

DEUTERONOMY

Lesson 21 - Chapter 16 Continued

Last week we ended by discussing some fascinating details about Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, respectively called **Pesach** and **Matza** in Hebrew. We're going to continue that today and won't fully finish Deuteronomy 16 until next time. There are a couple of reasons that we are carefully going over the laws concerning these Biblical feasts; first, because the way that some Jews and Christians celebrate those holy days today is not necessarily Scripturally accurate and second is because this was the series of festivals during which Yeshua HaMashiach celebrated a final meal with His disciples, was betrayed and arrested, tried and executed, and was buried and arose from the dead. This was the climax of what Yeshua had come for in the first place and it will remain the most important part of His earthly ministry until He comes again for the next stage in God's redemption process.

I told you last time that I wanted you to think about what we went over in discussing Passover, at least partially because it might challenge what you thought you knew concerning those holy days. Now what we are going to discuss is rather technical so stay focused.

I also want to say right up front that while I cannot (nor can anyone else) be 100% certain on the timeline I will present to you, it does fit both the Scriptural AND the Traditional understanding for Jesus' era. So while I am fully prepared to defend it, understand that I am not saying that it is impossible for another scenario to be equally plausible. However unless we completely throw out the "3 nights in the tomb" statements what IS **not** possible is that Yeshua was crucified on the 6th day of the week (Friday in modern terminology). No matter how you slice it Friday nighttime plus Saturday nighttime, with the absolute Biblical assurance we have of a 1st day of the week discovery of the missing body (Sunday morning) does not add up to 3 nights.

There is ONE other scenario that is a slight possibility and it is that everything I lay out to you today simply backs up by one day; but I do not accept that because that possibility only occurs if the protocols of Passover week were done according to the traditions espoused by the Pharisees. If things were done in accordance with the strictest traditions of the Pharisees of that era, then my timeline would indeed have to back up one day. But that is very unlikely (and I say that it is as near to impossible as you can get) because the Sadducees controlled the Priesthood in Jesus' day and they followed the Lev. 23 injunction that Firstfruits was to take place on the first day after the 7th Day Sabbath. I'll show you later why this is important.

Let's briefly review before we start with some new material so that we can all start from the same understanding.

There is a series of 3 springtime Biblical Feasts that begin on the 1st month of the Jewish Religious calendar year, the month of Aviv. Aviv is the original Hebrew name for this month that, after the Babylonian exile, also started to be called by its Babylonian name Nisan. While it is said that the Biblical Feasts revolve around an agricultural motif, the reality is that neither Passover nor Unleavened Bread is about farming or food production. Passover is a commemoration of the day that the Lord smote Egypt by killing all firstborns (meaning firstborn sons) in order to force Pharaoh to release Israel from his grip. Yehoveh ordered that all who wish to trust in Him can avoid this death by sacrificing a yearling lamb and then brushing its blood onto the doorposts of their homes. While I pointed out several elements of this process that we don't typically take into consideration, the one that I'd like you to keep in mind today is that the ONLY people in Egypt that were ever at risk of death were the firstborns.

Unleavened Bread (**Matza**) is the 2nd of the group of 3 springtime festivals and it commemorates the day that Israel actually began its march out of Egypt. While Passover is a 1-day event, Matza is a 7-day event that begins the day immediately following Passover. Because in Egypt this event happened suddenly and Israel had leave immediately, and there was no time for the Hebrews to prepare their staple food, bread, in the normal way (by adding yeast, letting it rise, and then baking it) the Jews were required to prepare a kind of bread that did NOT utilize yeast or leavening. This bread, **Matza**, was not even baked; it was prepared by being placed on a griddle to cook in the open air similar to the way we cook pancakes.

The final festival of the group of 3 is called **Bikkurim**, or Firstfruits. This occurs the day immediately following the 1st day of Matza. So we have each festival begin in turn over the 14th, 15th, and 16th of Aviv. The final day of the festival is the 21st of Aviv. We'll talk more about Firstfruits shortly.

Now the first part of chapter 16 of Deuteronomy is really meant to discuss the 3 pilgrimage festivals; that is, those 3 special ones out of the 7 Biblical feasts in which it is required that all Hebrew males journey to the Tabernacle (later the Temple) and make a sacrifice. So this group of 3 springtime festivals I've been teaching you about are NOT the same thing as the 3 Pilgrimage festivals. However ONE of the 3 springtime festivals IS a pilgrimage festival: the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And because of the way the 3 springtime festivals happen (in immediate succession) the result was that the Jewish pilgrims would be present at the central sanctuary for all 3 of the springtime feasts.

Another important feature of the festivals is that God added some special Sabbath days to them. There are 2 kinds of Biblical Sabbaths: the regular weekly 7th day Sabbath that we're all familiar with, and the festival (or "high" or "great") Sabbaths that were part of the Biblical

festivals. In the series of 3 spring feasts, the **1st day** of the 7-day festival of **Matza** was one of those added special Sabbaths, as was the **final day** of the 7 days of **Matza**.

