recalls the haste with which the Israelites fled Egypt. The impending Egyptian army did not allow Israel to wait for their bread to rise. We recall the escape from Egypt for the seven days of Passover as it is traditional to abstain from leaven.

The matzah is eaten at the contemporary Seder and the seven days following in place of leavened bread, and it holds the same significance as in rabbinic tradition.

Yeshua equates the matzah with his body at the Last Supper with his disciples

Luke 22:19 <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

He broke the bread and distributed it to his disciples saying, “This is my body, which is broken for you” 1Corinthians 11:24

Today, matzah is often used as a communion element to remember Yeshua’s sacrifice.

The matzah is meant to remind us that Yeshua’s body was broken. Interestingly, the modern way of producing matzah causes it to be striped and pierced.

Messianic Judaism sees this as a reminder that the Messiah’s body was “striped” Isaiah 53:5

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

and “pierced” Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7

<sup>10</sup> “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

<sup>7</sup> Look, he is coming with the clouds, every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

Further, just as leaven causes bread to rise, sin puffs us up. At Passover, we remove all leaven from our homes, not only in memory of the haste with which we departed Egypt, but also as a symbol of removing sin from our lives.

The apostle Paul charges us to: “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” 1 Cor 5:7

As described earlier the matzah is removed and broken into three pieces, and then the middle piece is wrapped in the cloth and becomes the afikomen that is hidden from view.

While the traditional meaning of afikomen is “dessert,” there have been other Jewish opinions. According to the late Jewish scholar David Daube and others, afikomen is actually a Greek word meaning the “coming one,” and is a clear reference to the Messiah

He also observed that: “If there was no previously established symbolism relating to the unleavened bread, then what were his disciples to make of it when he ‘gave to them and said, “Take, eat, this is my body””

As believers in Yeshua, we know that our Messiah’s sinless body was “broken” in death, wrapped in a cloth, hidden in burial, and then brought back by the power of God.

We see amazing parallels of these events in the traditions of the afikomen that remind us of Yeshua’s sacrifice. Therein lies a new significance—a new meaning—brought to the Seder.



### **THE CHAROSETH OR SWEET MIXTURE**

The Charoseth (a sweet mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine and cinnamon) is not specifically mentioned in the Old Testament. However in the Rabbinical Tradition the mixture represents the mortar used by the Israelite slaves to make bricks for Pharaoh. The charoseth is sweet and delicious, and so the rabbis explain that even the most difficult circumstances of our lives are sweetened by the promise of future redemption.

The charoseth is another possibility for Judas’ “sop,” but it is not explicitly mentioned in Yeshua’s Last Supper.



### **THE KARPAS OR GREEN ( PARSLEY OR CELERY**

The Karpas (“greens”—usually parsley or celery) does not appear in the early celebrations of Passover.

However, in Rabbinical Tradition the greens represent life. But before we eat them, we dip them into salt water, representing the tears of life. The karpas are dipped in salt water to represent and remind us that the lives of the Israelite slaves were immersed in tears. By dipping, we are also reminded that a life without redemption is a life drowned in tears.

The karpas may have been eaten at the Last Supper, though likely without its later significance. They are not specifically mentioned since greens were likely part of festive meals during that time period.



### **CEREMONIAL CUP(S)**

Lastly I would to mention the 4 ceremonial cups. Although not mentioned in the original Passover festival the cup is often used as a symbol of both God’s judgment and salvation. These themes are woven together beautifully in the Passover story.

The four cups represent the four phrases in Exodus 6: 6-7 “I will bring you out”; “I will deliver you”; “I will redeem you”; “I will take you to be my people.”

At the Last Supper, Yeshua raised the cup before the supper Luke 22: 17-18

<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

and the cup after the supper (the Cup of Redemption), when he said, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” Luke 22:20.

This is the covenant promised to us by God when He said He would establish a new covenant with His people Jeremiah 32: 38-40

<sup>38</sup> They will be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>39</sup> I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. <sup>40</sup> I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.

Paul tells us that the communion cup represents the blood of Messiah 1 Cor. 10:16

<sup>16</sup> Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ?  
And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

The four cups represent the four phrases in Exodus 6: 6-7 “I will bring you out”; “I will deliver you”; “I will redeem you”; “I will take you to be my people.”

However the four cups also represent four phrases in the New Testament “Yeshua sanctifies us”, “Yeshua delivers us”, “Yeshua redeems us” and “Yeshua is our Joy”

**The First Cup “The cup of Sanctification” and “The Cup of Yeshua sanctifies us”**



When drinking the cup of sanctification, we remember God bringing Israel out of slavery and the miracle that the Messiah Yeshua came through the line of David.

And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” ([John 17:19](#))

We also earnestly pray for the many Jewish people who are still in spiritual slavery, who have yet to embrace Yeshua, their very own Messiah.

During Passover, we remember how God brought the children of Israel out from slavery and made us into a great nation with a name and a great purpose.

You see, Israel always had a purpose and calling—to be light to the nations and to bring Messiah Yeshua into the world! Without the Jewish people, without Passover, we would not have the Messiah—what a humbling thought!

“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, Isaiah 42:6

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Isaiah 49:6

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” Acts 13:47

When drinking the cup of sanctification, we remember God bringing Israel out of slavery and the miracle that the Messiah came through the line of David. We also earnestly pray for the many Jewish people who are still in spiritual slavery, who have yet to embrace Yeshua, their very own Messiah.

**The second Cup “The Cup of Deliverance” and “The cup of Yeshua delivers”**



These days, no one likes to talk about the judgment of the Lord. Yet, it is a biblical truth that all people, both Jew and Gentile, are under God's judgment unless they accept salvation, that is, substitutionary atonement, through Yeshua the Messiah

<sup>9</sup> Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!  
Romans 5:9

<sup>15</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 1 Cor. 15: 1-5

<sup>6</sup> Yeshua answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” John 8:32

Even in the story of Passover itself—the children of Israel could not rest on their status as Israelites. They had to respond to the method that God chose—the slaying of the Passover lamb—to be spared from the 10<sup>th</sup> plague of the slaying of the firstborn. In the same way, until the Jewish people respond to Yeshua, the way of eternal salvation, Jewish people are still under God's judgment

Let us have a sense of urgency as we share with our Jewish friends and family, knowing that just as the children of Israel escaped Egypt in haste, so is our time on earth fleeting – each moment is precious.

I encourage you to share Yeshua with your Jewish friends or invite your Christian Friends to a Passover Banquet near you.

!

### **The third Cup “the Cup of Redemption” and “The Cup Yeshua Redeems us”**



The Cup of Redemption is the third cup of the Passover Seder and is the first cup to be drunk after the meal.

It is believed that it is the Cup of Redemption that Yeshua instructed the disciples to partake of in the last supper, since both accounts in Matthew 26:27 and Luke 22:19 describe the cup being taken after the meal.

<sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. Matthew 26:27

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” Luke 22:19

Luke’s account even refers to the last meal Yeshua had with his disciples as “Passover”

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Luke 22:15 In this( verse specifically, Yeshua tells His disciples: “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”

The Cup of Redemption traditionally signifies the slaying of the Passover lamb that spared the Israelites from the 10th plague of the slaying of the first born. This cup traditionally remembers how the Lord redeems Israel with an outstretched arm.

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” Galatians 4: 4-5

Therefore, it is so very imperative that we as believers must remind both the Jewish People as well as the Gentiles that the wine in this cup is “My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” As the blood of the Passover Lamb covered the believing Israelites and Egyptians back in Egypt, so the blood of Yeshua covers Jewish and Gentile believers today!

*The Fourt Cup* “ The Cup of Praise “ and “ The Cup of the Messiah is our Joy”

The 4th cup of the Seder is the Cup of Praise. When drinking this cup, we sing and rejoice that Israel was made into a nation at Sinai!

We say that Lord has remembered us; and to this day, God has remembered the everlasting covenant that He made with Abraham

Traditionally we sing Dayenu (It would have been enough).

In the song Dayenu, we thank God for delivering us from the Egyptians, bringing us through the Sea of Reeds, and bringing us forth as Am Yisrael, the people of Israel

If you had just poured out your love in creation, It would have been enough.

If you had revealed yourself through creation, but not made covenant with us, It would have been enough.

If you had made covenant with us and not entered into relationship with us, It would have been enough.

If you had just been in relationship with us and not fussed over us when we strayed, It would have been enough.

If you had called us to accountability when we strayed and not delivered us from bondage, It would have been enough.

If you had delivered us from slavery and not led us into a land of freedom, It would have been enough.

If you had led us into a land of freedom and not sent holy men and women to teach us your Way, It would have been enough.

If you had sent us prophets to speak of your love and not sent us a Savior, It would have been enough.

If you had sent us a Savior and not taken humanity unto yourself, It would have been enough.

If you had taken humanity unto yourself but not given us resurrection victory, It would have been enough.

If you had conquered the power of sin but not given us the gift of Holy Spirit, It would have been enough.

If you had conferred Holy Spirit but not called us to participate in your work of redeeming and blessing the world. It would have been enough.

Since the time of the first Jewish disciples and apostles in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament), the Gospel of Yeshua and the One True God has been spread around the globe, reaching nearly all people groups.

As that fulfillment of the Gentiles

<sup>24</sup> And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

is coming to a close, God has also been fulfilling His prophecies to the Jewish People.

After 2,000 years of desolation and exile, the Jewish People are being restored to their Jewish homeland

One of the astounding prophecies about this restoration is that

“yet again there will be heard in this place ... the **voice of joy (sason)** and the voice of gladness (simchah)” (Jeremiah 33:10–11).

If we could really get a handle on Messiah’s joy, it would radically change our perspective of everyday life.

Consider for a moment how Yeshua could willingly enter into the physical brutality of His execution and the spiritual depravity of taking the sin of the whole world upon Himself.

Scripture tells us how and why:



“For **because of the joy set before Him**, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

One day, our sacrificial One, Yeshua, will return like the sower did and reap the reward for His labor—**He will gather us to Himself, much like a bridegroom comes to take his bride,**

What a joyful wedding that will be!

In Conclusion: In all these prophecies, we see that Yeshua fulfilled the biblical expectations and foreshadowing of what the Messiah would do: he was a willing sacrifice, a suffering servant, who came peacefully, was crucified, and was resurrected from the dead. In doing this during the holiday of Passover, when we remember God's faithfulness to deliver us from bondage,

Yeshua added even greater significance to this festival. If the implications of these claims are true, we have the opportunity to not only celebrate our redemption from slavery, but reconciliation with God through Messiah Yeshua.



CELEBRATING THE  
FEAST  
of  
UNLEAVENED  
BREAD

REMEMBERING FREEDOM.  
CELEBRATING DELIVERANCE.

חַג הַמַּצּוֹת

## Leviticus 23: 6-8

6And on the fifteenth day of that month is the Festival of Unleavened Cakes to the Lord; you shall eat unleavened cakes for a seven day period.

7On the first day, there shall be a holy occasion for you; you shall not perform any work of labor.

8And you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord for a seven day period. On the seventh day, there shall be a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work of labor.

וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה חַג  
הַמִּצּוֹת לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ:

זבִּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם  
כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:

ח וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֶשָּׁה לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה  
לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:



As previously mentioned, the spring feasts of Israel are closely connected, forming a compact and continuous season. The timing of these feasts depends entirely on the observance of Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately follows the Passover meal, while the Feast of First Fruits falls on the specific Sunday within this period. Shavuot is then celebrated exactly 50 days after that Sunday.

The Feast of Passover itself is celebrated on the evening of Nisan 15, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins at the same time, on the evening of Nisan 15. The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts for seven days. These two festivals, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, are observed together and symbolize the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Unleavened Bread, or *Hag HaMatzot*, is considered a distinct celebration observed during the Passover week. Both feasts, celebrated in tandem, commemorate the Exodus. The origins of this festival are rooted in the commands given by God to the Israelites as they left Egypt (Exodus 12:14-20):

<sup>14</sup> “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.

<sup>15</sup> For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel.

<sup>16</sup> On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.

<sup>17</sup> “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

<sup>18</sup> In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.

<sup>19</sup> For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel.

<sup>20</sup> Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”

As part of the command, Israel was instructed to eat unleavened bread (matzah) for seven days, beginning with the Passover meal. During this time, not only was eating leavened bread prohibited, but the presence of leaven in one’s house was also forbidden (Exodus 13:7, Deuteronomy 16:4).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the three major pilgrimage festivals when all Israelite men were called to come to the place God had designated to celebrate. These feasts were traditionally celebrated at the Temple in Jerusalem (Exodus 23:15):

<sup>15</sup> “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzot*) follows a seven-day sequence detailed in the biblical books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It begins immediately after the Passover sacrifice and lasts for seven days.

Before Passover begins, all leavening agents, such as yeast and sourdough, must be removed from the home. A traditional "search for leaven" is conducted the evening before Passover to ensure no crumbs are left behind.

**Day 1 (Nisan 15):** This day is considered a "High Sabbath" or sacred assembly, during which no regular work is permitted, except for food preparation. The first required meal of unleavened bread (matzah) begins at evening.

**Days 2-6 (Intermediate Days):** During these days, no leaven may be eaten or even found within the household.

According to Numbers 28:16-25, the special offerings for each day of this period included:

- Two young bulls offered as a burnt offering
- One ram offered as a burnt offering
- Seven male lambs (year-old, without blemish) offered as a burnt offering
- One male goat offered as a sin offering to make atonement for the people
- Accompanying grain and drink offerings, including fine flour mixed with oil and wine.

**Day 7 (Nisan 21):** Like the first day, this day is a sacred assembly, and no regular work is allowed. The Feast officially ends at sunset.

These rituals were closely tied to Israel's agricultural cycle, specifically the timing of the barley and wheat harvests, giving the feast both a spiritual and agricultural significance.

### Barley and Wheat Harvest Seasons

In Israel, two harvest seasons follow one after another, the barley harvest and then the wheat harvest. In the Calendar's list of seasons, for instance, the month of harvesting barley (רצק חרי) וכל, שערם) si dewollof by "taehw gnitsevrah fo htnom eht" (ירח קציר

In fact, the simple meaning of the word *matzah*, the eating of which is this holiday's central ritual, is barley flatbread. Barley was generally not leavened with yeast since the main benefit of such leavening is to make the dough rise and produce a loaf, but this cannot be done with barley, which only yields flatbreads.

So what is the meaning of the Matzah

Matzah, an unleavened flatbread made solely of barley flour and water, holds a central and multi-layered symbolic meaning in Judaism, particularly during the festival of Passover.

It is a powerful symbol representing both slavery and freedom, **as well as humility and faith.**

The primary meaning of matzah is as a physical reminder of the rushed departure of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The biblical narrative recounts that they left in such a hurry that their dough had no time to rise, and they baked it into flat cakes for their journey.

Matzah is often referred to as *lechem oni*, the "poor man's bread" or "bread of affliction".

Its simple, unadorned nature, lacking any enriching ingredients, recalls the meager and hard sustenance the Hebrew slaves were given by their masters. This aspect serves as a reminder of suffering and a call to empathy for those still in need.

Despite its association with hardship, the matzah also symbolizes redemption and the transition to freedom. When the Israelites willingly ate this same simple bread as they embarked on their journey into the desert, the hard crust transformed psychologically from a food of servitude to the bread of liberty, chosen in their eagerness for an autonomous future.

Leaven (*chametz*), which puffs up bread, often symbolizes pride, arrogance, and corruption in Jewish thought. The flat, unpretentious matzah, therefore, represents humility, self-abnegation, and an eagerness to follow God without the "puffiness" of ego.

The act of eating matzah is also seen as an act of immense faith. The Israelites left behind the certainty and "culture" of Egypt without a guaranteed food source in the desert, trusting in God's provision.

During the Passover Seder, matzah is central to the rituals designed to make the ancient story come alive, encouraging each generation to remember their history and appreciate the meaning of freedom and their ongoing responsibility to fight oppression.

Some people observe the custom of celebrating the Matzah while saying the blessing.

*Baruch atah Adonai  
Eloheinu melech ha'olam  
Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu al bi'ur chametz*

**ברוך אתה יהוה  
אלהינו מלך העולם  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו  
וצונו על בעור חמץ**

*Blessed are you, O Lord  
Our God, King of the universe  
Who has sanctified us by His commandments  
And commanded us about removal of leaven*



Seeing Messiah Yeshua in *Chag Matzot*, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, may not be quite as obvious as in some of the other Feast observances.

We easily see the death of Yeshua in the Passover observance, and we can see his resurrection in First Fruits. But what is the prophetic significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

Perhaps the most popular teaching regarding this Feast centers around the idea that leaven is representative of sin. And even a little bit can have a big impact



Leaven, or yeast, is a fungus that ferments sugars and is used to cause dough to rise. The use of leaven was strictly forbidden in all offerings made to the Lord by fire (Lev 2:11; Lev 7:12; Lev 8:2; Num 6:15).

Its secretly penetrating and diffusive power is referred to in 1Cor 5:6-8

<sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?

<sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Yeshua addresses 3 types of sinful leaven, and Paul addresses 2 of them: -

The leaven of the Pharisees: Matthew 16:6 And Yeshua said to them,

**"Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees..."**

While Yeshua doesn't define the sin of the Pharisees in the Matthew passage we don't have to be in the dark as to what it was for it is the overwhelming characteristic of the Pharisees and it is clearly stated for us in Luke 12:1 which states

**'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.'**

This is the first leaven to beware of.

Hypocrisy - saying one thing and doing another - putting on a religious show outwardly when your heart is far from God.

The leaven of the Sadducees: Matthew 16:6 And Yeshua said to them,

**"Watch out and beware of the leaven of the... Sadducees."**

The Pharisees were known for their religiosity and hypocrisy but the Sadducees had a different problem.

They were known for their reluctance to believe in the supernatural. They didn't believe in angels or in the resurrection (Luke 20:27-38). They were the spiritual skeptics of their age while maintaining a show of religion.

The leaven of Herod: Mark 8:15 And He was giving orders to them, saying,

**"Watch out! Beware of the leaven of... Herod."**

Herod is an interesting case. He was in a position of worldly power but also desired to see Yeshua so that he could see a sign.

There are several warnings here. One is against the desire for worldliness and power that can easily spread and unfortunately, looking at the Western church today, we see so much of this leaven.

But the other warning is in combining this through seeking signs and wonders in attempting to gain greater power.

- The leaven of legalism: Galatians 5:7-9

**You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? (8) This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. (9) A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.**

The problem in the Galatian church was that they started with faith and Yeshua plus nothing but were soon persuaded that they needed to add aspects of the law (like observing certain days, circumcision, righteousness by works etc).

So their faith became Yeshua plus... Paul instructed them (in no uncertain terms!) that this was not from God and was in fact a leaven that quickly leavens the whole lump. –

The leaven of immorality: 1 Corinthians 5:1,7

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife...

Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened.

For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

The context of this well known passage in Corinthians concerning leaven is sexual immorality.

1st century Corinth, which is in southern Greece west of Athens, was know unfortunately for an 'anything goes' attitude. It had a reputation for gross immorality. And as we see here it had infiltrated into the Church.

Paul correctly identified this as a leaven. The church was following the ways of the culture in which they lived

The traditional search for leaven is symbolically seen as self-examination, looking for hidden areas of sin in our lives, and the removal of leaven as the act of repentance and/or sanctification. It is suggested, then, that the messianic significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is focused on the sinless life of Yeshua.



Yeshua is the Unleavened Bread

The unleavened bread speaks of the total sinlessness of Yeshua Christ. Yeshua was sinless, just like the Passover lamb was without blemish. He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. (1Jn 3:5) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2Cor 5:21)

1Cor3:16 states

<sup>16</sup> Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

the house that contains the leaven is a picture of our lives and our bodies - the temple of the Holy Spirit . We are to look in our house (heart) with the candle (Holy Spirit) and search for things in our heart that cause us to sin, remove them and burn them.

The Messianic Significance lies in the ceremony involving the matzah:

As part of the passover ceremony the leader will bring out a linen bag containing three pieces of matzah (flat, unleavened bread that has stripes and has been pierced).

The second or middle piece of the three is removed from the bag and is broken.

Half of the matzah is then wrapped in a linen cloth and is hidden somewhere in the house.

This part is known as the 'afikomen' and it remains hidden until a later part of the ceremony where children are asked to search for the 'afikomen'.

The one that finds it is rewarded with a gift and the afikomen is then broken into many pieces and eaten by all that are at the service.

The Matzah Messianic Fulfillment: The three pieces of unleavened bread (matzah) that are together in one bag speaks of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

**<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

The second piece that is removed from the bag speaks of the second member of the Godhead, Yeshua, coming to earth and being found as a man.

The great prophetic revelation about Yeshua foretold this saying:

<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isa 53:4-5

In that the broken matzah was then wrapped in linen signifies the burial of Yeshuas body which also was wrapped in linen (Mk 15:46).

**<sup>46</sup> So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.**

This was then hidden for a time just as Yeshua was hidden in the tomb for 3 days and 3 nights.

The same occurs spiritually for all that seek and find Him are given the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Eph 4:7-8).

In that everyone in the ceremony is then asked to partake of the matzah that is no longer hidden, so Christ invites all to spiritually partake of Him saying

'I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.' (Jn 6:51)

It is sad that Jewish people can re-enact this tradition year after year and not find the significance of what they are doing truly means?

They will one day!!

The feast of unleavened bread points to Yeshua as the bread from heaven that was without sin.

He is the second or middle matzah that was removed from the three and was broken for our sake.

On that last supper/the last Passover I find it interesting that as He took the bread and broke it saying:

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." (Lk 22:19)

Think of the significance, He was doing tradition, and about to fulfill and walk out that tradition and bring completeness. Those 12 men in that room with Him had no idea the significance of what they were witnessing.

Now we can see the prophetic significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It represents the burial of the lifeless, dead body of Yeshua.

Yet the Feast of Unleavened Bread goes for seven days, a limited period of time that comes to an end.

After that, leaven is once again introduced, and life comes once again back into the bread.

The lifeless, unleavened "bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3) is only temporary.

Likewise, Messiah Yeshua's death was very real, but only temporary.

Paul summarizes the Gospel message in the letter of (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

These Spring Feasts – Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of First Fruits – picture it perfectly. In the Passover, we see Yeshua's death as the Passover lamb. In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we see his lifeless body buried in the grave, but only temporarily. And at First Fruits we see his resurrection from the dead, restored to life and presenting himself before the Father.