So to be clear: we have Passover on the 14th of Aviv, the next day is the 1st day of **Matza** (which means it's a special festival Sabbath), then the next day after that is Firstfruits. Let me stop and point out something very important right here: while the modern Hebrew calendar will indeed always show Aviv 16th as Firstfruits, that is NOT the Biblical practice and it was NOT the Tradition as practiced while the Temple still stood. In reality, while the Torah DOES specify Aviv 14 as Pesach and Aviv 15 as the 1st day of Matza, the Torah does NOT specify Aviv 16 as Firstfruits. Rather it says this about the date of Firstfruits in Lev. 23:11: ^{RSV} **Leviticus 23:10** *"Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest; ¹¹ and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, that you may find acceptance; on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.*

So according to the Torah Passover was on Aviv 14.....always: Matza was on Aviv 15.....always; and then there was to be a lull until the 7th day Sabbath came around and then on the following day Firstfruits was to be celebrated. THIS was the way the Sadducees practiced it; and since this ceremony HAD to occur at the Temple, and be performed by the priests, what the Pharisees or the Galileans or anyone else thought about when and how and in what order to perform this ritual didn't matter because the Sadducees controlled the priesthood and everything that went on at the Temple.

Let's examine the momentous events that surrounded Christ's death and how it would have played out on a timeline. Look at this chart I've prepared for you. At the top is an illustration of how a Hebrew 24-hour day is defined. Notice that a Biblical day begins and ends at sunset. Our modern day that uses mechanical clocks as our means of time measurement makes 12 midnight when one day ends and the new begins and it never varies.

I have arbitrarily chosen the time of 7 pm as the moment of darkness when the old day ends and the new begins because in the springtime, in Israel, that is about the time of sunset. Notice the dark bar indicating that it is nighttime, then the gray portion to indicate twilight, and then the white portion which represents the daylight hours. Of course we'll then encounter gray again as evening approaches and then finally darkness. It is very difficult for us moderns to wrap our minds around this ancient way of measuring time and days because in essence the first meal of the new day for any Hebrew (or anyone else as far as any records discovered would indicate) was the evening or nighttime meal, dinner. So for a Hebrew the first meal of each new day was dinner, breakfast was the middle meal of the day and what we'd call lunch was the last meal of the current day-cycle. Here is what I believe to be the correct timeline for Yeshua's last supper, arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection; let's go over it.

Aviv 13 (this not on the chart) is the day before Passover, which in the year Jesus died would have been a Wednesday. It was on Wednesday the 13th that the disciples had the special meal prepared that Christianity labels The Last Supper. As I told you last time, we find in the Mishna tractate Pesahim that the Galileans adopted a tradition that in Hebrew is called, **seudah maphsehket** that translates to “last supper”. Allow me to remind you that in Yeshua’s days the politics were such that the Holy Lands had been divided (by Rome) into several districts. The ones we’re all most familiar with are Judea (Judah) to the south where Jerusalem was located, Galilee up north, and Samaria that lay between the other two. Further, Judaism had severely fractured and the Judean Jews, Galilean Jews, and Samaritan Jews had each developed some different traditions on a number of religious matters including just how the feasts were to be observed. The Galilean Jews (Yeshua and His disciples were Galileans) had established an additional celebration called **seudah maphsehket** (last supper) that the Judean Jews did not recognize. This last supper was about remembering that it was indeed not ALL Hebrews who were in danger from death at God’s hand in Egypt, but ONLY the firstborn sons. So a special nighttime meal was adopted whereby this meal would be eaten and there would be a 24 hour fast that followed (thus the name “last supper”). Following the last supper and then the fast, the next meal to be eaten was the Passover meal.

Now there have been a number of essays and books that explain that it was known that there were two Passover Seders: one on Passover eve, Aviv 13th, (the day before Passover) and the official Passover night meal on Aviv 14. But this is not very good scholarship and it misses the mark rather significantly. These so-called 2 Passover Seders were in fact the combination of the last supper (celebrated ONLY by Galilean Jews and it appears probably also by the Samaritan Jews), and then the next night the actual Passover meal. But this same poor scholarship also rather obscures what went on with Jesus and His disciples on those fateful few days. And it ignores that the Judean Jews, and thus the Priesthood centered in Jerusalem did NOT join in that additional Passover Seder.

So on Aviv 13 (Wednesday by our calendars) the **seudah maphsehket** was prepared; HOWEVER, it was not eaten on Aviv 13. Rather it was after sundown (after the end of the day of Aviv 13) that the meal was eaten. That is, it was eaten as the first meal of the day of Thursday Aviv 14th (remember, the beginning of a new day is just after sundown). So this special meal honoring the firstborn (called last supper) was actually eaten on Passover, but as the **beginning** meal of Aviv 14, Passover day. Are you with me so far? OK, now follow me closely.