*Yeshua answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body.*

### Celebrate The Feast of Unleavened Bread

In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we see the removal of leaven.

It is the removal of life for a short period of time, and this is where we can see a picture of Messiah Yeshua. We can see in the Feast of Unleavened Bread the burial of the lifeless Yeshua, awaiting resurrection. We can also see a direct application to our own lives.

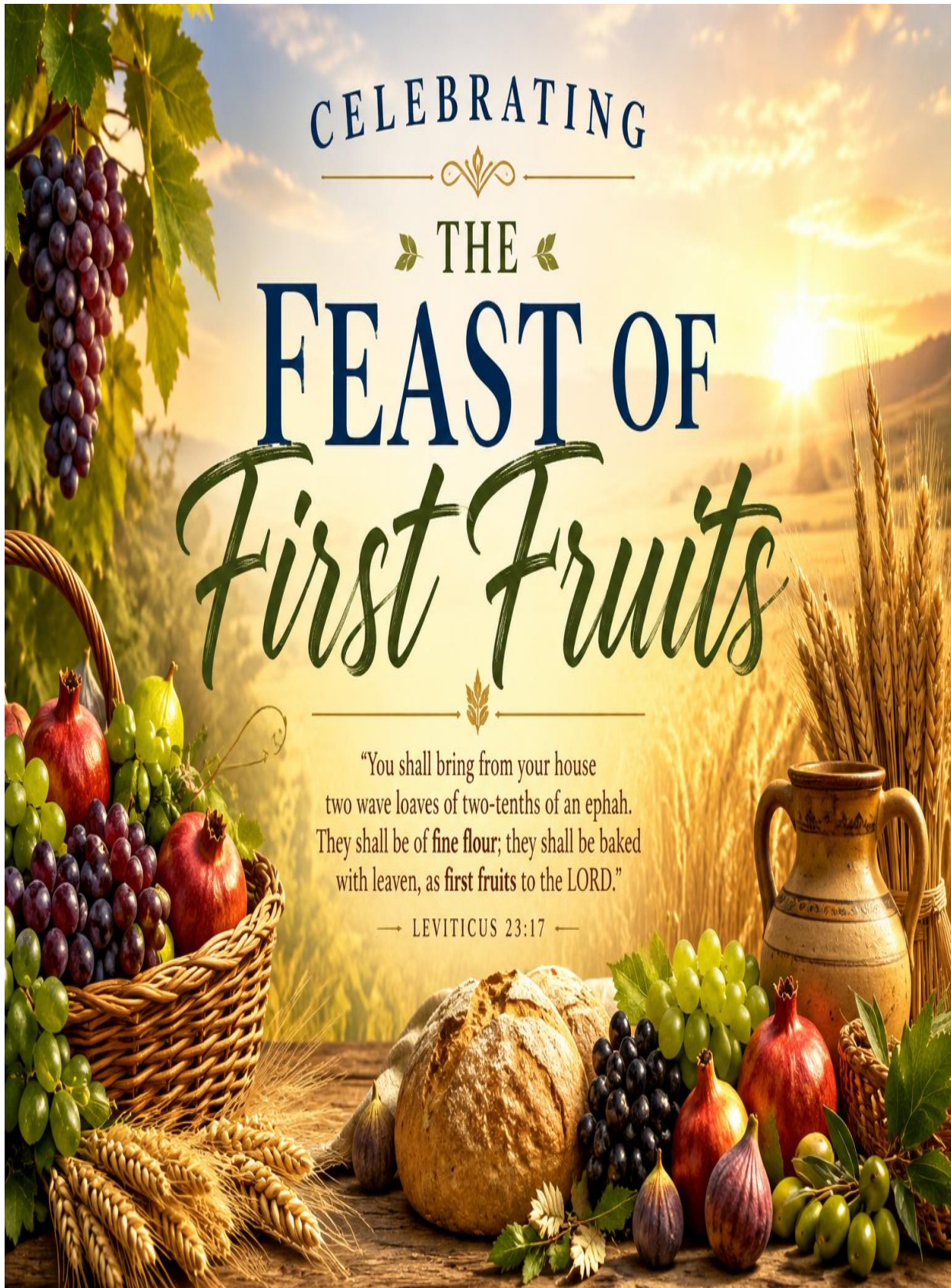
*Romans 6:3-5 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Yeshua were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

Certainly the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a reminder of how Israel left Egypt in haste, before the bread dough could rise.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread also illustrates, in a prophetic picture, the burial of Messiah Yeshua following his death seen in Passover and his resurrection seen in First Fruits.

So during this Feast of Unleavened Bread, throw out your old leavened bread. Feast on unleavened bread for a week. Then enjoy a fresh new loaf of fluffy, aromatic leavened bread or a delicious, sweet donut.

*Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor 5:8*



## Leviticus 23: 9-14

9And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

10Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: When you come to the Land which I am giving you, and you reap its harvest, you shall bring to the kohen an omer of the beginning of your reaping.

11And he shall wave the omer before the Lord so that it will be acceptable for you; the kohen shall wave it on the day after the rest day.

12And on the day of your waving the omer, you shall offer up an unblemished lamb in its [first] year as a burnt offering to the Lord;

13Its meal offering [shall be] two tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil, a fire offering to the Lord as a spirit of satisfaction. And its libation [shall be] a quarter of a hin of wine.

14You shall not eat bread or [flour made from] parched grain or fresh grain, until this very day, until you bring your God's sacrifice. [This is] an eternal statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

טוידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמר:

ידבר אל־בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם  
כי־תבאו אל־הארץ אשר אני נתן לכם  
וקצרתם את־קצירה והבאתם את־עמר  
ראשית קצירכם אל־הכהן:

יא והניף את־העמר לפני יהוה לרצונכם  
ממחרת השבת יניפנו הכהן:

יב ועשיתם ביום הניפכם את־העמר כבש  
תמים בן־שנתו לעלה ליהוה:

יג ומנחתו שני עשראים סלת בלולה בשמן  
אשה ליהוה ריח ניחח ונספו (כתיב  
ונסכה) יין רביעת ההין:

יד ולחם וקלי וקרמל לא תאכלו עד־עצם  
היום הזה עד הביאכם את־קרבן אלהיכם  
חקת עולם לדוריכם בכל משבתיכם:



The Feast of the First Fruits is commanded by God as an everlasting ordinance continuing forever ([Lev 23:14, 21](#)).

The first day of the feast landed on the first Sabbath after the Passover Seder.

As the Israelites wandered 40 years through the desert, the Lord provided their daily food in the form of bread from heaven; Manna. The Lord was giving them a land that was fertile and bountiful, no longer requiring the Manna.

The Feast of Firstfruits gives honor and thanksgiving to God for the first fruits of their harvest (barley) in their new land.

The first fruits called *bikkurim* were brought by farmers in ancient Israel to be placed near the altar in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

On the day after the Sabbath during [Passover](#), the people were to give the priest a sheaf of their grain harvest for the first fruits.



The priest was then to raise the bundle and wave it “before the Lord” so it would be accepted on their behalf” (**Lev 23:11**). The worshipper was also to offer a male lamb, a year old without blemish, as a burnt offering as a sign of their dedication (**Lev 23:12**). The food and drink offering is also given as a sign of their fellowship with God (**Lev 23:13-14**).

The mitzvah of *bikkurim* began when a farmer in Israel (and some of the surrounding areas) would go out to his field and find budding fruit, and tie a reed around them, verbally declaring them “first fruits.”

This applied only to fruits of the seven species of the land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.



So how were the first fruits brought to Jerusalem?

Villagers of each region would gather in a central town, where they would sleep in the city's thoroughfare. They did not enter the town's homes, lest they contract impurity.

In the morning, the leader would call out: "Arise and let us ascend to Zion, to G-d our L-rd."

An ox with horns coated in gold would lead the procession, a crown of olive branches on its head, representing the seven species from which the first fruits were taken.

A flute was played before the procession until it approached Jerusalem. The entire way, the people proclaimed: "I rejoiced when it was told me: 'Let us go to the house of the Lord."

They would travel for only two-thirds of the day, allowing others along the way to notice them and join in the procession.

When they were close to Jerusalem, emissaries were sent to notify the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they adorned their first fruits and beautified them. If they had some produce that was fresh and other produce that was dried, the fresh produce was placed on top.

The leaders of the Israelites and of the priests, and the Temple treasurers, would go out from Jerusalem to greet them.

When the procession had entered the gates of Jerusalem, the people began declaring: "Our feet were standing in your gates, O Jerusalem.

All of the artisans in Jerusalem would stand and greet them: "Our brethren, the inhabitants of so-and-so, you have come in peace."

They proceeded through Jerusalem, the sound of a flute accompanying them, until they reached the Temple Mount.

There, even important personages, such as the king of Israel, placed baskets on their shoulders and proceeded until the Temple Courtyard, all the while singing Psalm 150.

At that point the Levite choir would sing, "I will exalt You, God, for You have raised me up . .

There, with the basket still on his shoulder, the farmer would make the first declaration: “I declare this day to the Lord, your God . . .”



He then held the edges of the basket, and the priest held it from below and waved it up and down and in four directions before reciting the formula

“An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather . . .”

That phrase, “An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather,” comes from the Passover Haggadah and Jewish liturgy (Deuteronomy 26:5), referring to Laban the Aramean's attempts to harm Jacob, symbolizing Israel's humble beginnings and God's protection, with the “Aramean” being Jacob himself (a wanderer/fugitive) or Laban.

It's a core part of the declaration recited when bringing first fruits (Bikkurim) to the Temple, highlighting God saving the patriarchs from persecution in Aram before they went to Egypt, ensuring Israel's growth.

He then placed the first fruits near the southwest corner of the altar, bowed reverently and departed.

The first fruits were given to the priests who were on duty at that time. They divided the produce among themselves to be eaten within the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem.

The priest took the fruit and returned the expensive containers to the owners. In the case of a reed or grass basket, both the first fruits and the basket were given to the priests.

After sleeping in Jerusalem overnight, the farmer was free to return home.

In the Land of Israel, the most basic sense of faith stems from an agricultural dependence on God. The Jewish farmer, whose livelihood is entirely dependent on God's blessing, must live in a perpetual state of faith and appreciation.

This faith is even indicated in the kind of fruit farmers brought as bikkurim; they only offered the seven species for which the Land is praised—wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. These species are native to Israel and are especially dependent on the blessing of rainwater for their growth.



“The firstfruits” is a common expression found in both Old and New Testaments. It is used in Scripture with both literal and figurative meanings. So when Paul said Christ was “**the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**” (1 Cor. 15:20), he was using terminology and imagery rich in history and meaning.

At least five kinds of firstfruits can be identified in Scripture:

### **The first harvest**



In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to give the first and best portions of the harvest as an offering to Him (Ex. 23:16; Neh. 10:35). This included grain (Ex. 23:16; 34:22), olive oil (Num. 18:12; Deut. 18:4), new wine (Num. 18:12; Deut. 18:4), honey (2 Chron. 31:5), sheep wool (Deut. 18:4), fruit (Neh. 10:35), and even their herds and flocks (Deut. 15:19).

By giving the firstfruits as an offering to God, the Israelites acknowledged that all the harvest—in fact, everything they had—came from God and belonged to Him. Therefore, the firstfruits offering acknowledged God’s ownership of everything, expressed thankfulness for His provision, and anticipated what was to come.

### **Israel**

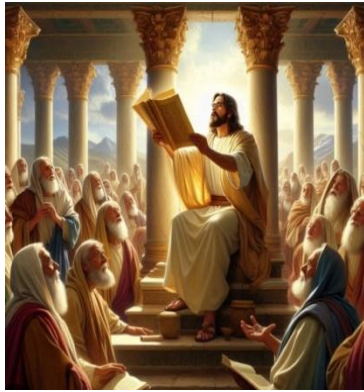


God in the book of Exodus 4:22 it says: ‘**This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son,**

In a symbolic use of the term, Jeremiah called Israel the firstfruits of God’s harvest.

“**Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest**” (Jer. 2:3).

Just as the first and choicest crops were devoted to God, Israel was God's chosen and set apart people. But the fact that Israel was God's *firstfruits*, not His *only* fruit, also anticipated other peoples and nations coming to the Lord.



### **Believers**

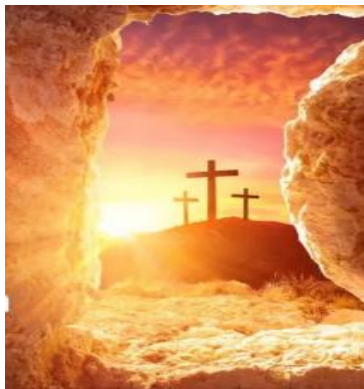
In Romans 16:5 and 1 Corinthians 16:15, the first converts of a particular area were called "the firstfruits." Some translations use the term "first converts," but literally it is "firstfruits" (KJV), the same word used in 1 Corinthians 15:20.

James 1:18 uses the term with reference to believers: "By his choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." The new birth we have experienced is only a preview of the day to come when He will make all things new in a new heaven and a new earth.



### **The Holy Spirit**

Paul said we "have the Spirit as the firstfruits" (Rom. 8:23). The Holy Spirit is a foretaste, the first installment of our future glory. He is God's the pledge of more to come in our resurrection life.



### **Yeshua**

When Paul said Yeshua is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20), he was drawing an analogy between the Old Testament offering and Yeshua's resurrection.

As the Old Testament firstfruits symbolized and consecrated the entire harvest that was to follow, Christ's resurrection was the foretaste of the resurrection of all believers yet to come.

His resurrection is our assurance that one day all believers will be raised from the dead and will receive new, resurrected bodies.

"Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55)

From a Messianic perspective, the Feast of First Fruits (Yom HaBikkurim) prophetically foreshadows Yeshua as the Messiah, signifying His resurrection as the "firstfruits of the dead," the guarantee of a future, abundant harvest of believers resurrected at His return, and the start of God's new creation.

His rising on this very day, as the Temple priests presented the barley firstfruits, links Him as the ultimate offering, proving His victory over death and inaugurating the spiritual harvest of souls for God's Kingdom.

The Scriptures speaks of two "*Firstfruits*" festivals, the first being at Passover, and the second fifty days later on Pentecost (*Shavuot* in Hebrew).

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the end of the Sabbath which fell on Passover, people were delegated to go into different barley fields after sunset and obtain samples from each field.

The barley for the Passover "*Firstfruits*" offering (*Reishit* in Hebrew) was laid together in a sheaf (an *omer*), and brought to the court of the Temple. There, the grain was winnowed, parched, and bruised in a mortar. The next morning after some incense had been sprinkled on the sheaf, the priest waved it before the Lord towards the four different points of the compass. He then took a part of the grain and threw it into the fire of the altar. Once the offering was accepted, the remainder of the harvest was then acceptable before God (Leviticus 23:11-14).

The Feast of *Firstfruits* illustrates Messiah's resurrection in light of Passover, thus disclosing the Resurrection in its proper biblical context.

We know that Yeshua died as our Passover Lamb, and through Him we have redemption and forgiveness (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7)

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Yeshua coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

<sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 1 Corinthians 5:7

Just as *Firstfruits* was celebrated only after entering the Promised Land (Leviticus 23:10), so also Messiah's resurrection looks to life beyond this 'wilderness journey' of struggle.

This resurrection life cannot be understood while in the bondage of sin.

In fact, it wasn't until after *Firstfruits* was observed that the new growth of grain could be eaten.

Likewise, it wasn't until after Yeshua's *resurrection* that believers could fully partake of the new growth, even the new life in Him.

It was only after He had been raised and ascended to the Father that we received “the *Firstfruits* of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 8:23).

<sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

*Firstfruits* gave assurance that the rest of the harvest would be accepted: “*He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted*” (Leviticus 23:11).

The waving of the sheaf sanctified the whole harvest (see Romans 11:16).

Messiah’s resurrection is proof that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins, and that the rest of the harvest is accepted in Him as well!

<sup>16</sup> If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

*He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Romans 4:25)*

*Who is the one who condemns? Messiah Yeshua is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34)*

*And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua. (Ephesians 2:6)*

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Yeshua has entered as a forerunner for us.” (Hebrews 6:19,20)*

I Cor.15:20 But the fact is that Christ (the Messiah) has been raised from the dead, and He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep [in death].

<sup>21</sup> For since it was through a man that death came into the world, it is also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead has come.

<sup>22</sup> For just as in Adam all people die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive.

<sup>23</sup> But each in his own rank and turn: Christ (the Messiah) is the firstfruits, then those who are Christ’s at His coming.

Messiah’s incomparable miraculous resurrection occurred on divine schedule, fulfilling the Feast of Firstfruits on God’s biblical calendar.

4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:... (1 Corinthians 15:4)



Yeshua is "the firstfruits" of those to rise from the dead  
**But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;  
afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**  
(1Corinthians 15:23)



promising resurrection and eternal life to a righteous  
redeemed remnant cleansed of their sins in His atoning  
blood and filled with His Holy Spirit.

*Yeshua also said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he  
who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone  
who lives and believes in Me will never die."* (John 11:25-  
26).

The Apostle Paul in speaking to those who have faith in the Passover Lamb's cleansing blood, encourages us with these words, **"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ... the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."** (1Corinthians 15:52)

**"Having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."**  
(Romans 5:9)

In Revelation, "Yeshua" is the ultimate **Firstfruit** as the first resurrected from the dead, but the term also refers to the **144 thousand** sealed believers in Chapter 14, who are "firstfruits to God and the Lamb," representing a dedicated, purified remnant redeemed from the earth, symbolizing early, pure yield for God before the greater harvest of believers.



In [Revelation 14:4](#), **These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**

the 144,000 are said to be the firstfruits of the redeemed.

We view the 144,000 as a literal Jewish men, who fit the description given in Revelation.

They are sealed “servants of God,” which means they have the special protection of God (Revelation 7:3).

They are kept safe from the divine judgments of the tribulation and from the wrath of the Antichrist. They are virgins (Revelation 14:4). They follow and obey Christ. They are redeemed, “and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless” (verse 5, ESV).

The 144,000 are said to be “redeemed from the earth” and “purchased from among mankind” (Revelation 14:3–4).

Since they are “offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb” (verse 4), we know that there will be many others to follow who will also be redeemed.

The Bible predicts that Israel will one day repent and turn back to God (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25–27), and the 144,000 Jews are the “firstfruits” of that redeemed Israel.

With God’s protection, these “firstfruits” of salvation can freely perform their mission during the tribulation.

Their job seems to be to evangelize the post-rapture world and proclaim the gospel.

As a result of their ministry, “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Revelation 7:9) will come to faith in Christ. Sinners are saved, and God is glorified.

These future missionaries will go throughout the earth spreading the gospel. They are the firstfruits—men who are saved early on in the tribulation and help bring in a great harvest of souls to the glory of their Redeemer.



Yeshua as the “First Fruit” signifies His resurrection as the *first* to overcome death, fulfilling the ancient Jewish Feast of Firstfruits, and His Second Coming represents the final harvest where believers, resurrected or raptured, join Him, sharing in His victory and eternal life, establishing His kingdom on Earth. He’s the pattern: as the First Fruit, His followers (“those who are Christ’s”) will also experience resurrection and new life at His glorious return.

# CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF GIVING — OF THE — TORAH



## Leviticus 23: 14-22

**14**You shall not eat bread or [flour made from] parched grain or fresh grain, until this very day, until you bring your God's sacrifice. [This is] an eternal statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

**15**And you shall count for yourselves, from the morrow of the rest day from the day you bring the omer as a wave offering seven weeks; they shall be complete.

**16**You shall count until the day after the seventh week, [namely,] the fiftieth day, [on which] you shall bring a new meal offering to the Lord.

**17**From your dwelling places, you shall bring bread, set aside, two [loaves] [made from] two tenths [of an ephah]; they shall be of fine flour, [and] they shall be baked leavened, the first offering to the Lord.

**18**And associated with the bread, you shall bring seven unblemished lambs in their [first] year, one young bull, and two rams these shall be a burnt offering to the Lord, [along with] their meal offering and libations a fire offering [with] a spirit of satisfaction to the Lord.

**19**And you shall offer up one he goat as a sin offering, and two lambs in their [first] year as a peace offering.\_

**20**And the kohen shall wave them in conjunction with the first offering bread as a waving before the Lord, along with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord, [and] belong to the kohen.

**21**And you shall designate on this very day a holy occasion it shall be for you; you shall not perform any work of labor. [This is] an eternal statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

**22**When you reap the harvest of your Land, you shall not completely remove the corner of your field during your harvesting, and you shall not gather up the gleanings of your harvest. [Rather,] you shall leave these for the poor person and for the stranger. I am the Lord, your God.

יְדִילְחֶם וְקָלִי וְכֶרְמֶל לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַד-עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַד הִבִּיאֲכֶם אֶת-קֶרְבֶּן אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדִרְתֵיכֶם בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הִבִּיאֲכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעַת שָׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה:

וְעַד מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַיהוָה:

וּמִמִּשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם תָּבִיאוּ | לֶחֶם תְּנוּפָה שְׁתֵּי שִׁנֵּי עֶשְׂרִים סֵלֹת תִּהְיֶינָה חֻמֵּץ תֹּאפֶינָה בְּכֹרִים לַיהוָה:

וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֵי-הַלֶּחֶם שִׁבְעַת כִּבְשִׂים תְּמִימִם בְּגִי שָׁנָה וּפָר בֶּן-בָּקָר אֶחָד וְאֵילִם שְׁנָיִם יִהְיוּ עֹלָה לַיהוָה וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם אִשָּׁה רִיחֵ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:

וּסְעִשִׂיתֶם שְׁעִיר-עִזִּים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת וּשְׁנֵי כִבְשִׂים בְּגִי שָׁנָה לְזִבְחַ שְׁלָמִים:

וְהִנִּיף הַכֹּהֵן | אֹתָם עַל לֶחֶם הַבִּכּוּרִים תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁנֵי כִבְשִׂים קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיוּ לַיהוָה לִכְהֵן:

כֹּאֲקִירָאֲתֶם בַּעֲצֶם | הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם בְּכָל-מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם לְדִרְתֵיכֶם:

כִּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת-קִצְרֵי אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא-תִכְלֶה פֶּאֶת שְׂדֶךְ בִּקְצֹרְךָ וְלִקֵּט קִצְרֹךְ לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעָנִי וְלַגֵּר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:



Shavuot (שבועות in Hebrew, also called “Hag Matan Torateinu” (the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah) is a two-day Jewish holiday that commemorates the date when God gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai over 3,000 years ago.

Fifty days after the first Passover, the Torah—God’s instruction or the Law—was given. It was released at Mount Sinai.

“You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.” —Nehemiah 9:13

The Giving of the Torah (Matan Torah) is the foundational event in Judaism where God revealed the Ten Commandments and the entire Torah (divine law) to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, transforming them from a liberated people into a nation with a divine mission. This miraculous experience, marked by fire, smoke, and thunder, is celebrated annually by Jews during the holiday of Shavuot, the "Feast of Weeks," occurring 50 days after Passover.

The event at Sinai established Judaism's core principles, giving the Jewish people a path to follow and a unique relationship with God, a moment reaffirmed and celebrated every Shavuot.



With the Exodus from Egypt only three months in the past, the Jews arrive at Mount Sinai. and camp at the foot of the mountain.

God tells Moses that He not only wants to give the Jews the Torah, but also wants to make them His chosen, holy nation, who will follow His commandments. The Jews wholeheartedly agree, replying, “All God wishes we will do.”

The Jews awake to thunder and lightning and a deep, powerful horn blast. As they approach Mount Sinai, they see it ablaze, a thick cloud at its peak. Trembling in awe and fear, they gather at the foot of the mountain.

The blasting of the Shofar horn grew louder, but suddenly all sounds ceased, and an absolute silence ensued; and then God proclaimed the Ten Commandments.

The entire people heard the words of G-d, and they became frightened.

They begged Moses to be the intermediary between God and them, for if God Himself would continue to give them the entire Torah, they would surely die. Moses told them not to be afraid, for God had revealed Himself to them so that they would fear Him and not sin.

Then God asked Moses to ascend the mountain; for he alone was able to stand in the presence of God.



There Moses was to receive the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments, and the entire Torah, to teach it to the children of Israel.

Moses went up the mountain and stayed there forty days and forty nights, without food or sleep, for he had become like an angel.

During this time, God revealed to Moses the entire Torah, with all its laws and the interpretations thereof.

Finally, God gave Moses the two stone Tables of Testimony, containing the Ten Commandments, written by God Himself.

Although Shavuot is one of the *Shelosh Regalim* (the three Pilgrimage Festivals), which means it's technically equal in importance to Passover and Sukkot, it's less commonly celebrated than the other two holidays.

Maybe this is because Shavuot doesn't have a well-known home component, like the Passover seder (celebrated by more Jews than almost any other Jewish ritual) or the *sukkot* (huts) some Jews build outside of their homes on Sukkot.

The custom of decorating with greens and fresh flowers on Shavuot reminds us of the spring harvest and the ancient ritual of bringing the first fruits to the temple. The decorations also remind us of the legend that when the Israelites arrived at the base of Mount Simai they found it blooming with flowers and greenery.



Many Jews prepare and eat dairy foods – often cheesecake and blintzes as a reminder of the sweetness of the Torah, and also as a reminder that the Torah calls the land of Israel a land flowing with “milk and honey”

Often families gather together to enjoy a Shavuot meal that features these dishes.

The Torah teaches that the Israelites had three days to prepare to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. To ready themselves for the momentous occasion, they were instructed to wash their clothes and to stay ritually pure. By recalling those three days, the Jewish People today can use the three days before Shavuot to prepare personally, as a family, and as a community to re-experience this life changing event.

Additionally, Shavuot reminds us that we are to strive for spiritual growth year-round. Why, ask the Hasidic rabbis, is the holiday referred to as “the season of the *giving* of the *Torah*” instead of as “the season of our *receiving* of the *Torah*?” They argue that although it was given to our forefathers at Sinai on that specific date, we are to receive it everywhere, on all occasions.



The Book of Ruth is also traditionally read on Shavuot morning because of its link to the harvest season (when the story takes place) and because of Ruth’s acceptance of the Jewish faith and God. When the Moabite Ruth and her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, returned to Bethlehem, it was at the very beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22).

The three pilgrimage festivals found in the Hebrew Bible all mark important moments in the annual harvest calendar:

**Passover** is the beginning of the barley harvest; Shavuot marks the end of the wheat harvest and beginning of the fruit harvest; and *Sukkot* marks the end of the fruit harvest. [The story of Ruth](#) takes place against the backdrop of the harvest season, from the reaping, gleaning, threshing, and winnowing of the wheat.

Additionally, Ruth was a brave Gentile woman whose love for God and the *Torah* led her to convert to Judaism. Her remarkable pledge to Naomi is among some of the most stirring words in Scripture, “*Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God*” (Ruth 1:16-17).

Finally, Ruth has a further connection to Shavuot. At the end of Ruth’s story, she and Boaz are married and have a son named Obed. His son was Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David. So Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David who, according to tradition, was born and died on Shavuot.

# PENTECOST & THE FEAST OF WEEKS SHAVUOT SENDING FORTH THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Some believe that celebrating the giving of the Torah on Shavuot is legalistic or no longer necessary. Keeping the law was designed to be a response to God's grace and deliverance.

Shavuot is the last feast that has been prophetically fulfilled of the seven. Our Redeemer was crucified as the Passover Lamb, He was buried on Unleavened Bread at the exact time prescribed in the Torah, and He rose as that First Fruit; as that wave offering.

As the Israelites were bringing in the spring harvest, the harvest of Yahveh could not be touched until the first fruits of it were offered to Him.

Yeshua was the first fruit as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:20

**"But now Messiah is risen from the dead and has become the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep".**



He was the first fruit of those who are resurrected.

There will be a resurrection of all souls as Daniel said, **"Some to everlasting life and some to everlasting death"** (Daniel 12:2).

Yeshua, our first fruits, is the fulfillment of Yahveh's promise that there is hope for those who walk in His ways.

Fifty days have passed since Yeshua became the first fruit of the Spring barley harvest. It was the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was a small harvest compared to the summer harvest, which will be a greater harvest of souls.

When the Savior rose, He did come back to His disciples, He went through the walls of their room and He said,

"Shalom Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)

and He breathed upon them.

The very life that breathed this world into existence breathed the life and power of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) into His disciples, to be a first fruit to receive the Spirit.



He said, **"RECEIVE the Ruach Ha Kodesh"** (John 20:22).

Peter was transformed, they were all transformed, because shortly after that Peter became an eloquent spokesman instead of a clumsy coward, by the power of the Ruach Ha Kodesh, the Spirit of truth.

Yeshua would send His Spirit to clothe us with power, His very Presence.

On the Day of Pentecost

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

<sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

<sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

<sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4),

also known as the Feast of Harvest, three thousand Jewish souls were brought into the kingdom of Yahveh as a summer harvest.

Their hearts were pierced asking Peter, "what do we do to be saved? And Peter quoting Joel said, "and it shall be everyone who calls on the name of Yahveh will be saved" (Acts 2:21).

After the great outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh, we read accounts of the disciples "living, moving, and having their existence in the Spirit" (Acts 17:28) allowing Yeshua to manifest His glory in signs and wonders, in words of truth that set the captives free, and opened the blind eyes, in order to complete the work that He began on this earth.

The Ruach HaKodesh is the Spirit that separates. It literally separates us out of our flesh and its desires for this world, out of commonness, out of profane things, out of worthless things, unto the holy and the precious. It is written,

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also...” (John 15:26-27).

We must testify about the great and awesome salvation that has been given to us. “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though Yahveh God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Yeshua has given us everything. He has given us His blood to cleanse us, He has given us His righteousness that we might go into the presence of Yahveh Almighty, and He has given us His Ruach Ha Kodesh (His Holy Spirit) that He will teach and lead us.

The Spirit will convict us of sins and He will speak through us, prophesy through us, and work wonders. Yeshua said that if He did not leave His Counselor, the Comforter, His Ruach, would not come (see John 16:7).

When the Spirit would come, we would not only be His ambassadors on this earth but His instruments through which even greater signs and wonders would be done for His Father's name sake. But first things first.

"Remember Gentiles that at that time you were separate excluded, foreigners without hope without Yahveh but now in Messiah you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Messiah" (Ephesians 2:13).

<sup>13</sup> But now in Yeshua, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

This is a cause of great rejoicing for those who were excluded, and this is a call for rejoicing for natural born Jews, for apart from the blood there is no hope for redemption.

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, (Ephesians 2:14)”

His purpose was to create in Himself “one new man” out of the two thus making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to Yahveh through the stake by which He put to death their hostility.

He came and preached peace to you the Gentiles who were far away and peace to those who were near [the Jews]. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one spirit” (Ephesians 2:15-18).

Together, Jew and Gentile cleansed in the blood, walking in righteousness by the power and grace of His indwelling Spirit, will display the riches of His glory as a new creation called, “one new man” (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Consequently, the Gentiles are no longer foreigners, praise be to Yahveh they are no longer outcasts.



He shows no favoritism. It is written,

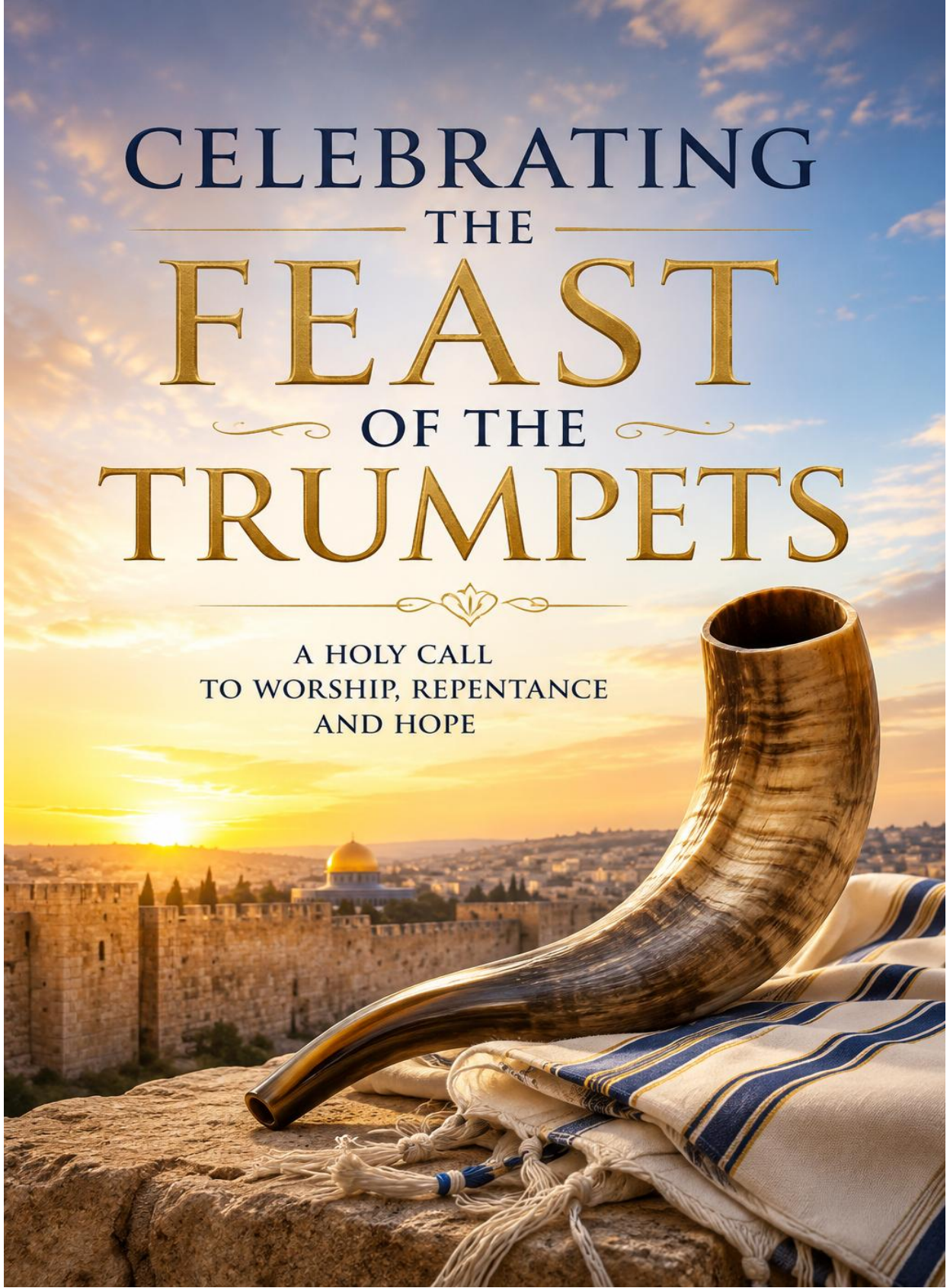
“Consequently the Gentiles are no longer foreigners or aliens but fellow citizens with Yahveh’s people, members of God’s household”,

ONE TOGETHER WITH ISRAEL (see Ephesians 2:19).

HalleluYAH for the sound of the rushing wind and the flames of fire, the Spirit came.,

Their hearts were pierced saying what do we do to be saved? And he was quoting Joel, “[He who calls on the name of Yahveh shall be saved](#)” (Joel 2:32).

*Receive the Ruach HaKodesh!*



# CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

A HOLY CALL  
TO WORSHIP, REPENTANCE  
AND HOPE

## Leviticus 23: 23-24

**23** And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

**24** Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first of the month, it shall be a Sabbath for you, a remembrance of [Israel through] the shofar blast a holy occasion.

כַּגִּידְבַר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:

כַּדְבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ יְהִי לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן  
זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ:



The Bible identifies **two** primary "New Year" dates that serve different religious and civil purposes, while Jewish tradition (as recorded in the Mishnah) recognizes a total of four.

### 1. The Ecclesiastical New Year (Nisan 1)

This is considered the "Biblical New Year" because it was explicitly commanded by God during the Exodus from Egypt. We covered it in depth in Part 3 Passover

["This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you"](#) (Exodus 12:2).

It marks the start of the religious or "festival" calendar used to calculate the dates of holy days like Passover. It occurs in the spring.

### 2. The Civil New Year (Tishrei 1)

Commonly known today as **Rosh Hashanah**, this date falls in the seventh month of the ecclesiastical calendar (autumn).

It is described as a day of "solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets" (Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1).

It marks the start of the civil year, agricultural cycles, and the counting of Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

Rosh Hashanah , the Jewish new year, is a fall festival, taking place at the beginning of the month of Tishrei , which is actually the seventh month of the Jewish year (counting from Nisan in the spring). It is both a time of rejoicing and of serious introspection, a time to celebrate the completion of another year while also taking stock of one's life.

The two days of Rosh Hashanah usher in the Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*), also known as the Days of Awe (*Yamim Noraim*), which culminate in the major fast day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

The Days of Awe represent the climax of a longer process. Starting at the beginning of the previous month, called Elul, the shofar is traditionally sounded at the conclusion of the morning service.

A ram's horn that makes a trumpet-like sound, the shofar is intended as a wake-up call to prepare for the Tishrei holidays.

One week before Rosh Hashanah, special petitionary prayers called *Selichot* are added to the ritual. Rosh Hashanah itself is also known as *Yom Hadin* or the Day of Judgment, on which God opens the Books of Life and Death, which are then sealed on Yom Kippur.

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the shofar the ram's horn.

The blowing of the shofar represents the shofar's cry. Its plaintive cry also serves as a call to repentance.



"Blessed are the people who know the Shofars cry, they walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance The relevant biblical verse is Psalm 89:15

Before reviewing the ceremonial aspects of Rosh Hashanah, let's take a moment and look at the history and significance of the shofar in Jewish ceremonial observance.

Beyond the limitations of language lies a primal communication—the involuntary cry that erupts from the depths of the soul. In Hebrew, this unadulterated expression of shock, tragedy, or joy is known as *tzeaka*, the pure voice most often heard in children.

The Shofar embodies this visceral human cry. Each of its distinct notes acts as a spiritual conduit, bypassing words to reach the deepest recesses of the heart. According to Jewish tradition, while every soul possesses an inherent desire to connect with the Divine, this intent is often obstructed by an internal "wall of resistance" built by worldly inclinations.



The Shofar's sound— breaks spiritual barriers and frees the heart. This allows for a wordless connection with God and the emergence of our truest selves, unhindered and fully liberated.



Although the **Shofar** is not mentioned by name in the Torah until the revelation at Mount Sinai in the Book of Exodus, the tradition originates in the Book of Genesis with the ram caught in the thicket by its horns. This ram, sacrificed by Abraham in place of his son Isaac, provides the physical source and symbolic meaning for the traditional horn used today.

It was the blast of a Shofar emanating from the thick cloud on Mount Sinai that made the people of Israel tremble in awe: **"And all the people were watching the thunder and the flames and the sound of the Shofar and the mountain smoking; and when they saw it, they kept far off, shaking with fear"** (Exodus 20:18).



In Biblical times, the shofar served as a vital military signal, with the Tanach providing numerous examples of its use in warfare —

Perhaps the most memorable of any Biblical battle scene is the Battle of Jericho fought by Joshua and the people of Israel at the command of God.



The Book of Joshua describes the unusual military tactics which rejected modern technological weaponry in favor of the simple Shofar:

Now Jericho was completely sealed up because of the Children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

And the LORD said unto Joshua: 'See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, even the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all the men of war, going about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven rams' horns before the ark; and the seventh day you shall compass

the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the horns. And it shall be, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the horn, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight ahead.' Joshua (6:1-5)

Joshua did exactly as he was told and experienced exactly what Hashem said would happen – the Shofars were sounded, the people shouted, and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.



In Judges chapters 6 and 7, we read of another famous military exploit that was orchestrated by God through the powerful blasts of the Shofar.

The altercation between Gideon and the Midianites shows us how the Shofar was used, once again, to frighten the enemy and win the war.

And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them Shofars, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. And he said unto them: 'Look on me, and do likewise; and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow the Shofar, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the Shofars also on every side of all the camp, and say: For the LORD and for Gideon!' Judges (7:16-18)

At Gideon's signal, his 300 men blew their Shofars and shattered their clay jars revealing flaming torches. The enemy was terrified of the blast of the Shofars and began to flee.

Regarding the era of redemption, the prophet Zechariah declared:

*And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth like the lightning; and the Lord God shall blow the Shofar, and shall move in stormy winds of the south.*

(Zechariah 9:14)

We fervently pray for the vision of Isaiah to be fulfilled, “[And on that day \[of Redemption\] a Tekiya will be sounded from a great Shofar.](#)” (Isaiah 27:13)

The Book of Numbers discusses the blowing of the shofar and mentions two different sounds, a long blast called ‘Tekiya’ and a series of short blasts, known as ‘Teruah’:

However, while the Torah commands the sounding of the shofar, it lacks specific instructions regarding the methods and timing of the blasts. These essential guidelines and liturgical procedures are provided instead by Rabbinic Judaism.

[When you sound \(utkatem\) short blasts \(teruah\) a second time, the camps that lie on the south side shall journey; short blasts \(teruah\) they shall sound \(yetkau\) for their journeys. But when you gather together the congregation, you shall sound a long blast \(tetkau\) but not a short blast \(tariyu\).](#) Numbers 10:6-8

In Jerusalem, you can almost feel the city holding its breath as Rosh Hashanah approaches.

At night, thousands gather at the Western Wall for slihot — prayers of repentance that echo through the stones and the night air.

I wish you could hear it in person: voices rising together, some weeping, some whispering, all pouring out their hearts before the Lord.



It's like stepping into a current that carries you straight to God's throne.

If you've ever heard it, you know it's unlike anything else. The shofar doesn't play music — it cries out.

It's raw, unrefined, almost jarring. And that's the point. It's meant to shake us awake, to call us back to the heart of God.



The Torah tells us: “[In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation](#)” Leviticus 23:24

In Hebrew it's called Zichron Teruah — “a memorial of the shofar's sound.”

A sound that carries through generations, from the wilderness at Sinai, through the valleys and hills of Israel, all the way to today.

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When you sound (utkatem) short blasts (teruah) a second time, the camps that lie on the south side shall journey; short blasts (teruah) they shall sound (yetkau) for their journeys. But when you gather together the congregation, you shall sound a long blast (tetkau) but not a short blast (tariyu). Numbers 10:6-8



According to the Talmudic passage, the Rabbis established a requirement to sound the *Tekiya*, *Teruah*, and *Tekiya* in that specific order, repeating this entire sequence three times.

**Tekiya – Teruah – Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Teruah – Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Teruah – Tekiya**

While the long, steady blast of the *Tekiya* was universally understood, the Sages of the Talmud debated the precise nature of the broken *Teruah* sound.

One opinion defined it as three broken, sigh-like notes known as *Shevarim*.

A second opinion identified it as at least nine short, rapid bursts, which retained the name *Teruah*.

A third possibility suggested the true sound was a combination of both—a sighing moan followed by rapid sobbing.

To account for all these interpretations and ensure the biblical obligation is met, Jewish practice evolved to sound each of these variations, always placing a *Tekiya* before and after the middle blast. This resulting sequence, which includes the three distinct types of broken sounds, is repeated to reach a total of at least 30 blasts during the primary service.

**Tekiya – Shevarim – Teruah - Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Shevarim – Teruah - Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Shevarim – Teruah – Tekiya**

**Tekiya – Shevarim - Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Shevarim - Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Shevarim – Tekiya**

**Tekiya – Teruah – Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Teruah - Tekiya**  
**Tekiya – Teruah – Tekiya Gedola**

The final Tekiya is prolonged (called Tekiya Gedolah, the “great blast”). This last blast recalls the verse from Isaiah, “*And on that day a great ram’s horn shall be sounded*” (Isaiah 27:13).

Each blast has its own meaning:

**Tekiah** the long, steady note, like a royal trumpet announcing the King.

**Shevarim** three broken notes, like a cry from the heart, reminding us of our need for mercy.

**Teruah** nine short, urgent blasts, like an alarm clock for the soul, shaking us from our slumber.

Together, these calls tell our story: our God reigns, we are broken, and yet He calls us to wake up and walk in His redemption.

And as followers of Yeshua, the sound of the shofar carries even deeper meaning. It not only points back to what God has done, but forward to what He will do. Paul reminds us:

*“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet (SHOFAR) of God”* **1 Thessalonians 4:16**

Every Rosh Hashanah is like a rehearsal for that great day when Messiah returns. The shofar now is just a shadow, a foretaste of that final trumpet that will announce the King of Kings.

But the Shofar isn’t just about prophecy and the future. It’s about now. It’s about softening our hearts, laying down grudges, letting go of pride, and making space for God’s Spirit to move. It’s His gentle (and sometimes not-so-gentle) way of saying, “Don’t drift. Don’t grow cold. Come closer. I’m speaking — are you listening?”

The prophet Joel put it this way:

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm in My holy mountain! Let all who live in the land tremble*

*e, for the day of the Lord is coming”* Joel 2:1



The Jewish New Year – ‘Rosh Hashanah’ (‘Head of the Year’) – is the first of the Feasts of the fall. In the Bible it is called the Feast of Trumpets, Leviticus 23:24, Numbers 29:1.

The meaning of New Year was not applied to this Feast until at least the second century A.D., more than 1500 years after the institution of the holiday.

It is the ‘Yom HaShofar’ (a shofar is a ‘ram’s horn trumpet’), the day of the blowing of the shofar, the *Iom Teruah*, the Day of Blowing.

For the Jewish people this is the beginning of the period of the ‘10 awesome days’. It starts with the day of the New Moon, a day of darkness that sets in with a moonless night.

The beginning of a time of meditation, of self-scrutiny, of prayers, of hours spent in the synagogue.

To plead with God. To look at all the wrongdoings and trespasses. To ask for forgiveness.

Maybe the Lord will be merciful and add another year to one’s life. Maybe one will not be scratched out of God’s Book of Life.

Orthodox Jews sometimes prepare for the 10 awesome days that start with ‘Yom HaShofar’ by reading every day of the previous month Psalm 27.

Rosh Hashanah shares many rituals with Shabbat (candle lighting, festive meals, no creative work), but it’s also a unique festival with distinct practices like blowing the *shofar* and special prayers, and when it *falls on* Shabbat, some rituals (like *shofar* blowing) are modified or skipped to honor both holy days. It’s treated as a major holiday (*Yom Tov*), aligning with Shabbat’s sanctity but also having its own special liturgy and symbolism.

There are many wonderful customs, symbols, and traditions associated with [Rosh HaShanah](#), the Jewish New Year, a time of prayer, self-reflection and repentance.

Preparation for both Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur (the “Day of Atonement”) customarily begins a full month before the holidays themselves, with the entire Hebrew month of Elul

dedicated to reflecting on the past year, and preparing to improving ourselves, our communities, and our world in the coming year.



Elul is the Hebrew month that precedes the High Holidays ([Rosh HaShanah](#) and [Yom Kippur](#)).

Some say that the Hebrew letters that comprise the word Elul – *aleph, lamed, vav, lamed* – are an acronym for “*Ani l’dodi v’dodi li*,” a verse from Song of Songs that means “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”

Most often interpreted as a dialogue of love poetry, the phrase also reflects the love between God and the Jewish people.

This is especially pertinent during this season as we assess our actions and behaviors during the past year while hoping for blessings in the coming year.

Several customs during the month of Elul are designed to remind us of the liturgical season and help us prepare ourselves and our souls for the upcoming High Holidays.

So how is Rosh Hashanah celebrated

Rosh Hashanah is celebrated in both the synagogue and the home, with key rituals like the special prayers and the central shofar-blowing occurring in synagogue, while festive meals, symbolic foods (apples, honey, round challah), and family reflection happen at home, creating a blend of communal worship and private observance.

The central theme in the synagogue is repentance and the crowning of God as King.

Hearing the sounding of the ram’s horn is the most iconic ritual. Typically, 100 blasts are sounded each day to serve as a spiritual “wake-up call”.

Services are significantly longer than standard services and use a special prayerbook called a *machzor*. It is traditional for many to wear white to symbolize purity and renewal.

Many Jews attend extended synagogue services, especially for the unique morning liturgy and shofar blasts

First and foremost, nearly every prayer and worship service of Rosh Hashanah is characterized by a special *nusah*, or body of musical themes and melodies. Both evocative and celebratory, the music of Rosh Hashanah is an occasion for great operatic innovation and displays of cantorial virtuosity.

The silent, standing prayers — called Amidah prayers — of Rosh Hashanah are filled with numerous piyyutim, or religious poems, written and interpolated into the services over the span of centuries.



Most of these poems emphasize the awesome nature of the coronation of God as king and speak of the inadequacy and terror of mere human beings in approaching God in prayer and praise.

In addition, all of the Amidah prayers include entreaties to God to remember and inscribe the Jewish people in the book of life. In the rabbinic imagination, God was described as a heavenly scribe, recording all of the deeds of human beings and diligently writing them down in various heavenly archives: the book of life, the book of remembrance, the book of livelihood, the book of merit, and so on. On Rosh Hashanah, God records our deeds and on Yom Kippur God judges our spiritual fate for the coming year. Therefore, the Days of

Awe are a time when all life on earth is subjected to God's review and judgment.

Because Rosh Hashanah is a coronation of God as king of the universe, one of the most famous and familiar prayers of this season is Avinu Malkeinu ("Our Father, Our King").

Consisting of 20 lines of entreaties asking God to forgive our sins, to help us achieve repentance for our transgressions, to remember us favorably, and so on, it concludes with a haunting congregational melody in which the community sings

"Our Father, Our King, graciously answer us, although we are without merit. Deal with us charitably, and lovingly save us."

The most well known and beloved of Rosh Hashanah synagogue observances is the sounding of the ram's horn, the Shofar, to herald the beginning of the new Jewish year.

The Torah describes Rosh Hashanah as "a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts."

Several blessings are recited before the blowing of the shofar,



ברוך אתה אדני אלהינו מלך ה'  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לִשְׁמֹעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, עוֹלָם

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Haolam  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lishmo'a kol shofar*

**"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who has sanctified us with His commandments and  
commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar,"**

then approximately 100 blasts are sounded throughout the rest of the worship services.



The blasts of the shofar are divided into three kinds of blasts: *tekiah*, one long sounding; *shevarim*, three somewhat shorter soundings equal in length to one *tekiah*; and finally, *teruah*, a series of at least nine staccato notes, also equal in length to one *tekiah* blast.

Among the various reasons given for the blowing of the shofar is that the coronation of kings in ancient times was supposedly marked with the sounding of a shofar.

In addition, because Rosh Hashanah is also a time of spiritual introspection and repentance, the shofar essentially calls us back to our senses and serves to

remind us to mend our ways.

Traditionally, the shofar is blown each morning (except on [Shabbat](#)) from the first day of Elul until the day before [Rosh HaShanah](#). Its sound is intended to awaken the soul and kick start the spiritual accounting that happens throughout the month.

In some congregations, the shofar is sounded at the opening of each *Kabbala Shabbat* service during Elul. **Kabbalat Shabbat** ([קבלת שבת](#), "Welcoming the Shabbat") is a joyful series of psalms, hymns, and prayers recited at the beginning of Friday night synagogue services to usher in the holy Sabbath



As the High Holidays approach, Jews gather for Selichot, a cycle of prayers and poems designed to stir the soul toward repentance.

These services focus on God's compassion, specifically the 13 Attributes of Mercy revealed to Moses.

A particularly moving service occurs late on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah, where worshippers often gather by candlelight to begin their final week of spiritual preparation.

It is customary to read Psalm 27 each day from the beginning of Elul through Hoshana Rabbah, the last day of [Sukkot](#).

<sup>1</sup> **The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?**

<sup>2</sup> **When the wicked advance against me to devour<sup>[a]</sup> me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.**

<sup>3</sup> **Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.**

<sup>4</sup> **One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.**

<sup>5</sup> For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.



<sup>6</sup> Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.

<sup>8</sup> My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek.

<sup>9</sup> Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.

<sup>10</sup> Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

<sup>12</sup> Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

<sup>13</sup> I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

<sup>14</sup> Wait for the LORD, be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.



In Jewish tradition, visiting the graves of loved ones and the righteous during the month of Elul serves as a profound period of spiritual preparation before Rosh Hashanah.

This practice, known as *Kever Avot*, provides a space for deep introspection (*cheshbon nefesh*), where the reminder of mortality encourages a personal accounting of one's life.

Beyond personal reflection, these visits strengthen a sense of continuity with one's heritage and ancestors.

During these visits, specific rituals and prayers are observed to honor the deceased and seek spiritual elevation.

It is common to recite various Psalms, particularly Psalm 91 or specific verses from Psalm 119 that correspond to the Hebrew letters of the departed's name.

The *El Malei Rachamim* prayer is often chanted to seek peace for the soul, and visitors frequently give *tzedakah* (charity) at the cemetery as an act of merit.

Before leaving, a small stone or pebble is traditionally placed on the grave marker to signify that the deceased has been remembered and that the grave has been attended to by the living.

While these visits can occur throughout the month of Elul, timing is often guided by specific communal and religious protocols.



Many communities hold formal *Kever Avot* services, with the eve of Rosh Hashanah and the days leading into Yom Kippur being the most traditional times for attendance.

However, visits are generally avoided on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, and major joyous holidays.

While some traditions limit visits to a grave during the first year of mourning, Elul is widely considered an appropriate exception to this rule, allowing for spiritual connection regardless of the timing of the passing.

## Rosh Hashanah at Home

### The Candles

Rosh Hashanah candle lighting is *similar* to Shabbat but with key differences: both involve blessings and ushering in the holy day, but Rosh Hashanah (and other holidays) permits *transferring* fire from a pre-existing flame (like a match or gas stove) on the holiday itself, whereas Shabbat forbids *creating* a new flame, so candles are lit *before* sunset, often with a special blessing for Shabbat, while Rosh Hashanah uses a "festival" blessing.

As with every major Jewish holiday, the women of the house light the candles on each evening of Rosh Hashanah and recite the appropriate blessings.

*Barukh attah adonai, eloheinu, melekh ha-olam,  
asher kidd'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu l'hadlik neir shel yom tov.*

טוב יום של נר להדליק ואננו תיובמנו קדשנו אשר העולם מלך אליהינו ה' אתה ברוך.

Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us to kindle the festival lamp.

When lighting on Friday evening, be sure to light well before sunset, and on the following night, be sure night has fallen before you light. On the second night (or if lighting after nightfall on the first night), make sure to use an existing flame, while you say the Shehecheyanu blessing.

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-noi E-loi-hei-nu  
Me-lech ha-o-lam she-he-che-ya-nu v'ki-yi-ma-nu  
vi-hi-gi-ya-nu liz-man ha-zeh.

הַיְזָה לְזִמְנֵנוּ וְהַגִּיעֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ שְׁחַחֲנוּ לְסִמְחָתוֹ מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ הָ אֵתָהּ בְּרוּךְ

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the  
Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and  
enabled us to reach this occasion.

## Rosh Hashanah Seder

One of the most joyous aspects of Rosh Hashanah is the festive meals that families and friends come together after synagogue.

It's traditional to have special dinners and lunches on both days of the holiday. These don't have to be elaborate, but it is customary to set a nice table with a tablecloth, use good dishes, and dress up for the Rosh Hashanah meals.

As on other Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah meals feature Kiddush over wine or grape juice and two loaves of challah bread. (On Rosh Hashanah it's customary to use round challah instead of braided loaves: this symbolizes the circle of life and the beginning of the Jewish year.)

Instead of dipping our challah into salt, as on Shabbat, on Rosh Hashanah we dip it into honey to signify a sweet new year.

## Traditional Rosh Hashanah Foods



Eating apples dipped in honey is a time-honored Rosh Hashanah practice: the sweetness of fruit and honey is said to portend a sweet new year.

Apples and honey are only two of many *simanim*, or foods that help evoke our hopes and dreams for the coming year. There's a plethora of other auspicious food and it can be fun to try. These unusual foods and blessings add a new dimension to our family feasts and gets us all thinking about what we wish for in the new year.

Apples and Honey symbolize sweetness. First it's traditional to recite the blessing over apples:

*Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree. Then after eating the apple: May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that You renew for us a good and a sweet new year.*



Fish traditionally was seen as a Jewish holiday delicacy.

This is another *siman*; it's customary to eat fish then recite: *May it be Your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.*

Fish heads might seem a little off-putting but many kosher grocery stores sell or give them away just for this. Just as Rosh Hashanah is literally the “head” of the year, so too fish heads remind us that we’re at the beginning,

with an entire new year and blank slate before us.

It recalls God’s promise that if we keep the commandments, we will triumph over our enemies: “God shall place you as a head and not as a tail; you shall be only above and you shall not be below – if you hearken to the commandments of Hashem, Your God” (Deuteronomy 28:13).



**Pomegranates** are a common theme in Jewish art and culture. In ancient times, the Cohanim who worked in the Temple in Jerusalem used to wear beautiful white robes with golden pomegranates and bells lining the hems.

That’s because pomegranates are full of seeds – some say 613, the same number of mitzvot that are in the Torah.

This juicy fruit reminds of the many mitzvot that we can do. [It’s traditional to eat some pomegranate](#) and say: *May it be Your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that our merits increase as (the seeds of) a pomegranate.*

These and the [blessings for other simanim](#) can be found in Jewish prayer books and Rosh Hashanah *machzorim* (special prayer books for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur).



One of the most beautiful Rosh Hashanah customs doesn’t take place in a synagogue or even at home . On the first day of the holiday after lunch, Jews walk to a nearby body of water (a stream or pond will do) and symbolically cast away their sins from the previous year.

The custom of Tashlich began in Medieval times. There are a number of mystical explanations for this beautiful ceremony, including recalling the ancient Kings of Israel, who were crowned next to bodies of water. We think of them now on Rosh Hashanah when we contemplate God as the “King” over the world. In traditional Jewish thought water is said to represent the beauty of the Torah. As we stand

next to ponds or streams, we recall this beautiful image: just as water is necessary to nourish our bodies, Torah is needed to nourish our souls.

The brief *Tashlich* ceremony is contained in Rosh Hashanah *machzorim* (prayer books).

# Rosh Hashanah Happy New Year

## Yeshua in the Feast of the Trumpets



The biblical feasts of Israel, outlined primarily in Leviticus 23, function as divinely appointed times (*moedim*) that structure Israel's worship and sacred calendar.

These feasts are not merely historical commemorations but theological signposts embedded within redemptive history.

Yeshua Himself affirmed this continuity when He declared, **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”** (Matthew 5:17).

Among these feasts, the Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*) stands as one of the most prophetically charged. Unlike Passover or Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets is marked not by a narrative explanation but by proclamation—specifically, the sounding of the trumpet.

The New Testament repeatedly associates trumpet imagery with resurrection, judgment, kingship, and the return of the Messiah.

Yeshua taught that **“he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds”** (Matthew 24:31).

In Scripture, the “trumpet” often symbolizes God's powerful, authoritative voice,



**At Mount Sinai, the trumpet announces the presence of God:**

**“On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightning's and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled”** (Exodus 19:16).

The trumpet grows louder as God descends (Exodus 19:19), emphasizing divine authority. The author of Hebrews reflects on this event:

**For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them”** (Hebrews 12:18–19).

Yet believers in Yeshua approach God through a better covenant:

**“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... and to Yeshua, the mediator of a new covenant”** (Hebrews 12:22, 24).

In Revelation, Yeshua Himself speaks with trumpet-like authority:

**“I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet”** (Revelation 1:10).



### **The Trumpet and Kingship**

Trumpets were used to proclaim kings. At Solomon's anointing:

**“Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’”**  
(1 Kings 1:34).

This royal imagery is fulfilled in Yeshua. Scripture declares:

**“On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords”** (Revelation 19:16).

Yeshua directly associates trumpets with His royal return:

**“Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man... and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call”** (Matthew 24:30–31).

Paul confirms Christ's reigning authority:

**“For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet”** (1 Corinthians 15:25).

### **The Trumpet and Resurrection**



The clearest New Testament connection between Christ and the Feast of Trumpets appears in Paul's resurrection teaching:

**“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. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed”** (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

Paul further writes:

**“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first”** (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Yeshua affirmed His authority over resurrection:

**“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out”** (John 5:28–29).

### **Judgment and Repentance in Yeshua**

Jewish tradition associates the Feast of Trumpets with judgment. The New Testament affirms that judgment is entrusted to Christ:



**“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son”** (John 5:22).

Peter proclaims:

**“He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead”** (Acts 10:42).

Yet judgment is paired with mercy. At Pentecost, Peter declares: **“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yeshua for the forgiveness of your sins”** (Acts 2:38).

For believers, the trumpet does not announce condemnation:

**“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Yeshua”** (Romans 8:1).



### **Trumpets in Revelation and the Reign of Christ**

Revelation intensifies trumpet imagery through the seven trumpet judgments. The culmination is announced:

**“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever”** (Revelation 11:15).

This declaration aligns with the Feast of Trumpets as an announcement of divine kingship and the consummation of God’s redemptive plan.

## **The Feast of Trumpets and the Church**

The New Testament repeatedly exhorts believers to live in expectation of Christ's return:

**"Wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Yeshua who delivers us from the wrath to come"** (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

James urges readiness:

**"You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand"** (James 5:8).

Paul warns: **"If even lifeless instruments... do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"** (1 Corinthians 14:7–8).

The church, like the trumpet, must proclaim Yeshua clearly.

Paul teaches that Christ fulfills the feasts typologically:

**"For Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed"** (1 Corinthians 5:7).

**"But in fact Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"** (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Concerning the feasts as a whole:

**"These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Yeshua" (Colossians 2:16–17).**

The Feast of Trumpets belongs to what is "to come," pointing toward the return of the Messiah and the final restoration of all things.

The Feast of the Trumpets finds its fullest meaning in Yeshua. What was once a sacred proclamation in Israel becomes, in the New Testament, the announcement of resurrection, judgment, and the visible reign of the risen King.

As Scripture promises:

**"For the Lord himself will descend... with the sound of the trumpet of God"** (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

For believers, this trumpet is not a sound of fear but of triumph. The Feast of Trumpets ultimately directs attention to Messiah—the One who was crucified, raised, and will return in glory.



CELEBRATING THE  
**DAY OF  
ATONEMENT**



YOM KIPPUR

A DAY OF  
REPENTANCE,  
FORGIVENESS  
AND RESTORATION

## Leviticus 26: 27-32

**27**But on the tenth of this seventh month, it is a day of atonement, it shall be a holy occasion for you; you shall afflict yourselves, and you shall offer up a fire offering to the Lord.

**28**You shall not perform any work on that very day, for it is a day of atonement, for you to gain atonement before the Lord, your God.

**29**For any person who will not be afflicted on that very day, shall be cut off from its people.

**30**And any person who performs any work on that very day I will destroy that person from amidst its people.

**31**You shall not perform any work. [This is] an eternal statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

**32**It is a complete day of rest for you, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe your rest day.

**כז**אך בעשור לחדש השביעי הזה יום  
הכפרים הוא מקרא-קדש יהיה לכם  
ועניתם את-נפשותיכם והקרבתם אשה  
ל'ה':

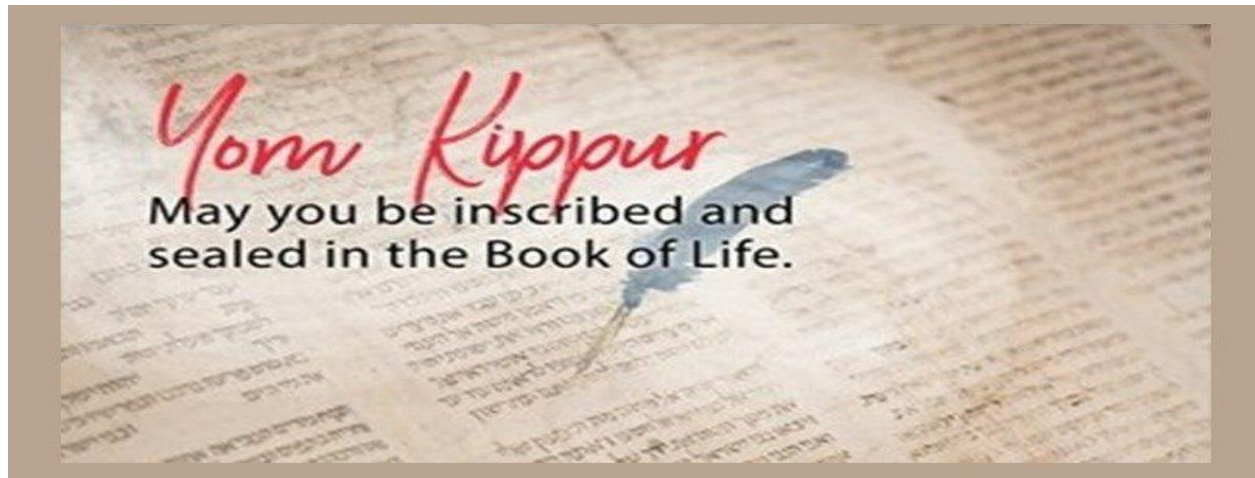
**כח**וכל-מלאכה לא תעשו בעצם היום הזה  
כי יום כפרים הוא לכפר עליכם לפני ה'ה'  
אלהיכם:

**כט**כי כל-הנפש אשר לא-תענה בעצם  
היום הזה ונקרתה מעמיה:

**ל**וכל-הנפש אשר תעשה כל-מלאכה  
בעצם היום הזה והאבדתי את-הנפש  
ההוא מקרב עמה:

**לא**כל-מלאכה לא תעשו חקת עולם  
לדוריכם בכל משבתיכם:

**לב**שבת שבתון הוא לכם ועניתם  
את-נפשותיכם בתשעה לחדש בערב  
מערב עד-ערב תשבתו שבתכם:



Yom Kippur is preceded by the 10 **Days of Awe** (Hebrew: *Yamim Noraim*) . Also known as the **Ten Days of Repentance**, a sacred time dedicated to introspection, prayer, and seeking forgiveness

It refers to the ten-day period in the Jewish calendar beginning with **Rosh Hashanah** (the Jewish New Year) and ending with **Yom Kippur** (the Day of Atonement).

According to Jewish tradition, the period begins on **Rosh Hashanah** when God opens the "Book of Life" to evaluate the actions of all individuals.



While initial inscriptions are made on the New Year, the final verdict is not "sealed" until the conclusion of **Yom Kippur**.

This ten-day window serves as a spiritual trial, offering a crucial opportunity for individuals to alter a difficult decree through sincere behavioral changes and prayer.

Jewish tradition teaches that on Rosh Hashanah, God opens the "Book of Life" to judge all human deeds.

Yom Kippur (Hebrew: יום הכיפורים or יום קפור), Also known as Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance.

For nearly 26 hours we "afflict our souls": we abstain from food and drink, do not wash or apply lotions or creams, do not wear leather footwear, and abstain from marital relations.

Instead, we spend the day in synagogue, praying for forgiveness.

### **A Brief History of Yom Kippur**

Yom Kippur is closely connected to **Mount Sinai** through the biblical story of **forgiveness after the sin of the Golden Calf**. This connection explains why Yom Kippur became a day of atonement and divine mercy.

After the Israelites left Egypt, Moses went up **Mount Sinai** to receive the Torah from God (Exodus 19–20).



While Moses was on the mountain for forty days, the people sinned by creating and worshiping the **Golden Calf** (Exodus 32:1–6).

When Moses came down and saw this, he broke the first set of stone tablets, symbolizing the broken covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 32:19).

<sup>19</sup> When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

Moses then returned to Mount Sinai to plead with God to forgive the people.

<sup>30</sup> The next day Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

<sup>31</sup> So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.

<sup>32</sup> But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” (Exodus 32:30–32).

God ultimately agreed to forgive Israel and commanded Moses to carve a **second set of tablets**.

A key verse associated with this moment is when Moses asks God for forgiveness, and God responds with compassion and mercy (Exodus 34:6–7). These verses are still central to Yom Kippur prayers today.

<sup>6</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Exodus 34:6-7

According to Jewish tradition, Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the second tablets on the **10th day of the month of Tishrei**, the date that later became **Yom Kippur** (Exodus 34:1, 29).

Because of this, Yom Kippur came to be understood as a permanent annual day of atonement and reconciliation between God and the Jewish people.

Moses descended from Mount Sinai on the 10th of Tishrei (Yom Kippur) with the second set of Tablets, signifying that God had forgiven the Israelites for the sin of the Golden Calf.

On the very next morning, 11<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei Moses assembled the entire community to transmit the detailed instructions for the Tabernacle's construction (Exodus 35).

The command to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is inextricably linked to **Yom Kippur** through the historical timing of its delivery and its theological role as a symbol of divine forgiveness.

The relationship between Yom Kippur and the Tabernacle centers on the transition from forgiveness to residency as well as the necessity of maintaining a holy environment for the Divine Presence.

In the biblical context, the Tabernacle was the physical residence of God (the *Shekhinah*) among the Israelites.

However, the accumulation of the people's sins and ritual impurities was viewed as a spiritual "pollution" that contaminated the sanctuary.



If the Tabernacle remained defiled, God's presence could no longer dwell within it.

Therefore, the transition from forgiveness to residency required a systematic ritual of purgation to ensure that the sanctuary remained a fit habitation for the Divine.

Yom Kippur served as the "spiritual spring cleaning" required to preserve this residency. The rituals described in Leviticus 16 focus heavily on the High

Priest entering the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat (the *Kapporet*).

This act was not merely about personal absolution for individuals; it was specifically designed to "cleanse the sanctuary" of the impurities of the people.

By removing these spiritual contaminants, the High Priest effectively cleared the obstacles that would otherwise force the Divine Presence to depart from the camp.

Consequently, the Day of Atonement became the annual mechanism that protected that relationship, ensuring that the community stayed "clean" enough to keep God in their midst.

While the spiritual foundations of **Yom Kippur** are often traced back to linguistic roots and narrative parallels in the Book of Genesis, the formal designation "**Yom Ha-Kippurim**" (Day of Atonements) first appears in the Book of Leviticus.

Specifically detailed in chapters 16 and 23, the Torah establishes this day as a mandatory annual fast and a "Sabbath of Sabbaths".

It serves as a solemn period of "self-denial" and spiritual cleansing, during which the High Priest performs intricate rituals within the **Tabernacle**—including entering the Holy of Holies—to atone for the collective sins of the nation.

Leviticus chapter 16 provides a detailed description of the Day of Atonement and the rituals performed by the High Priest.

According to this chapter, Yom Kippur was the one day each year when the High Priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for himself, his household, and the entire nation of Israel (Leviticus 16:2–3).



<sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

<sup>3</sup> "This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering<sup>[a]</sup> and a ram for a burnt offering.

One of the most well-known rituals described in Leviticus 16 involves two goats.

In the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) described in Leviticus 16, the two goats functioned together as a singular sin offering to address the totality of the nation's guilt. The process began with the high priest casting lots to determine the destiny of each animal: one "for the Lord" and one "for Azazel."



The first goat was sacrificed as a blood offering, and its blood was brought into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle upon the Mercy Seat. This act represented propitiation, where the legal penalty of death for sin was paid to satisfy divine justice and purify the sanctuary.

The second goat, known as the scapegoat, remained alive to represent the removal of sin from the community. The high priest would lay both hands on its head and confess all the iniquities and transgressions of the people, symbolically transferring their guilt onto the animal. This goat was then led away by a designated man into a remote wilderness or "land of forgetfulness," never to return. This act represented expiation, visually demonstrating that the people's sins had been carried far away from God's presence. Together, the two goats illustrated the complete process of atonement—one paying the price for sin and the other removing the presence and stain of that sin from the people.

(Leviticus 16:7–10, 20–22). This ritual emphasized the removal of sin from the community and highlighted the idea that wrongdoing could be acknowledged and cleansed.

Additional commandments concerning Yom Kippur appear in Leviticus 23, which describes the day as a sacred assembly and a time to “afflict your souls” (Leviticus 23:27).

<sup>27</sup>Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

This phrase has traditionally been understood by Jewish tradition to mean fasting.

The text also strictly forbids work, reinforcing the seriousness and sanctity of the day (Leviticus 23:28–32).

Together, these passages establish Yom Kippur as a day focused on atonement, humility, and spiritual purification.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, Rabbinic Judaism reshaped Yom Kippur by reinterpreting scripture.

The rabbis emphasized verses that highlighted repentance and moral behavior over sacrifice.

For example, the prophet Hosea taught that sincere words of repentance could replace offerings: “We will offer the words of our lips instead of bulls” (Hosea 14:3). This idea supported the transition from Temple rituals to prayer.

Another key prophetic passage comes from Isaiah, which challenges the idea that fasting alone is sufficient.

Isaiah teaches that true repentance requires ethical behavior, justice, and care for others (Isaiah 1:16–17; Isaiah 58:5–7).

These verses strongly influenced rabbinic teachings about Yom Kippur, reinforcing the belief that God values moral transformation more than ritual alone.

The concept of *teshuvah*, or repentance, became central to Yom Kippur observance.

This idea is rooted in Deuteronomy, which teaches that people can return to God through sincere repentance and obedience (Deuteronomy 30:1–3).

Rabbinic tradition further developed this concept, teaching that Yom Kippur atones for sins between a person and God, but not for sins against other people unless forgiveness is first sought.

The confessional prayers recited on Yom Kippur, such as the *Vidui*, are based on biblical models of communal confession.

In the book of Nehemiah, the people of Israel publicly confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors as part of national repentance (Nehemiah 9:1–3). This scriptural precedent shaped the collective language used in Yom Kippur prayers.

### **So how do the Jewish People Celebrate Yom Kippur**

The day before Yom Kippur is regarded as a festive holiday in its own right, functioning as a bridge between the physical world and the intense spirituality of the coming fast.

The morning begins with rituals of purification and charity, most notably **Kapparot**,

Kapparot is a traditional Jewish atonement ritual performed during the Ten Days of Repentance, most commonly on the day preceding Yom Kippur. Its name derives from the Hebrew word for "atonement," and the ceremony is intended to stir a person to deep repentance by witnessing a symbolic substitute for their own fate.

While its exact origins are unclear—as it is not mentioned in the Torah or Talmud—it was first documented by Babylonian scholars in the 9th century and eventually became a widespread custom in various Jewish communities.



The ritual traditionally involves circling a live chicken above one's head three times while reciting specific prayers from the book of Isaiah, Psalms, and Job.

Men typically use a rooster and women a hen, with the practitioner declaring, "This is my exchange, this is my substitute, this is my atonement".

Following the ceremony, the chicken is slaughtered according to Jewish law (*halakha*) and either the meat or its monetary value is donated to the poor to feed those in need.

In modern times, many individuals and communities use money instead of live animals due to concerns over animal welfare and urban logistics. When performing Kapparot with money, the practitioner waves a sum of cash—often \$18 or a similar symbolic amount—around their head while reciting the same prayers, substituting the word "money" for "chicken". This money is then placed in a charity (*tzedakah*) box to support charitable causes, ensuring the core themes of justice and compassion remain central to the pre-holiday preparation.

Following this, many individuals immerse in a **Mikvah**, or ritual bath, to achieve spiritual purity and undergo a symbolic "rebirth" that washes away the impurities of the past year.



**Mikveh** or **mikvah** (Hebrew: מִקְוֶה / מִקְוָה), is a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism to achieve ritual purity.

Most forms of ritual impurity can be purified through immersion in any natural collection of water.

The *mikveh* provides a bathing facility that remains in contact with a natural source of water.

The Mishna (Jewish code of law) describes in elaborate detail the requirements for ritually proper

water and for the quantity of water required for ritual cleansing.

There is supposed to be no barrier between the person immersing and the water. The person should be wearing no clothes, jewelry, makeup, nail polish, fake nails, or grooming products on the hair or skin.

For more observant Jewish women, an attendant will assure these requirements are met. Showering or bathing and carefully checking the whole body is, therefore, part of the religious requirements before entering the water of a Mikveh.

Once prepared, the Mikveh attendant will walk with the person to the mikveh. They will be in the room while the person emerges themselves in the pool. All parts of the body must be submerged in the water and blessings recited.

The Sephardic custom is to recite the blessing first and then submerge completely for a moment or two. Ashkenazic Jews usually submerge once, then recite the blessing, and then submerge either one or two more times. Many mikva'ot provide the text.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על הטבילה

**Barukh atah Adonai Elohenu melek ha'olam  
asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al ha'tevillah.**

Blessed are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us concerning the immersion.

After you have blessed and immersed, one can spend some time in the mikveh for personal reflection or prayer.-

Finally, it is customary to "beg" for a piece of **Lekach** (honey cake) from others; this humble request is intended to satisfy any divine decree that one must be a "recipient" of charity during the coming year, thereby ensuring the year ahead is sweet and prosperous



The tradition is based on the belief that if a person has been divinely decreed to become a "recipient" of charity or help in the coming year, this humble request for cake serves to fulfill that requirement [3]. By asking for a small, sweet gift now, the individual seeks to satisfy the decree of dependency in a symbolic way, thereby avoiding the need to ask for basic necessities or financial assistance later.

Because the request involves honey cake, it represents the hope that all divine provisions in the following year will be pleasant and

"sweet" rather than bitter or difficult.

It serves as a physical prayer that one's sustenance should come directly from God's "full, open, holy, and generous hand," ensuring that any help received throughout the year is given with dignity.



Following the Kapparot, **Mikvah** and **asking for Lekach** Two meals are eaten, one in the morning, or early afternoon, and one, the "separation meal," just prior to the onset of Yom Kippur. These meals are festive affairs, and we dip the challah in honey.

The reason why eating on the ninth is considered so great a deed that it is equivalent to having fasted, is that by doing so, we show our joy that the time for our

atonement has arrived. By extension we thus show that we are concerned with our sins.

The festive meal on Erev Yom Kippur "**separation meal**," provides us with the physical strength needed on Yom Kippur to focus ourselves on prayer, supplication, and reflection that will lead us to teshuvah.

**Teshuvah** (תשובה) is a Hebrew term meaning "return," central to Judaism, often translated as repentance but more accurately describing a spiritual process of returning to God or one's true self by rectifying wrongs, with key stages including regret, confession, and resolving not to repeat the sin, especially significant during the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur)

Traditionally the meal includes light, easy-to-digest foods like chicken and soup. Many eat Kreplach (meat-filled dumplings in soup); the dough symbolizes kindness "covering" the meat, which symbolizes severity. Challah is often dipped in honey for sweetness.

One must stop eating prior to candle-lighting time.

Immediately before the fast begins, it is customary for parents to bless their children.



#### BLESSING HISTORICALLY RECITED FOR GIRLS

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה, כְּרִבְקָה, כְּרָחֵל, וְכֵלָאָה.

*Y'simeich Elohim k'Sarah, k'Rivkah, k'Rachel, k'Leah.*

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.



#### BLESSING HISTORICALLY RECITED FOR BOYS

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּעִפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה.

*Y'simcha Elohim k'Efrayim v'chi-Menasheh.*

May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh.



All women and girls, light candles at least 18 minutes before sunset –and recite the following blessings:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל  
יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִי

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the Yom Kippur light.

In Jewish tradition, particularly during the High Holidays, wearing a white robe known as a **kittel** serves as a profound symbolic bridge between the human and the divine.

On **Yom Kippur**, as individuals abstain from physical needs like eating and drinking, they strive to transcend their earthly nature and reach a state of spiritual purity.

By donning this simple white garment, practitioners seek to emulate the ministering **angels**, who are traditionally viewed as being entirely spiritual and free from sin.

In the visions of **Ezekiel** (9:2) and **Daniel** (10:5, 12:6), angels are explicitly described as being "clothed in linen". By choosing this fabric, the wearer aligns themselves with these biblical depictions of purity and holiness, reinforcing their intent to stand before God with a clean and submissive heart.

Beyond its angelic associations, the kittel carries a solemn reminder of mortality.

Ultimately, the white linen kittel represents a hope for the soul to be cleansed, echoing the biblical promise that "sins shall be made as white as snow".

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Isaiah 1:8

Wearing a white kittel today honors this ancient practice of approaching God with simplicity and holiness. On [Yom Kippur](#), the tallit (prayer shawl) is worn for all the prayer services.

So now it's time to go to the synagogue



As the sun sets and Yom Kippur begins, people gather in synagogues for a day of reflection, prayer, and atonement.

The Torah scrolls are all removed from the Ark and the procession of scrolls moves towards the bimah (reading table) while everyone kisses and embraces the passing Torahs.

After requesting permission, from both the heavenly and earthly courts, to "pray with the transgressors," the cantor begins the Kol Nidre.

He chants the Kol Nidre three times, each time on a slightly higher note. The congregation reads along with the cantor, in an undertone.

The Kol Nidre is followed by a few brief verses and prayers and culminates with the Shehecheyanu blessing, in which we thank God for "granting us life, sustaining us, and allowing us to reach this occasion."

This blessing is recited in honor of every holiday, but usually following the night's *kiddush*.

On Yom Kippur, the blessing was incorporated as part of the prayers. Women and girls do not recite this blessing with the congregation—as they have already recited it after lighting the holiday candles.

In most congregations, at this point the rabbi delivers a sermon. In many congregations, this sermon is accompanied by an appeal—for charity has the power to evoke heavenly mercy.

The evening prayer service then commences.

During Yom Kippur, every time we say the second verse of the Shema, the “Baruch Shem” verse—“Blessed is the Name of the glory of Your kingship forever and ever”—it is proclaimed out loud. Throughout the year, this blessing is recited in an undertone, as it was “stolen” from the angels. On Yom Kippur, however, we are likened to angels, so we too, like the angels, can recite it out loud.

The special Yom Kippur Amidah (standing prayer) incorporates a lengthy confession of sins. This confession is recited silently, and with each sin that we confess, we lightly knock our chest—the domicile of the heart, the seat of our passions and impulses—with our fist.

The confession is later repeated, after the Amidah, together with the entire congregation. This double confession is repeated during all the day’s prayers, with the exception of the final Ne’ilah prayer.

The Amidah is followed by liturgy interspersed with the recitation of the verses ([Exodus 34:6–7](#))

**<sup>6</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”**

that allude to God’s Thirteen Attributes of Compassion:

The 13 Attributes of Mercy according to Kabbalah:

1. ל-א / G-d — mighty in compassion to give all creatures according to their need;
2. רַחוּם / *rachum* — merciful, that humankind may not be distressed;
3. וְחַנוּן / *ve’chanun* — and gracious if humankind is already in distress;
4. אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם / *erech apayim* — slow to anger; (once, to the righteous)
5. אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם / *erech apayim* — slow to anger; (repeated again for the wicked)
6. חֶסֶד-וָרֵב / *ve’rav chesed* — and plenteous in kindness;
7. וְאֵמֶת / *ve’emet* — and truth;
8. חֹסֵד נֹצֵר / *notzer chesed* — keeping kindness
9. לְאַלְפִים / *laalafim* — unto thousands;
10. עוֹן נֹשֵׂא / *noseh avon* — forgiving iniquity;
11. פֶּשַׁע / *vafeshah* — and transgression;
12. וְחַטָּאָה / *vechata’ah* — and sin;
13. וְנִקְיָה / *venakeh* — and pardoning.

**He preserves kindness for two thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and He cleanses.”**

The entire Kol Nidrei and evening service should take approximately two hours.

Many have the custom to recite the entire Book of Psalms after the evening service.

The joint morning and Musaf services occupy the bulk of the day (approximately six hours).

The morning service pretty much follows the order of the traditional Shabbat service.

The special Yom Kippur Amidah and confession is recited, followed again by songs and special Yom Kippur liturgy.

Two Torah scrolls are taken from the Ark, and from them we read about the special Yom Kippur service in the Holy Temple.

In many communities, the *aliyahs* are auctioned off to the highest bidders, with the monies raised earmarked for a charitable cause.

That statement describes a common Jewish communal practice, especially on high holidays like Yom Kippur, where the honor of being called up to the Torah (an **aliyah**) is auctioned off because it's highly sought after; the funds go to synagogue expenses or charities, generating income for the community while offering a spiritual 'ascent'.



The Torah reading is followed by the Yizkor service—traditionally preceded by the rabbi's homily.

The Yizkor service is followed by the Musaf service. The most prominent feature of this is the Avodah, a rather lengthy and detailed recounting of the Yom Kippur service in the Holy Temple, whose highlight was the high priest's

entry into the Holy of Holies.

During the course of the Avodah, on three occasions we relate how the high priest would pronounce God's ineffable name, and in response the assembled Jews would prostrate themselves on the ground.

When reaching these passages, we too prostrate ourselves on our hands and knees.

The Avodah concludes with a series of prayers in which we beseech God to restore the Temple service with the coming of Moshiach (Messiah)

Towards the end of Musaf, the *kohanim* (priests) administer the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24-26

It is a core Jewish prayer, recited by *Kohanim* (priests) during *Musaf* on Yom Kippur, blessing the people with

יְשֹׁא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְשִׁם לְךָ ; יֵאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ ; וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה  
שְׁלוֹם..

*Yevarechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha, Ya'er Adonai panav elecha v'yichunecha, Yisa Adonai panav elecha v'yasem lecha shalom.*

"May the LORD bless you and keep you; May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; May the LORD lift up His face upon you and give you peace,"

It's given from a platform (*duchan*) with hands raised, symbolizing God as the source of blessing, not the priests.

In most synagogues, the *Musaf* prayer is followed by a break, lasting between one and three hours.

*Minchah*, the afternoon prayer, is called for one or one and a half hours before sunset.

The service commences with the Torah reading, which speaks of the purity of Jewish life and warns us not to engage in immoral practices.

For the *haftorah* we read the entire book of Jonah, which contains a timely message on the importance of repentance and prayer.

The Yom Kippur *Amidah* is then followed by a few brief prayers. The entire *Minchah* service lasts approximately one hour.

Now, moments before sunset, in the waning hours of Yom Kippur, we reach the climax of the holiest day of the year, and we recite the *Ne'ilah* prayer.

*Ne'ilah* means "locking." The gates of heaven, which were open all day, will now be closed—with us on the inside.

During this prayer we have the ability to access the most essential level of our soul, the level that is in a state of absolute oneness with her Creator. The Holy Ark remains open for the duration of the entire prayer.

The *Amidah* is followed by a selection of prayers, and culminates with the cantor emphatically proclaiming the words of the *Shema*

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד

*Sh'ma Yisra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.*

“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is one!”

With intense concentration, the congregation repeats the verse.

The cantor then recites the “Baruch Shem” verse three times, again followed by the congregation.

Finally, with all his might the cantor proclaims seven times, “The Lord is God!” and again the congregation repeats after him. This is followed by the joyous proclamation,

בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם הַבָּאָה לְשָׁנָה

L'shanah Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim

**“Next Year in Jerusalem!”**

**The *shofaris* then sounded—one triumphant, long blast**

The *shofar* (ram’s horn) is then sounded—one triumphant, long blast, signifying the end of the holy day.



In Chabad synagogues, the shofar blast is preceded by the euphoric singing of “Napoleon’s March.”

The “Napoleon’s March” is a joyous, rhythmic Jewish folk melody, originally an 1812 French military tune, adopted by Chassidim to symbolize victory over spiritual adversaries (Satan), sung famously at the end of Yom Kippur after the Ne’ilah service, representing prayers accepted and a good

year.

The melody was embraced by the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, who transformed it into a spiritual anthem of triumph for the Jewish people.

At this point we are ecstatically confident that God has sealed us all for a wonderful year: a year of happiness, prosperity and health; the year when we will finally experience the long-awaited Redemption.

Before leaving synagogue, we pray the ordinary evening prayer and do Kiddush Levanah if practical.

## Yeshua in Yom Kippur:

In Messianic theology, Yom Kippur is viewed not merely as an annual ritual, but as a profound prophetic shadow of the work of Yeshua. The connection between the ancient levitical rites and their fulfillment is explored extensively in the Book of Hebrews, particularly through the lens of the heavenly Tabernacle and the prophetic imagery of Isaiah 53, where the temporal sacrifices of the earthly Tabernacle meet the eternal reality of the heavenly one.

Yom Kippur, instituted in **Leviticus 16**, confronts the problem of God's holiness dwelling among a sinful people.



**Leviticus 16** opens by stressing danger and restriction: after the death of Aaron's sons, God warns that the high priest may not enter the Holy of Holies "at any time" lest he die (Leviticus 16:1–2).

Only once a year may the high priest enter behind the veil, carrying blood to make atonement "because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins" (Leviticus 16:16).

Before representing the people, the priest must sacrifice for himself, underscoring the

imperfection of the mediator (Leviticus 16:6, 11).

He wears plain linen garments rather than his usual glory, symbolizing humility before God (Leviticus 16:4).

Central to the ritual is blood, which is sprinkled on and before the mercy seat (kapporet) atop the Ark of the Covenant (Leviticus 16:14–15).

Blood represents life offered in place of life (Leviticus 17:11), and its purpose is to cleanse the sanctuary from the pollution caused by Israel's sins.

Two goats embody complementary aspects of atonement. One is sacrificed "for the LORD," while over the second, the scapegoat, the high priest confesses "all the iniquities of the people of Israel" before sending it into the wilderness, symbolically carrying away their sins (Leviticus 16:20–22).

This entire ceremony is to be repeated yearly as "a statute forever" (Leviticus 16:34), revealing that the atonement it provides is real but not final.

**Every year, as Yom Kippur approaches, we are struck by a single question: Why?**

It's so easy to slip into the rhythm of fasting and prayer, yet the prophets constantly pull us back to the core.

In Isaiah 57 and 58, the prophet delivers a stinging critique of performative religion, contrasting empty rituals with the heart-level devotion God actually requires.

Isaiah 57 begins by exposing the community's spiritual adultery, rebuking them for pursuing pagan idols and child sacrifice while ignoring the deaths of the righteous.

Yet, amidst this indictment, God offers a stunning promise: though He inhabits eternity, He chooses to dwell specifically with those who possess a humble and contrite spirit. He makes it clear that while there is no peace for the wicked, there is restoration for those who truly turn back to Him.

Isaiah 58 sharpens this focus by addressing the hypocrisy of the people's fasting.

They wonder why God hasn't answered their prayers, but He reveals that their "devotion" is marred by exploitation, greed, and strife.

God declares that the fast He actually chooses isn't a mere display of sackcloth and ashes; it is the active pursuit of justice—breaking the chains of the oppressed, feeding the hungry, and sheltering the homeless.

When the people align their hearts with this mandate of mercy and honor the Sabbath as a true delight, God promises that their light will break forth like the dawn, transforming them into "Repairers of the Breach" and restorers of the land.

The Creator of all things has always desired one thing: to dwell among us. From the shade of Eden to the heights of the New Jerusalem, the grand narrative of Scripture is God's pursuit of being "at one" with humanity (Genesis 3:8; Revelation 21:3).

But our sin carved a canyon between us. Heaven aches to be near, but our brokenness makes it impossible to survive His direct presence.



This is where the Book of Hebrews bridges the gap. Written to Jewish believers navigating the transition from the physical Temple to a new spiritual reality, the letter's message is definitive:

Yeshua is the ultimate High Priest. His authority doesn't rest on the genealogical line of Aharon (Aaron), but on the eternal order of מֶלְכִי-צֶדֶק—Melchizedek, the "King of Righteousness" (Hebrews 7:1-3 5:5-6; ).

**7:1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,**

**2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.”**

**3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. (Hebrews 7:1-3)**

**5:5 In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”**

**6 And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrew 5:5-6;)**

**26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;**

**27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, ... (Hebrew 7:26-27)**

Yeshua's atonement is not just a covering (כִּפּוּר *kippur*), but a removal of sin.

He bridges the gap once and for all, offering us confidence—not arrogance, but humble confidence—to approach God's presence (Hebrews 10:19-22).

It's the profound shift from the temporary Yom Kippur "covering" to the eternal remission of sin.



Because Yeshua entered the heavenly Holy of Holies with His own blood, the "gap" isn't just bridged—the veil is torn wide open.

That "humble confidence" (*parrēsia*) means we don't have to shrink back in shame; we come as redeemed children because the removal of sin is total [4, 5].

Paul writes, “For Messiah is the end (*telos*) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4). But what if we understood “telos” not as “end” but as “target” or “goal”? The Torah isn't abolished; it's fulfilled—its aim is Messiah.

The Hebrew root of Torah, יָרָה *yarah*, means “to shoot” or “to aim.” Torah is like an arrow, and Messiah is the target.

All the instructions, the sacrifices, the festivals—they point us toward Yeshua. When we focus on the target, we see the purpose behind the practice.

Hebrews 3 **There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.**

and 4 **1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.**

**2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it...**

Hebrews 3 draw a powerful parallel between Israel's journey to the Promised Land and our journey into God's rest.

The question isn't just, "Is God with us?" but "Are we with God?" (Exodus 17:7; Hebrews 3:7-19).

Trust (אמונה emunah; πίστις pistis) is the key—do we trust that the One who brought us out of bondage will also bring us in?

Rest isn't just about ceasing from labor; it's about trusting that Yeshua, our High Priest, has done what we could never do. We can approach the Holy of Holies with confidence, not because of our own merit, but because of His.

One of the longest quotations from the Tanakh in the New Testament Hebrews 8:8–12 is Jeremiah 31:31-34,

<sup>31</sup> “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

<sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

<sup>33</sup> “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

<sup>34</sup> “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

the promise of a New Covenant (ברית חדשה Brit Chadashah).

Hebrews 8 and 10 remind us that the problem with the first covenant wasn't the Torah itself, but the inability of the people and priests to fulfill it.

**“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Hebrews 8:10**

The New Covenant is about transformation from the inside out. God's instructions are no longer just external commands—they become part of who we are.

In the book of Hebrews, the author bypasses explicit citations of Isaiah 53, opting instead to weave its themes into a sophisticated reinterpretation of Yom Kippur through shared ritual logic and vocabulary.

Operating within a world defined by the Torah and temple worship, the text addresses an audience well-versed in the Levitical categories of priesthood and sanctuary.

Rather than relying on traditional prophetic proof-texting, Hebrews establishes a sacrificial framework where the suffering servant of Isaiah serves as the essential theological lens.

By doing so, the "servant" figure is naturally integrated into the mechanics of the Day of Atonement, providing the deeper conceptual meaning behind Yeshua's high-priestly work.

The tension between the ritual mechanics of the Torah and the moral vision of the Prophets creates a theological "gap" that remains open throughout the Hebrew Bible.

On one hand, the Yom Kippur liturgy in Leviticus 16 provides the necessary structural "covering" (*kippur*) for sin, yet its efficacy is tethered to a repetitive cycle (Leviticus 16:34) and animal substitutes that lack moral agency.

On the other hand, Isaiah 53 introduces a righteous Servant whose suffering is described as a literal *asham*, or guilt offering (Isaiah 53:10). This Servant provides the "moral likeness" missing from animal sacrifice, bearing the iniquity of the people through conscious, substitutionary choice (Isaiah 53:5-6).

However, this sacrifice occurs in a vacuum, detached from the priestly mediation and the physical Sanctuary required by the Law.

The Book of Hebrews resolves this disparity by synthesizing the two traditions, arguing that the ritual shadows of the Tabernacle find their substance in the moral perfection of the Servant.

By identifying the Servant as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), Hebrews suggests that the "once a year" repetition of Yom Kippur was merely a rehearsal for the "once for all" sacrifice of a mediator who possesses both the ritual legality of the Law and the moral qualification of the Prophets.

Thus, the unresolved problem of how sin is truly removed rather than merely obscured is settled: the Servant becomes the "lamb" the ritual anticipated, transforming a yearly symbolic covering into a definitive moral purification.

The linguistic bridge facilitating this synthesis is the Hebrew concept of "bearing sin," centered on the verb *nasa'* (נָסָא).

In the Yom Kippur ritual, Leviticus 16:22 specifies that the scapegoat shall "bear (*nasa'*) all their iniquities upon itself" into the wilderness, a physical dramatization of removal.

Isaiah 53:12 employs this exact terminology, declaring that the Servant "bore (*nasa'*) the sin of many," thereby transitioning the act of carrying guilt from a symbolic animal to a conscious, suffering human.

The Book of Hebrews states that Yeshua was "**offered once to bear the sins of many**" (Hebrews 9:28).

By echoing the *nasa'* motif, Hebrews aligns the ritual scapegoat of the Law and the suffering Servant of the Prophets within a single framework: sin is not merely dismissed through an abstract decree, but is substantively "carried away" by a morally qualified substitute.

This connection deepens through the shared theme of exclusion and spatial removal.

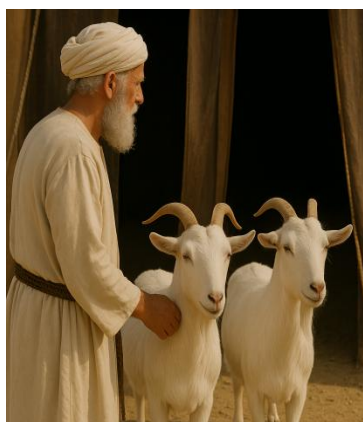
On Yom Kippur, the ritual purification requires that the scapegoat be sent "into the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:22) and that the remains of the sin offerings be burned "outside the camp" (Leviticus 16:27).

This finds a moral parallel in the experience of the Servant in Isaiah 53:8, who is "**cut off from the land of the living**" and exists as one despised and rejected by the community.

The Book of Hebrews makes this correspondence explicit by noting that just as the bodies of the sacrificial animals are burned outside the sanctuary, "**Yeshua also suffered outside the gate**" (Hebrews 13:12).

The location of this suffering is theologically vital: it signifies that sin is not merely hidden within the community but is physically and legally expelled beyond its boundaries. By suffering in the place of "the outside," the substitute effectively purges the "inside," allowing for a clean reconciliation within the sacred space of the community.

Isaiah 53 provides the moral dimensions absent from the Yom Kippur ritual by introducing a sin-bearer characterized by innocent, voluntary obedience.



While the animals in Leviticus 16 are passive, involuntary participants, Isaiah's Servant is one **who "had done no violence"** yet "**opened not his mouth,**" submitting to his role "**like a lamb that is led to the slaughter**" (Isaiah 53:7, 9).

Hebrews builds on this portrait, describing a mediator who is "**holy, innocent, and unstained,**" emphasizing that he offers himself "through the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 7:26; 9:14).

This voluntary agency provides the ethical depth necessary to transform a repetitive ritual transaction into a profound act of atonement. This synthesis is furthered by the union of priest and sacrifice.

In the Levitical system, the high priest mediates without dying, while the animal dies without mediating.

Isaiah 53 collapses this distinction, presenting a single figure who "pours out his soul to death" as his own offering.

Hebrews explicitly develops this convergence, portraying a High Priest who does not offer something external but rather "**offers himself**" (Hebrews 9:14).

Because this mediator lacks the personal sin that required the Levitical priests to first offer sacrifices for themselves (Leviticus 16:6), he can function as a perfect, uncompromised substitute.

Furthermore, Isaiah 53 promises outcomes that transcend mere ritual cleansing;

the Servant "makes many to be accounted righteous" and brings holistic healing (Isaiah 53:5, 11).

While Yom Kippur restored covenantal order, it did not fundamentally alter the worshiper's inner life. Hebrews applies Isaiah's promise to the conscience, arguing that this superior offering purifies the inner person so that sins are "remembered no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

Both texts also share a trajectory of suffering followed by vindication: just as the Servant is exalted after his death, Hebrews presents a once-for-all sacrifice followed by an exaltation at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:3; 9:28).

Ultimately, Hebrews employs a common Second Temple interpretive method to layer these scriptures: Leviticus provides the ritual grammar of atonement, while Isaiah supplies the character of the true sin-bearer.

By weaving these streams together, Hebrews argues that the shadows of the Law and the promises of the Prophets converge in a single, definitive event that achieves what the blood of animals could only ever anticipate.

Prophetic promises associated with Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) center on themes of national restoration, final judgment, and the ultimate reconciliation between God and humanity.



A primary promise involves a future spiritual awakening for Israel, often linked to Zechariah's prophecy that the nation will "look on me, the one they have pierced" and mourn. This recognition is seen as a prophetic foreshadowing of a future Day of Atonement where "all Israel will be saved," fulfilling the covenant to remove ungodliness and sprinkle clean water upon a people receiving a "new heart," as promised in Ezekiel.

The day also serves as a critical junction for the Book of Life, acting as the "Day of the Seal" (*G'mar Chatimah Tova*) where the divine verdicts inscribed on Rosh Hashanah are finalized.

This annual practice is viewed by many as a rehearsal for the ultimate Judgment Day, when the books will be opened for eternity.

Furthermore, Yom Kippur is prophetically linked to the return of the **Conquering King**. Unlike the first coming focused on individual salvation, this second coming is associated with the "day of vengeance" and the sounding of the Great Shofar (*Tekiah Gedolah*), which signals the Messiah's physical return to Earth.

Finally, the day carries profound promises of liberation and removal.

Because the Trumpet of Jubilee was commanded to be sounded on Yom Kippur in Leviticus 25, the day represents the ultimate cancellation of spiritual debts and the restoration of humanity to its original state.

This is mirrored in the ritual of the **Scapegoat**, which prophetically points toward the final removal of Satan and his influence from the human experience.



In conclusion, Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) contains several prophetic promises in Christian and Messianic Jewish theology, primarily focusing on the future national restoration of Israel, the final judgment, and the second coming of Yeshua as the ultimate High Priest and atoning sacrifice.

## Prophetic Promises

### National Recognition of the Messiah:



The prophecy of national recognition for the Messiah is a central theme in biblical eschatology, particularly regarding the future restoration of Israel.

Zechariah 12:10 is a significant prophecy concerning a future time when the Jewish people will "look on Me, on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him". This passage suggests a future moment of recognition and mourning for the one who was "pierced". Following this, Zechariah 13:1 indicates a period of national spiritual cleansing.

Other scriptures that touch upon this theme include Luke 13:35, Ezekiel 36:26-28, Romans 11:25-27, and Hosea 5:15

Romans 11:25-27 discusses a "partial hardening" of Israel before a "Deliverer" comes from Zion and "all Israel will be saved".

Hosea 5:15 mentions God returning to His place until Israel acknowledges their guilt.

## Final Atonement and Removal of Sin:



The transition from the ancient sacrificial system to final atonement represents a move from the temporary "covering" of sins to their permanent removal.

Under the Old Covenant, the rituals of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) served as a repetitive cycle; as **Hebrews 10:3-4** explains, the blood of bulls and goats acted more as a yearly reminder of sin rather than a permanent solution for it.

This system pointed toward a promised future where the stain of rebellion would be totally transformed.

The prophet Isaiah captured this hope in Isaiah 1:18, declaring that though sins be as vivid as scarlet, they would be made white as snow. This theme of total eradication is central to the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:34, where God pledges not only to forgive iniquity but to "remember their sin no more"—a covenantal promise that the debt is canceled and never again brought to account.

In Messianic theology, this prophetic vision is realized through the "once-for-all" sacrifice of Yeshua.

Unlike the earthly priests who had to stand daily to offer repeated sacrifices, Hebrews 10:10-12 emphasizes that Yeshua offered a single sacrifice for all time and then "sat down" at the right hand of God, signaling that the work of atonement was finished.

This act shifted the paradigm from *kippur* (covering) to complete removal, fulfilling the imagery of Psalm 103:12, which describes transgressions being removed as far as the east is from the west. Consequently, through this singular sacrifice, believers are granted a clean conscience and eternal redemption, as sins are no longer merely hidden from view but are completely washed away and forgotten in the eyes of God.

## The Day of Judgment:



In Jewish tradition, the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur represents a sacred window where God is believed to inscribe and then seal an individual's fate in the Book of Life.

This practice, rooted in the concept of teshuvah (repentance), finds its ultimate prophetic fulfillment in the Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15.

Just as the yearly "sealing" on the Day of Atonement determines a person's standing for the coming year, the

final judgment represents a cosmic "closing of the books" where every person stands before the Creator. According to scripture, while books are opened to record every deed, it is specifically the presence of one's name in the Lamb's Book of Life that determines eternal destiny.

For those who place their faith in the Messiah, this judgment is met not with fear, but with the assurance of salvation. This transition from a yearly, temporary sealing to a permanent, eternal one is highlighted in Ephesians 1:13, which teaches that believers are "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" the moment they believe.

This spiritual seal serves as a divine guarantee, signifying that their names are permanently recorded due to the Messiah's sacrificial work rather than their own merits. Consequently, the prophetic pattern of the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur to make atonement is fulfilled once and for all by Yeshua, ensuring that those who follow Him are granted eternal life and a secure place in the Book of Life.



### **Return of the Messiah and Millennial Kingdom:**

There is a profound prophetic connection between the tekiah gedolah (the "great blast") sounded at the conclusion of Yom Kippur and the return of Yeshua. This long, final blast signals the "closing of the gates" of judgment and prefigures the "last trumpet" described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:52, which triggers the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living. This trumpet serves as a divine summons, echoing 1 Thessalonians 4:16, where the Lord descends with the "trumpet of God" to gather His people from the corners of the earth.

Beyond gathering the elect, this great trumpet blast acts as a signal for the final defeat of God's enemies and the coronation of Yeshua as King.

Zechariah 9:14 envisions the Lord blowing the shofar as He marches out to save His people, a theme that culminates in the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15, which announces that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

This transition marks the end of human governance and the establishment of the eternal Messianic kingdom.

Ultimately, the shofar's call bridges the gap between the atonement of Yom Kippur and the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Just as Isaiah 27:13 prophesies a "great trumpet" blown to bring the outcasts home, Yeshua confirmed in Matthew 24:31 that His angels would use this sound to gather His chosen ones. This gathering leads to the ultimate fulfillment of God's desire to "tabernacle" or dwell among men, as described in Revelation 21:3, where the presence of God is no longer veiled but remains with His people forever.

### **Restoration and Peace:**



The prophetic visions of Isaiah 61 and Ezekiel 36 illuminate a profound trajectory of divine restoration that begins with healing and culminates in a global, messianic peace.

In Isaiah 61:1–3, the promise of a "divine exchange" is central:

God vows to bestow a "crown of beauty instead of ashes" and the "oil of joy instead of

mourning".

This transformation is not merely emotional but structural, as the redeemed are established as "oaks of righteousness," a sturdy "planting of the Lord" designed to display His glory to the nations.

While this mission began with the Messiah's first coming—when Yeshua declared the "year of the Lord's favor"—it awaits its final completion when the Messiah returns to fully restore Israel and mend the "ancient ruins" of many generations.

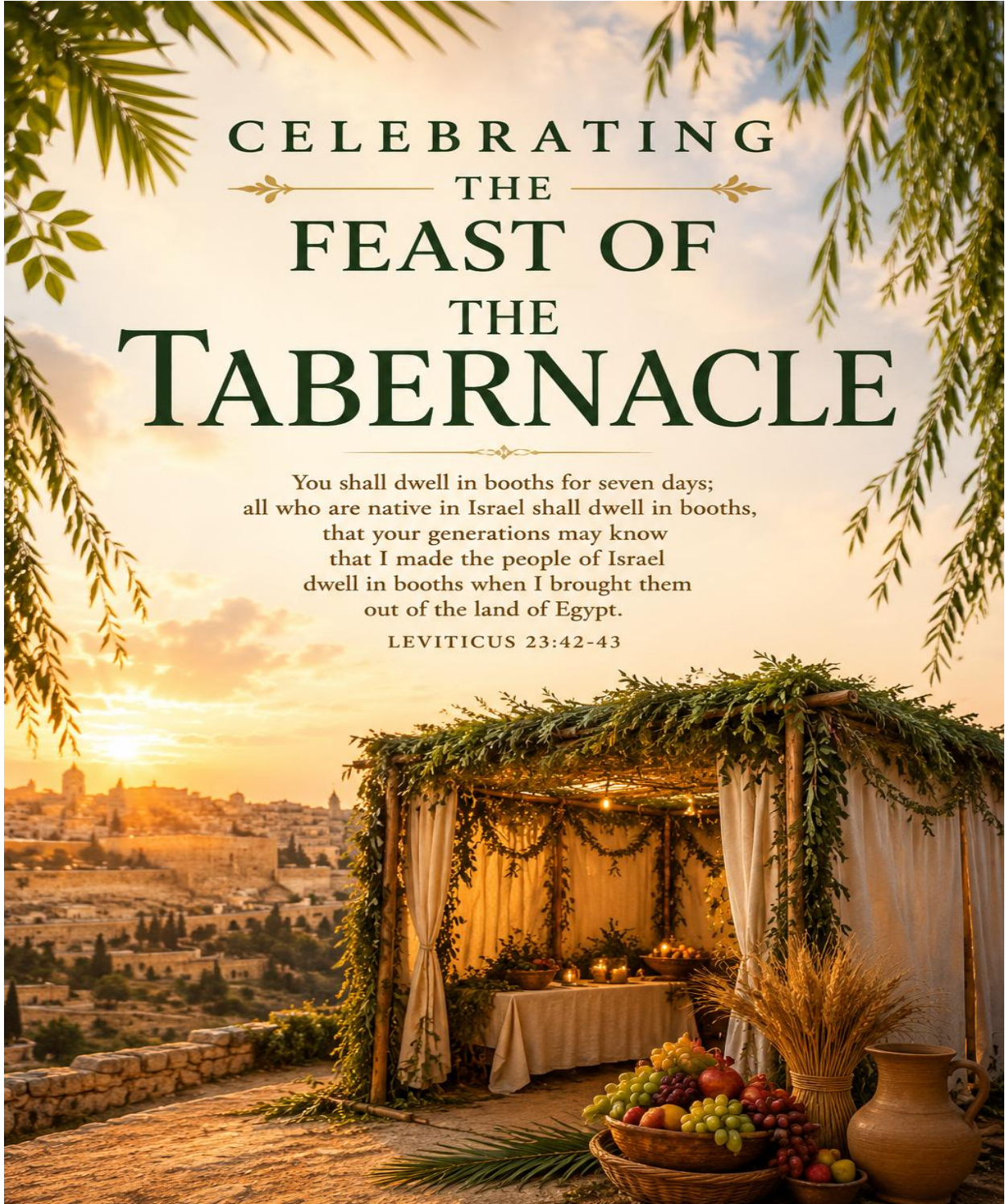
Parallel to this, Ezekiel 36 emphasizes the internal renewal necessary for such a kingdom.

God promises to gather His people from the nations and "sprinkle clean water" upon them to cleanse them from all "filthiness and idols".

This ceremonial cleansing is the precursor to a radical "heart transplant," where a "heart of stone" is replaced with a "heart of flesh," empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in God's ways.

Theologians note that this cleansing foreshadows the work of Christ, providing a spiritual foundation for a literal, future kingdom where Israel is restored to their land and the world finally experiences lasting, Messianic peace.

Together, these texts assure believers that the current "sorrows of the world" are temporary, serving as the backdrop for a certain, glorious restoration.



# CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLE

You shall dwell in booths for seven days;  
all who are native in Israel shall dwell in booths,  
that your generations may know  
that I made the people of Israel  
dwell in booths when I brought them  
out of the land of Egypt.

LEVITICUS 23:42-43

## Leviticus 23:33-36 41-43

**33**And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

**לַיהוָה יִדְבָּר אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:**

**34**Speak to the children of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, is the Festival of Succoth, a seven day period to the Lord.

**לַיהוָה יִדְבָּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בְּחַמֵּשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לַיהוָה:**

**35**On the first day, it is a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work of labor.

**לַבְּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:**

**36**[For] a seven day period, you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord. On the eighth day, it shall be a holy occasion for you, and you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord. It is a [day of] detention. You shall not perform any work of labor.

**לַשְּׁבִיעַת יָמִים תִּקְרִיבוּ אֲשָׁה לַיהוָה בְּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֲשָׁה לַיהוָה עֲצֹרֶת הוּא כָל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:**

**41**And you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord for seven days in the year. [It is] an eternal statute throughout your generations [that] you celebrate it in the seventh month.

**מִמָּחֳגַתֶּם אֹתוֹ חַג לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי תַחֲגּוּ אֹתוֹ:**

**42**For a seven day period you shall live in booths. Every resident among the Israelites shall live in booths,

**מִבְּסֻכֹּת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בְּסֻכֹּת:**

**43**in order that your [ensuing] generations should know that I had the children of Israel live in booths when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.



The Feast of Tabernacles, first mentioned at Mount Sinai as the “feast of ingathering,” is rooted in an agricultural setting intended to mark the "year's end" (Ex. 23:16, 34:22).

While this timing seems to conflict with the religious calendar beginning in the month of Nisan, the discrepancy is resolved by Israel's use of a dual calendar system.

In this framework, the holiday falls in the seventh month of the religious cycle (Tishri) while simultaneously serving as the start of the civil new year.

The Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, is a weeklong journey beginning five days after the solemnity of Yom Kippur, serving as a multi-layered celebration of history, harvest, and hope.

Rooted in the biblical mandates of Leviticus 23:34, which commands the Israelites to "keep the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord," the holiday is uniquely identified by two names:

Chag HaAsif, marking the "Festival of Ingathering" (Exodus 23:16) at the end of the agricultural year, and Chag HaSukkot, the "Festival of Booths."



The observance is defined by the physical act of dwelling in a sukkah, a temporary, foliage-covered structure that reinforces the spiritual lesson of life's transience.

As instructed in Leviticus 23:42-43,

You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

The Bible provides foundational instructions for building a sukkah through the mandates found in Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy 16, and Nehemiah 8.



The most detailed list of materials is found in Nehemiah 8:15, which instructs the people to "go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees, pine trees, myrtles, palms and other leafy trees to make booths."

This correlates with Leviticus 23:40, which specifies the use of "boughs of goodly trees" and "willows of the brook." From these verses, the essential biblical requirement is established: the structure must be topped with *schach*, or natural, detached vegetation that once grew from the ground.

By requiring a roof of natural materials through which the stars remain visible, the sukkah encourages a departure from material security in favor of reliance on divine providence.

Furthermore, the Hebrew root of the word *sukkah* (s-k-k) literally means "to cover" or "to shade," indicating that the roof's primary biblical purpose is to provide a canopy of shade rather than a permanent, waterproof seal.

The Bible also defines the structural intent and duration of these booths, emphasizing their temporary nature to reflect the Israelites' 40-year journey.

Leviticus 23:42-43 commands that "ye shall dwell in booths seven days," serving as a physical memorial so that future generations would remember God's providence after the Exodus.

This temporary dwelling is described elsewhere in scripture as a simple "pavilion" or "hut," such as the one Jonah built for shade while watching over Nineveh (Jonah 4:5).

By combining these passages, the biblical instruction for building a sukkah emerges as a mandate to construct a simple, seven-day shelter using natural branches, placed under the open sky to symbolize a total reliance on divine protection over physical permanence.

This theme of vulnerability is paired with the commandment of the Four Species (*Arba Minim*);



Leviticus 23:40 directs participants to "[take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook,](#)".

The ritual involves binding a Lavula (Palm) Hadass (Myrtle) and Avarah (Willow) and waving them alongside an **Etrog** (citron) in six directions to acknowledge God's presence everywhere.

The Arba Minim, or Four Species, carry profound layers of symbolic meaning that emphasize the themes of communal unity, personal integrity, and divine presence.

The most prominent interpretation, found in the *Midrash*, relates the four plants to four distinct types of people based on their taste—representing Torah knowledge—and their fragrance—representing active good deeds.

The Etrog (citron) possesses both, symbolizing a person of high character and scholarship; the Lulav (palm) has taste but no scent, reflecting the scholar who lacks action; the Hadass (myrtle) has scent but no taste, representing the active doer who lacks deep study; and the Aravah (willow) has neither, signifying those who have yet to achieve either.



The essential lesson of this ritual is found in the binding: the commandment remains incomplete unless all four species are held together, teaching that a community is only whole when it embraces and supports every individual, regardless of their spiritual or intellectual standing.

Beyond social unity, the Arba Minim are often interpreted as a representation of the human body and the total devotion of one's physical self to God.

In this view, the Etrog represents the heart, the Lulav signifies the spine, the Hadass leaves resemble the eyes, and the Aravah leaves represent the lips.

By waving these together, the celebrant symbolically pledges their emotions, their physical strength, their vision, and their speech to a higher purpose.

This holistic dedication is further reinforced by the act of waving the bundle in six directions—north, south, east, west, up, and down—which serves as a physical declaration that God's presence and mastery encompass the entire universe.

Finally, the species serve as a bridge between the spiritual and the natural world, particularly regarding the **sustenance of life**.

Because these four plants are highly dependent on water, they act as a symbolic petition for rainfall during the upcoming agricultural year.

Whether viewed through the lens of community, anatomy, or ecology, the Arba Minim serve as a powerful reminder that the Feast of Tabernacles is a time to unify the fragmented parts of our lives and our society under a single banner of gratitude and faith.

The holiday structure balances sacred restriction with festive celebration, beginning with Yom Tov.

When a Jewish festival falls on Shabbat, the two holidays merge, but **Shabbat takes precedence** in terms of laws and prohibitions. This often results in the omission or adjustment of specific festival traditions to ensure the stricter sanctity of Shabbat is maintained.

Shabbat is considered "holier" than festivals (Yom Tov), meaning its restrictions are more absolute



The first two days of Sukkot, are *yom tov* days. During this time, work is prohibited, and special customs are observed to honor the sanctity of the holiday.

Observing Yom Tov involves both negative and positive commandments. On these days, individuals refrain from creative labor (*melacha*) to protect the day's sanctity, yet they are actively commanded to rejoice through festive meals, wearing elegant clothing, and reciting

special prayers.



This commanded joy is primarily expressed through the hallowed atmosphere of the **sukkah**, where families gather for elaborate festive meals.

To usher in the sanctity of Yom Tov, women and girls light candles before sundown. On the second night, the flame must be transferred from a pre-existing source, as creating a new fire is prohibited.



To honor the occasion, worshippers wear elegant clothing and recite special prayers of praise, most notably the **Hallel** and **Hoshanot**.

A signature tradition during these meals begin with Kiddush over wine and the use of two whole loaves of **challah** bread, which are sliced and dipped in honey.

This sweet ritual, carried over from the High Holiday season, serves as a symbolic prayer for a year defined by sweetness and abundance.

By sharing these honey-dipped loaves with loved ones and guests, the community transforms the physical act of eating into a sacred celebration of divine protection and gratitude.

It is traditional to symbolically "invite" seven biblical ancestors (Ushpizin) meaning (Guest) into the sukkah, along with friends and family.

The tradition of the **Ushpizin** is a mystical custom originating from the Zohar that transforms the sukkah into a space for spiritual reflection.

Throughout the seven days of the festival, seven "founding fathers" of the Jewish people—**Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David** are believed to leave their heavenly abode to visit the sukkah.



While all seven souls are thought to be present collectively, a different ancestor is honored as the primary guest for each day, embodying a specific spiritual attribute or *sefirah* such as **Loving-Kindness, Strength, Harmony, Endurance, Splendor, Foundation and Sovereignty** respectively..

Worshippers often recite a formal invitation to welcome these exalted souls, and many dedicate time during their festive meals to study the life and virtues of that day's specific guest.

Intermediate days, known as *Chol HaMoed*, occur during the Yom Tov and Sukkot; while these are part of the holiday, they do not carry the full work restrictions of a Yom Tov.

During the Temple Periods, a special event happened every morning during Sukkot. This was called the *Nisukh HaMayim*, or "Pouring of the Water" ceremony.

The Talmud teaches that Sukkot is when God decides how much rain the world will get.



So, the water ceremony, like using the Four Kinds of Plants, was a prayer for good rain at the right time.

The water for this ceremony came from the Pool of Siloam in the City of David.

It was then carried up a special road to the Temple. People felt very happy during this procession.

After the water ceremony, every night, thousands of people would gather in the Temple courtyard. They came to watch the *Simchat Beit HaShoeivah*, which means "Rejoicing at the Place of the Water-Drawing." The most religious people would dance and sing songs to praise God.

The dancers held burning torches. Levite musicians played harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets.

Commemorating the ancient water-drawing ceremony, communities hold nightly celebrations with singing and dancing. While live music is typically reserved for the intermediate days, vocal celebrations often occur on Yom Tov nights.

The Mishnah says, "Anyone who has not seen the rejoicing at the Place of the Water-Drawing has never seen true joy."

Throughout the week, the sukkah becomes a center for hospitality and equality, fulfilling the command in Deuteronomy 16:14 to "rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant."

Beyond its historical significance, the festival carries an eschatological vision found in Zechariah 14:16, which foretells a time when "every one that is left of all the nations... shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

Sukkot serves as a universal holiday where the focus extends beyond the Jewish people to encompass all of humanity, represented by the "70 nations."

This connection is rooted in the ancient Temple service, where a total of **70 bulls** were sacrificed over the seven days of the festival. According to the Talmud, these offerings corresponded to the 70 root nations of the world, serving as an intercession to secure divine blessing, peace, and rainfall for every inhabitant of the earth.

This global perspective is further emphasized by the prophecies of Zechariah, which envision a future era where all nations travel to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkot together.

This transformation of a harvest rite into a symbol of international harmony concludes with Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, sealing a season dedicated to joy, forgiveness, and the warmth of shared faith.



Today, The **March of the Nations**, a centerpiece of the annual **Jerusalem March**, stands as Israel's largest and most vibrant tourist event, drawing thousands of Christian pilgrims to the capital during the **Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)**.

This massive parade serves as a public demonstration of global Christian solidarity, where participants from over 100 nations process through the streets of Jerusalem to show their support for the Jewish people.

Clad in traditional national dress and waving their home countries' flags, marchers transform the city into a kaleidoscope of cultures, often handing out small gifts and banners of love to the thousands of Israelis who line the route.

Organized primarily by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), the event fulfills a specific biblical vision rooted in **Zechariah 14:16**, which prophesies that all nations will one day come to Jerusalem to celebrate this specific feast.

Beyond the march itself, the week-long festivities include a "Roll Call of the Nations," where representatives present their flags on stage, and a series of worship events ranging from the Judean desert to the Garden Tomb. As the event enters its 46th year of ICEJ sponsorship in 2026, it continues to be a focal point for those seeking to participate in the biblical "harvest of nations" and a physical manifestation of Jerusalem as a "house of prayer for all people."

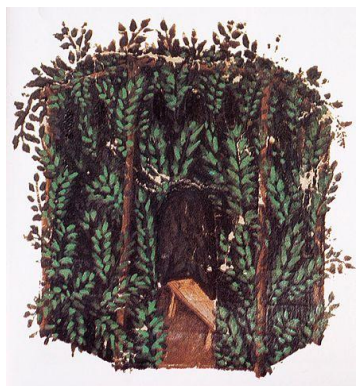
From a Prophetic Perspective the concept of Sukkot as a "foretaste" of the Messianic Age is rooted in the Hebrew term *miqra*, which defines the holiday as a "dress rehearsal" for a future era of universal peace and divine presence.

Central to this vision is the Sukkah of David, a prophetic image of a restored "Tabernacle of Peace" that replaces the false security of physical walls with total reliance on Divine protection.

By leaving permanent homes to dwell in temporary shelters, participants practice the spiritual "displacement" necessary to make room for a reality where the boundary between the physical and spiritual worlds finally dissolves.

Furthermore, as the *Chag HaAsif* or Festival of Ingathering, Sukkot celebrates the final agricultural harvest as a symbol of the eventual spiritual harvest of all souls. The abundance enjoyed during the week serves as a tangible prototype for the era of "End of Scarcity" and the final restoration of the Jewish people to their land

### **Sukkot in the Messianic Tradition**



In Leviticus 23:41, the Lord established the **Feast of Tabernacles** (Sukkot) as a "lasting ordinance," signifying that the spiritual reality of dwelling—or **tabernacling**—with Him is a promise that remains active today. For Jewish believers in Yeshua, the physical elements of the sukkah are not just historical reminders; they are tangible pointers to the **Messiah** and the eternal hope of one day dwelling in His presence forever.

King Solomon had chosen the Feast of Tabernacles as the time to dedicate the First Temple. As the people celebrated, God's shekinah — His visible presence and glory—filled the Temple.

Just as He had done in the desert, God showed His goodness and mercy by coming once again to dwell in the midst of His people.

Now, in the first century, though the Ark of the Covenant had been captured and though the glory of the Lord had departed from the Temple Ezekiel 10: 15-19, yet the Temple remained the focus of the of the Sukkot celebrations.

Two ceremonies in particular, no longer performed today in the absence of the Temple, were part of the first-century Sukkot.

## **The Illumination of the Temple THE LIGHT TO THE WOLD**



During the Second Temple period, the **Feast of Tabernacles** featured a breathtaking nightly ritual known as the **Illumination of the Temple**.

In the Court of the Women, four massive golden lampstands, standing nearly 75 feet tall, were filled with gallons of oil and ignited, reportedly casting such a brilliant glow that every courtyard in **Jerusalem** was lit by their fire.

This ceremony served as a vivid memorial of the **Pillar of Fire** that guided the Israelites through the wilderness and symbolized the **Shekinah Glory** of God dwelling among His people .

Amidst this radiance, the most pious leaders would dance with flaming torches while Levites provided a symphony of harps and cymbals, celebrating God's presence as the source of all light.

In Hebrew, the title "Light of the World" is Or HaOlam, a term that connects Yeshua's identity directly to the divine order established at creation.

When He declared Himself the light, He was using the word Or (אור), which signifies not just physical visibility, but the presence of life, truth, and the dispelling of spiritual chaos.

This claim is inextricably linked to His own name, Yeshua, which translates to "Salvation."

By identifying as the Light, He was essentially announcing that "Salvation has arrived to illuminate the darkness," a concept deeply rooted in the Hebrew word *Yeshuah*, which describes God's active deliverance of His people.

This declaration serves as the direct fulfillment of ancient blueprints found in the **Book of Isaiah**. Centuries earlier.

Isaiah prophesied that a "Great Light" would dawn upon those walking in deep darkness (Isaiah 9:2),

["The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."](#)

specifically identifying the Messiah as a "Light to the Nations" (*Or Goyim*).

These prophecies, particularly in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6, shifted the expectation of the Messiah from a localized Jewish leader to a universal savior whose reach would extend to the "ends of the earth." This transition from the specific to the universal was confirmed by the elder Simeon in the Temple, who recognized the infant Yeshua as the "light for revelation to the Gentiles."

In the Gospel of John, light is more than a metaphor; it is a primary theological theme that establishes Yeshua as the source of all existence.

John's prologue mirrors the opening of Genesis, declaring that the "Life was the Light of men," suggesting that the same divine Word who spoke physical light into being at creation has now entered humanity to dispel spiritual darkness.

Throughout the Gospel, John uses a deliberate contrast between light and darkness to represent the struggle between truth and sin, life and death, and divine revelation versus spiritual blindness.

This is vividly illustrated in the differing encounters of Nicodemus, who came to Yeshua by night in confusion, and the Samaritan woman, who met Him in the full light of day and became a bold witness.



The Menorah serves as a profound visual symbol of these prophecies and their fulfillment.

Originally commanded by God for the Tabernacle, the seven-branched golden lampstand represents the eternal presence of God and the perfection of His Spirit.

Each of the seven lamps is often linked to the seven spirits of God mentioned in Isaiah 11:2—wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, the fear of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord Himself—all of which Messianic tradition sees perfectly resting upon Yeshua.

Furthermore, the structure of the Menorah, with its six side branches pointing toward a central shaft, symbolizes that all life and wisdom must be aligned with Yeshua at the center.



In the Book of Revelation, the imagery of the **seven golden lampstands** represents the fullness of the global community of believers—the Church.

John sees the glorified Yeshua standing "in the midst" of these lampstands, a position that underscores His intimate presence and constant oversight.

Clothed in a long robe with a golden sash, Yeshua appears as a **High Priest** who, like the priests in the ancient Tabernacle, tends the holy lights to ensure they burn brightly.

He holds **seven stars** in His right hand, which represent the "angels" or messengers—often understood as the leaders or pastors—of the churches.

Being in His "right hand" signifies that these leaders are under His direct authority, protection, and accountability.

### **The Water Ceremony LIVING WATER**



Each day of the week-long celebration was defined by the Water Ceremony, a ritual where priests drew water from the Pool of Siloam into a golden pitcher as described earlier.

As they processed toward the Temple, the surrounding crowds would chant **Isaiah 12:3**:

*"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."*

This highlighted a profound connection between divine provision and human celebration; God's presence, symbolized by the water, became a direct source of communal rejoicing.

In John 7:37–39, we read that:

<sup>37</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Yeshua stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." <sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Yeshua had not yet been glorified.

The last day of the festival was the "greatest." The week-long ceremonies had reached their climax, and the crowd had already spent a week watching the water ceremony, reciting Isaiah 12:3, and praying for rain. Water was certainly on everyone's minds when Yeshua made that proclamation.

Yeshua identifies Himself as the source of Living Water (*Mayim Chayim*), a powerful metaphor for the spiritual renewal and eternal life He offers.

This concept is most famously illustrated in John 4, where Yeshua meets a Samaritan woman at a well and promises her water that will permanently quench her thirst, becoming a "well of water springing up to eternal life" within the believer.

By using this term, He positioned Himself as the fulfillment of the "fountain of living waters" described by the prophet Jeremiah, contrasting the refreshing, dynamic flow of a natural spring with the stagnant, unreliable cisterns of human effort.

Theologically, this Living Water is explicitly linked to the Holy Spirit, which Yeshua promised would flow like rivers from the hearts of those who believe in Him.

This theme reached its peak during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), a festival where water libations were poured out in prayer for rain; it was at this precise moment that Yeshua stood and invited the thirsty to come to Him and drink.

This invitation suggests that spiritual satisfaction is not found in religious rituals or worldly achievements, but in a continuous, life-giving relationship with Him.

The image of Yeshua as the Living Water remains a cornerstone of Messianic Jewish identity. It serves as a reminder that the soul's deepest longings are met through divine grace and the indwelling of the Spirit.

This "living" aspect emphasizes a faith that is active and restorative, much like the prophetic river in Ezekiel 47 that brings healing and life to every dry place it touches.

Sukkot reminds us of God's provision in the past; it speaks to us about God's present provision of living water and of light through Yeshua; and it also offers us a glimpse of the future, when God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3) will be fulfilled and all nations of the earth will be blessed through Israel, the nation whom he first chose.

A passage in the book of the prophet Zechariah talks about this time to come:

Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.  
(Zechariah 14:16)

There is an unusual incident in the New Testament that may well have Matthew 17:1–8 as its background:



<sup>1</sup> After six days Yeshua took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

<sup>2</sup> There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

<sup>3</sup> Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Yeshua.

<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Yeshua, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.

<sup>7</sup> But Yeshua came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.”

<sup>8</sup> When they looked up, they saw no one except Yeshua.

The word for the three “tents” that Peter wants to make also translates as “booth” or “tabernacle.”

When Peter beheld this glorious scene, full of God’s shekinah light, he may well have been thinking: “This is it!

This is the coming of God’s kingdom! Now it’s time to celebrate Sukkot!” with Zechariah 14 on his mind.

But the visible shekinah disappeared, as did Moses and Elijah, and the disciples learned that this was in fact not the final coming of God’s kingdom but only a glimpse of what lay ahead.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

What is the message of Sukkot for the future, then? The same divine presence and provision that accompanied Israel in the past and that came to fulfillment in Yeshua, is still a future hope in all its fullness.



For the spiritual water that quenches our thirst and the divine light that guides our way is at present not to be compared with its final fulfillment.

Even Paul writes that, “**For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face**” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

There is more to come—and in the meanwhile, God’s water and His light are freely available to those who choose to follow Yeshua.

### **Final Fulfillment**

In the Book of Revelation, the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) reaches its ultimate prophetic fulfillment as the temporary “booths” of Israel’s history are replaced by the permanent, eternal presence of God.

This transition is most vividly captured in Revelation 21:3,



<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

which declares that the tabernacle of God is finally among men, meaning He will "dwell" (literally, *tabernacle*) with them forever.

This fulfills the heart of the festival: the transition from a fragile, nomadic existence to an indestructible home in the New Jerusalem, where the cloud of glory that once covered the wilderness camp becomes a permanent canopy over the redeemed.

The liturgical elements of Sukkot are woven directly into the imagery of the celestial throne room.



In Revelation 7:9, a diverse multitude from every nation is seen holding palm branches, a direct reference to the *lulav* used during the feast to signal joy and victory.

This heavenly celebration mirrors the "Feast of Ingathering," as the final harvest of souls is gathered into God's kingdom.

Furthermore, the two primary rituals of the Temple feast—the Water Libation and the Illumination of the Temple—find their completion in the New Heaven and New Earth.

The ritual water from the Pool of Siloam is replaced by the "river of the water of life" flowing from the throne (Revelation 22:1), and the massive candelabra of the feast are superseded by the glory of God and the Lamb, who provide a light so pervasive that the sun is no longer needed.

Ultimately, the fulfillment of Sukkot in Revelation signals the end of human exile.

In this final state, the "shelter" of God is no longer a temporary structure but an eternal reality, marking the moment when the Creator and His creation are perfectly reunited in an everlasting Sabbath.

The fulfillment concludes with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (**Revelation 19:6–9**),

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

<sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

<sup>9</sup> Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

which elevates the annual Passover meal to an eternal celebration between the Redeemer and His "Bride," the Church.

CELEBRATING  
THE  
FESTIVAL  
OF  
*Lights*





Hanukkah is known as the Feast of Dedication or the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah isn't mentioned in the Old Testament, as it's origin is in the inter-testamental period, during one of the most courageous episodes in Israel's history.

So to understand the meaning and significance of Hanukkah in both Jewish Tradition and within the New Testament we must understand both the origin of the Menorah and the re-dedication of the Temple during the Maccabee Period.

So let's first take a look at the origin of the Menorah.

The menorah is first mentioned in the Torah in the book of Exodus 25: 31-40



<sup>31</sup> You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be of *one piece*.

<sup>32</sup> And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.

<sup>33</sup> Three bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with an ornamental knob and a flower*, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other

branch, *with an ornamental knob and a flower*—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand.

<sup>34</sup> On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms*, *each with its ornamental knob and flower*.

<sup>35</sup> And *there shall be* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand.

<sup>36</sup> Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece*; all of it *shall be* one hammered piece of pure gold.

<sup>37</sup> You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.

<sup>38</sup> And its wick-trimmers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold.

<sup>39</sup> It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.

<sup>40</sup> And see to it that you make *them* according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

Exodus 27:20 adds

<sup>20</sup>“And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.

When we see the instructions that God gives to Moses on how precisely to build the tabernacle, we are struck by the incredible amount of detail involved. Every tiny detail has been considered to perfection. It might seem strange to our ears sometimes, but if we are willing to “seek diligently” as the two central words of the Torah say, then we can find some wonderful truths hidden in God’s law

By studying the tabernacle with all its details, we can learn about heavenly things. They are a shadow, a pattern of what was to come in the Messiah. But let’s look at the original lampstand commissioned by God. Solid gold, with seven stands but made of one piece, and adorned with almond blossoms...

First of all, the light given by the massive menorah in the dark tent would have been a powerful symbol of God’s light and holiness in our dark and sinful world.

Jewish tradition holds that it reminds the people of Israel that they are also called to be his “Light to the nations” as God prescribed in Isaiah 42:6. Gently spreading light without force

<sup>6</sup>“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

It’s a symbol of bringing God’s glory, truth, and light into the world. And his people are called to be his representatives in bringing that light too.

Yeshua teaches in Matthew 5 that we too are called to be that light to the world:

*“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* The light is a witness to and of God.

In John 8, we see Yeshua speaking in the temple, declaring,

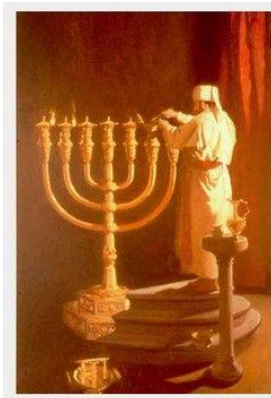
*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."*

Verse 20 tells us that:

*"He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put."*

He was standing close to the huge temple menorah, declaring himself to be that ultimate light and witness, as indeed he is. The menorah was a shadow of the coming Messiah, and his chosen witnesses to the world: the body of believers.

### **THE SEVEN BRANCHES MENORAH**



As we know, seven is God's number of completion, but despite the plurality of lamps, it is made of one 'piece'.

The shape reminds of a flowering tree of life.

On each of the six arms were 3 golden almond blossoms and together with the 4 on the center shaft there were exactly 22 almond blossoms.

Between the 22 flowers, there are 27 connections, and together with the highest connection from the top flower on the shaft of the middle lamp there are a total of 28 connections. Together there are 50 parts plus 7 lamps.

We know that it is to represent the presence of God in the midst of them, and in Revelation we also see the lampstands representing the Spirit's presence in the churches to whom John writes the messages from Yeshua.

There are seven churches listed, but one bride of Yeshua.

The other aspect of the seven branches design is that it resembles a tree. In Jewish tradition, the menorah is reminiscent of the Tree of Life from the creation story.

We can see from the New Testament in the book of Revelation that the tree is equated with eternal life.

Adam and Eve were banished from it, and Revelation 22 tells us that those with clean robes have the right to eat from it.

Thus, the menorah speaks of eternal life with God for his bride, made available to us all, only through the blood of the Messiah.

Yeshua said *"I am the true vine, you are the branches"* in John 15. He is the tree, and only in him can we live spiritually and produce fruit.

## ALMOND BLOSSOM

And why almond blossoms on the menorah?

Every detail is significant with God, and no word is wasted.

The almond tree is the first tree to bloom in Israel during winter.

Therefore, the white almond blossom is a symbol of life and purity.

God paid attention to every detail, for he commanded that every single almond blossom should consist of three parts, namely, the cups, buds and blossoms. Together they are 66 single flower parts.

Almond trees are mentioned elsewhere in the Bible in significant ways – the first time was when Aaron's priestly authority was questioned, and his staff budded, bloomed and produced fruit overnight as validation from God.

The second is when God shows Jeremiah an almond branch in a vision



God uses a Hebrew word-play, as the word for 'almond' is also root of the word to be 'diligent and hard-working', because the tree blooms and produces fruit before any other tree – in the middle of winter.

It is a metaphor for haste and determined work. God assures Jeremiah that he is diligently watching over his word to fulfill it, in Jeremiah 1:12, and so almond blossoms are a symbol of God's determination to carry out his plans.

In Zechariah 4, we see the prophet bewildered by a vision of a menorah with two olive trees either side, providing oil for the lamps.

Again, if we turn to the New Testament to look for two olive trees, we hear Paul describing Jews and Gentiles in Romans 11 as two olive trees; the wild Gentile tree being grafted into the cultivated Jewish tree, through Yeshua.

<sup>13</sup> For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

<sup>14</sup> If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

<sup>15</sup> For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

<sup>16</sup> For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

<sup>17</sup> And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

<sup>18</sup> Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

<sup>19</sup> Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

<sup>20</sup> Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

<sup>21</sup> For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

<sup>22</sup> Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

<sup>23</sup> And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

The two become one in him:

<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Yeshua you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Yeshua himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 13-22

The items in the desert tabernacle spoke of what was to come in the New Covenant – one bride of Messiah: Jew and Gentile called together, brought purified and clean before God to dwell with him. What a powerful symbol, and what riches are spoken by the God-designed menorah. How wonderful it is to have been brought into the New Covenant, and that we can see the fulfillment in Yeshua, the One to whom the menorah points.

## 9 BRANCH MENORAH ( CHANUKIAH)



As previously mentioned there was only one single Menorah – *the* ancient golden candelabra from the Jewish temple.

The 9 branch Hanukkah Menorah or Chanukiah is the lamp that Jews light during the 8 days of Hanukkah.

The Menorah is comprised of 8 branches – one for each day of Hanukkah, plus another one for the Shamash – the “helper” candle.

We celebrate the 8 days of Hanukkah to commemorate the miracle that took place in the Jewish temple during the revolt of the Maccabees against Antiochus and the Syrians.

But more about that later.

There are a couple of important differences between the 7 branch Menorah from the Jewish temple, and the 9 branch Menorahs we light during Hanukkah

Unlike the 7 Branch Menorah, you can light the Hanukkah Menorah using *either* candles or oil.

There's a common misconception that lighting oil Menorahs is somehow preferable because it's similar to the way our forefathers lit the golden Menorah.

That's a myth; plain and simple. Sure, you could use oil to make the candle lighting experience more authentic, but that doesn't mean that it's somehow “better” than using candles. You're fulfilling the commandment of lighting the Hanukkah Menorah, regardless of which method you choose.

Unlike the 7 Branch Menorah, the Hanukkah Menorah can be made of any color and any material

Whether it's a silver Menorah, crystal Menorah, glass Menorah, marble Menorah, Jerusalem stone Menorah or even a wooden Menorah.

Unlike the 7 Branch Menorah, the Hanukkah Menorah is displayed publicly

The golden Menorah was kept indoors and out of sight, in order to keep it safe.

We also light the Menorah indoors, except we don't keep it out of sight.

In fact, not only do we keep it within sight, we publicize it, usually by placing it near or inside a window.

By doing so, we fulfill the commandment of “Pirsum Hanes” (Hebrew for “publicizing the miracle”).

Unlike the 7 Branch Menorah, we light the Hanukkah Menorah at night



At the Jewish temple, the golden Menorah was lit during the daytime. We light our Chanukiah after sundown and keep it lit all night (until the candles naturally blow out).

Every Chanukiah is a Menorah, but not every Menorah is a Chanukiah

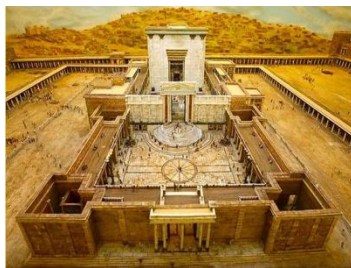
As I mentioned earlier, the term Chanukiah was invented to alleviate the confusion when using the word “Menorah”.

A Chanukiah strictly refers to a Hanukkah Menorah (9 branches), while a Menorah can mean *any* type of Jewish

lamp, *including* a Chanukiah.

Or, to put it simply: Every Chanukiah is a Menorah, but not every Menorah is a Chanukiah.

### **5 BRANCH MENORAH**



The five branch menorah represents the five levels of the soul, according to Kabbalistic (Tree of Life) teaching.

They are called ( in ascending order) Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya and Yeshida.

This menorah usually sits on the cantor’s stand in a synagogue. It is for those in their year of mourning of a deceased loved one. You will also find the symbol of the 5 branch menorah engraved in many gravestones .

Now lets look at the second the re-dedication of the Temple during the Maccabee Period.

### **RE- DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE**

The Feast of Dedication, which was once also called the Feast of the Maccabees, was an eight-day winter festival celebrated by the Jews in the month of December or sometimes late November, depending on when it fell in the lunisolar Jewish calendar.

Today, this festival is called Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights. The history of the Feast of Dedication goes back to the inter-testamental period.

The story of Hanukkah comes from historical events recorded primarily in the books of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. These books are part of a collection called the *Apocrypha*.

(The inter-testamental period is the time between the last writings of the Old Testament and the appearance of Christ. It lasted from the prophet Malachi’s time (about 400 BC) to the preaching of John the Baptist (about AD 25).

Although these books are not part of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), they are recognized by many Jewish and Christian communities as historical sources.

Around 167 BCE, the Jewish people were under the rule of the Seleucid Empire, led by King Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Antiochus, whose title meant “the manifested one”, sought to impose Greek culture and religion upon the Jewish people. Explicitly, he banned Jewish practices, desecrated the Temple, and set up an altar to Zeus for pagan sacrifices.

This attempt to force Hellenization provoked a major crisis among the Jewish population. In response, a priest named Mattathias and his five sons, including Judah Maccabee, led a revolt against Antiochus’s forces.

Known as the Maccabees, they were a priestly family who gathered a group of Jewish freedom fighters to resist the Greek forces through guerrilla warfare.

Against all odds, the Maccabees eventually succeeded in reclaiming Jerusalem and the Temple.

The name "Maccabee" meaning "Who is like You, O God?" became a symbol of Jewish strength, courage, and faith, recognized in books like 1 & 2 Maccabees.

When we tell this story year after year, we tend to imagine that the Maccabees found the beautiful gold Menorah of the Temple in its place, and they simply added the pure oil to it.

Yet, this would be truly remarkable. The Syrians had control of the Temple for a long stretch of time and they surely would have plundered all the valuable items within it. It would have been very unlikely for them to have left an impressive gold candelabrum in its place.

A midrash (a body of ancient Jewish rabbinic writings) suggests that when the Maccabees entered the Temple, they indeed did not find the Menorah there.

It had already been stolen by the enemies of the Jews.



So the Maccabees improvised by putting together a make-shift Menorah made of spears.

The midrash (Pesikta Rabbati 2:1) surmises that the spears had been left behind by the Syrian soldiers who fled in haste during their defeat.

So the Menorah of the original Hanukkah was made of the spears of our enemies!

This midrash is teaching a profound lesson. The very weapons with which our enemies sought to destroy us—those very weapons were used to spread the light of Judaism!

The Maccabees were demonstrating that their victory was not merely successful in a military sense. Rather, it was also—and pre-eminently—a spiritual victory.

The enemy’s spears were transformed into branches of the Menorah, bringing light into the Temple, restoring worship of the One true God.

The Haftarah (reading from the Books of the Prophets) that we read on Shabbat and during Hanukkah includes the famous words of the prophet Zechariah:

[“Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit said the Lord of hosts”](#) (Zechariah 4:6).

Not by spears, not by guns, not by missiles, not by terrorism, not by political intimidation: these weapons of our enemies will not prevail. We will transform their weapons into sources of light and peace. We will create a Menorah of righteousness that will inspire the world to a loftier and more spiritual vision.

To quote from the Passover Haggadah, “in each generation they arise to destroy us and the Almighty saves us from their hands.”

Upon completion of the spear menorah they sought to restore it to proper worship.



However, according to tradition, they found only a single small flask of oil. Which was enough to keep the menorah lit for just one day.

Miraculously, this small amount of oil lasted for eight days, giving the priests enough time to prepare more oil. This miracle of the oil became central to the celebration of Hanukkah and is a key reason why the holiday lasts for eight days.

The Bible mentions the Feast of Dedication by name in the Gospel of John. [“Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Yeshua was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade”](#) ([John 10:22–23](#)).

This is the scene in which Yeshua claims oneness with the Father, for which the unbelieving Jews try to apprehend and stone Him (verses 24–39).

Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication, is not one of the festivals instituted by God through Moses as part of the Law. That is not to say, however, that the festival is unbiblical or unpleasing to God.

The Feast of Dedication is about the darkness of persecution and the light of God that leads His people through the darkness of those figurative nights with a promise of joy in the morning ([Psalm 30:5](#)).

<sup>5</sup> [For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.](#)

## Hanukkah Festival of Lights



So now we understand both the originality and meaning of both the Menorah and the re-dedication of the Temple let us look at the Hanukkah Festivities as celebrated today by both the Jewish People and the Messianic Movement.

Hanukkah, is one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays, is an eight-day festival often referred to as the "Festival of Lights" and celebrated with candles, food, family, and friends.

Hanukkah begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev. It typically falls in late November or December on the Gregorian calendar.

Because the Hebrew calendar is lunar, the exact dates vary each year on the Gregorian calendar.

The holiday lasts for eight days and nights, and the Jewish people use a unique candelabra – a hanukkiyah – to celebrate each day. Every night, an additional candle is lit, progressing to a full hanukkiyah with all eight candles (plus the “helper” candle) glowing by the eighth night.

Through this beautiful and meaningful holiday, the Jewish people honor God’s miracles. At the same time, they celebrate the resilience of their faith, both ancient and modern. Hanukkah stands as a testament to the enduring light of God that no force of darkness can extinguish.

In modern Jewish life, Hanukkah is all about joy, gratitude, and symbolism. Observers light the hanukkiyah, a special nine-branched menorah. As mentioned previously, it holds a candle for each night of the holiday, plus a “helper” candle, called the shamash, which is used to light the others.

Each evening, families gather to recite blessings, light the candles, and sing traditional songs. All that to celebrate the miracles that occurred for their people.

In Israel, Hanukkah takes on a particularly vibrant character, with public menorah lightings, festive events, and traditional foods. Most famously, during Hanukkah Israelis eat sufganiyot (jelly-filled donuts) and latkes (potato pancakes), which are fried in oil. This, of course, connects to the holiday’s theme of miraculous multiplication of oil.

Hanukkah customs are rich with symbolism and tradition. Here are some of the most meaningful ways you can celebrate Hanukkah today:

## Lighting of the Candles



The most central Hanukkah tradition is lighting the hanukkah, a nine-branched menorah. Each night, light one additional candle until all eight are glowing on the final night.

Each night's added candle brings both literal and symbolic light, augmented by a newer emphasis on charity and a commitment to *tikkun olam* meaning **"repairing the world"** during the holiday.

### The Menorah Setup:

The *hanukkah* has 9 branches—8 for the candles of each night and 1 for the *shamash*, the “servant candle” used to light the others.

### How Many Candles Are Needed?

- 1 candle for the first night (plus the *shamash*).
- 2 candles for the second night, and so on, until 8 candles are lit on the final night.
- Total: 44 candles are needed for all 8 nights of Hanukkah (not counting extras for mistakes).

### Candle Colors:

While there's no rule about colors, many families choose blue and white candles, reflecting the colors of Israel's flag and symbolizing purity and the divine presence. You are welcome to use candles of any color that bring joy and meaning to your celebration.

### How to Light the Candles:

- Place the candles in the *hanukkah* from right to left, one for each night.
- Light the *shamash* candle first and use it to light the other candles.
- Light the candles from left to right, starting with the newest candle. This honors the increasing miracle of each night.

### Blessings:

Before lighting the candles, recite the traditional blessings to thank God for His faithfulness and the miracles of Hanukkah.

### A Simple Blessing to Reflect on:

לְשַׁעֲשֵׂה נִסִּים לְאַבֹּתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, she'asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim  
hahem baz'man hazeh*

*"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has performed miracles for our  
ancestors in days of old and in this time."*



#### Shining God's Light:

After lighting the candles, allow them to burn as a testimony of God's goodness.

Take time to reflect, pray, and sing songs of joy—remembering that the light of the Messiah, Yeshua (Yeshua), shines brighter than any darkness.

#### Blessing and Songs

Each night in a Jewish home, blessings are recited over the hanukkah, followed by traditional songs of praise.

One well-loved song is *Maoz Tzur* ("Rock of Ages"), which tells the story of God's salvation throughout history.

Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati,  
lecha na'eh leshabe'ach,  
tikon beit tefi lati,  
vesham todah nezabe'ach.  
Le'et tachin matbe'ach  
mitzar hamenabe'ach.  
Az egmor  
beshir mizmor  
chanukat hamizbe'ach

My refuge, my rock of salvation!  
It is a pleasure to sing Your praises.  
Let our house of prayer be restored.  
And there we will offer You our thanks.  
When You will have prepared the slaughter Of the the barking foe,  
Then we will celebrate with song and psalm The dedication of the altar.

## Hanukkah Food



Hanukkah foods often center on oil, representing the miracle of the Temple oil. Traditional dishes include:

**Latkes:** Fried potato pancakes, often served with applesauce or sour cream.

**Sufganiyot:** Jelly-filled donuts, another treat fried in oil, which is especially popular in Israel.

Dairy dishes, specifically cheese and cheese pancakes (cheese latkes), honor the bravery of Chag HaBanot (Festival of the Daughters): Observed on the seventh night of Hanukkah celebrates Judith and the bravery of all Jewish women with cheese-centered feasts.

## Playing Dreidel



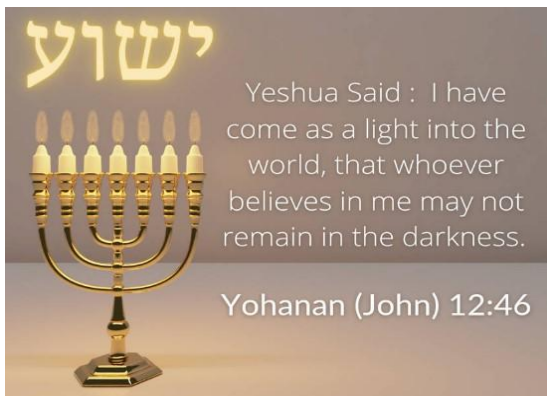
The dreidel, a four-sided spinning top, is a beloved Hanukkah game. Each side of the dreidel bears a Hebrew letter—*Nun*, *Gimel*, *Hei*, and *Shin*. They represent the phrase “Nes Gadol Haya Sham” (“A Great Miracle Happened There”).

In Israel, the letters slightly differ, spelling “A Great Miracle Happened Here.” The game is played with chocolate coins or other treats, bringing fun and a reminder of the miracle to children and adults alike.

For Messianic Jews, Hanukkah is a meaningful celebration that highlights God’s ongoing faithfulness to Israel and His gift of Yeshua, the Light of the World.

In addition to traditional Hanukkah practices, Messianic Jews may add specific elements to express their faith in Yeshua as the Messiah:

## Recognizing Yeshua as the Light:



Messianic Jews see a deep connection between the light of the hanukiah and the light that Yeshua brings to the world. In the Gospel of John, Yeshua proclaims:

“I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

This theme is cherished during Hanukkah.

Many Messianic families meditate on how Yeshua brings spiritual light and redemption, just as the oil provided physical light in the Temple.

### Seeing the Menorah from a Messianic perspective:

Jewish believers often pay special attention to the “shamash” or servant candle. It lights all the other candles on a *hanukkiah*.

It can serve as a symbol of Yeshua who serves and brings light to the world.

### Retelling the Hanukkah Story with a Messianic Perspective:

Messianic Jews also retell the traditional story of the Maccabees and the miracle of the oil.

However, they also reflect on the hope and renewal that comes through Yeshua.

Many Messianic families share how the rededication of the Temple reflects the rededication of their own lives to God. We honor His call to live as a “light to the nations” (Isaiah 42:6).

### Reading from the New Testament:

Since Yeshua observed Hanukkah (John 10:22-23),

<sup>22</sup> Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup> and Yeshua was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade.

Messianic Jews often read this passage and reflect on His role in the Temple during the Festival of Dedication.

This remembrance is a reminder of how God’s presence still “dwells among us” through Yeshua. Just as His light did in the ancient Temple.

As we gather to celebrate Hanukkah, Jews and Gentiles together, let us focus our hearts on the urgent needs of Israel and the Jewish community worldwide. While it is easy to forget those still in captivity, I feel a deep responsibility as a Zionist Gentile to urge fellow believers in Christ to act. In the face of rising global antisemitism, our Jewish brothers and sisters in the Diaspora need our unwavering support. By standing in unity, we become a true light that overcomes the darkness.

Although the deepening shadows of these early winter nights can feel heavy, they serve as a canvas for the light. It is only against this backdrop of darkness that we can truly recognize the holy sparks of opportunity scattered all around us.

In the immortal words of Rabbi Lord Sacks:

**'FOR THOUGH MY FAITH IS NOT YOURS. AND YOUR FAITH IS NOT MINE. IF WE EACH ARE FREE TO LIGHT OUR OWN FLAME. TOGETHER WE CAN BANISH SOME OF THE DARKNESS OF THE WORLD.'**