The meal called “last supper” is eaten in the first hour of Passover, Aviv 14th. It is here at this meal that Yeshua instructs His disciples to commemorate this day by drinking wine that symbolizes His blood that establishes the New Covenant, and by eating unleavened bread that symbolizes His body to which we become in union. NOTE: this was NOT the traditional Passover Seder; that was yet to come because that meal is not eaten until the END of Passover day.

Therefore at the start of the day of Aviv 14, Thursday (which is nighttime), Passover day, the Galilean “last supper” commemorating firstborns is eaten. The next event is that Judas betrays Jesus and shortly after midnight Our Lord is arrested. It is still Passover day. In the wee hours before daylight, He is tried and convicted of blasphemy. It is still Passover Day. After his sentence is confirmed by Pontius Pilate Jesus is scourged and nailed to a Roman cross by Roman soldiers. It is still Passover Day, Thursday, Aviv 14.

At about the moment Jesus expires (roughly 3 pm in the afternoon on Passover Day) the slaughter of the Passover Lambs begins in the Temple grounds. Somewhere around ¼ million sheep will be killed and their blood collected between the hours of 3 pm and 6 pm, the job completed as the sun nears the horizon. It is still Passover Day.

While this is occurring the women are hurrying to get the Roman soldiers to remove Jesus’ corpse from the cross; it is a requirement that they **MUST** get Him buried immediately because otherwise He would just lay exposed for at least 2 days. Why 2 days? I’ll show you in a minute. Their prayers are answered and Yeshua is entombed before the sun sets. It is still Passover Day.

The butchered lambs are placed in the thousands of collective ovens located all around Jerusalem so that the hundreds of thousands of visiting pilgrims can roast their Passover Lambs. It is still Passover Day. Shortly after the 3 stars that become visible only when it is dark enough, Passover Day officially ends and the 1st day of **Matza** begins. Aviv 14th has ended and it is now Aviv 15, Friday, the 1st day of Unleavened Bread.

What, you say, where did the Passover meal go? Aren’t they supposed to eat it on Passover day? **NO!** Much to many peoples’ surprise the Biblical injunction is that the Passover meal is to be eaten **AFTER** dark. This means the day has changed. It’s only that the Passover Lamb is to be slaughtered and prepared on Passover Day, but that’s not when it’s actually eaten. Thus Aviv 14 has changed to Aviv 15, the 1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That’s right: the Passover meal is **NOT** eaten on Passover Day; it is the first meal of the new day on Matza. Why? Because that’s exactly as it was in Egypt. They were still eating the Passover meal at around midnight on Aviv 15 when Yehoveh killed all the unprotected firstborns throughout Egypt.

Last week I explained to you that it was Jerome in the 5th century AD who translated the Hebrew words **Zevah Pesach** and made it Pass-over; but this is incorrect and misleading. Therefore we get this mental picture (along with millions of sermons to back it up) that on Pesach the Lord “passed over” the Hebrew firstborns killing only the Egyptian firstborns. While it is true that the Lord passed over the firstborns who obeyed the command to paint Lamb’s blood on their doorpost, the problem is that **Zevah Pesach** does not mean “pass over” it means “protective sacrifice”.

Look: what occurred on Aviv 14 in Egypt was that the Pesach Lamb was slaughtered and its blood brushed onto the doorways of homes. It was the day the “protective sacrifice” of the lamb, as ordered by God, took place. But, it would not be until after dark (when the day changed to Aviv 15, the 1st day of **Matza**) that late at night (around midnight) the Lord passed through Egypt killing all the firstborns who were NOT protected by the sacrifice of the Lamb. So Pesach, which is ONLY the protective sacrifice of the lambs, happened on Aviv 14 but the Lord didn’t pass over the protected Hebrew firstborns until the first hours of the next day, Aviv 15. Then later after the meal was eaten and it turned into daytime (still the same day) the Hebrews assembled together to be led by Moses as they left Egypt. It is the day they left Egypt (the same day that hours earlier they had eaten the Lamb as the first meal of the day) that is celebrated as the 1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Now what did we learn earlier that was special and different about the 1st day of Matza? It was a festival Sabbath day. Friday Aviv 15th was a Sabbath day, a special festival Sabbath day. It had some of the same requirements as the 7th Day Sabbath in that handling a human corpse was prohibited on ANY kind of Sabbath. That is why we read in the Gospels that there was a frenzy to get Messiah buried before dark, when the day changed from Pesach (a regular day) to the 1st day of Matza, which was a festival Sabbath day.

Aviv 15th was an uneventful day; it was Friday, the festival Sabbath to begin Matza. The day ends at sundown and now it is now Saturday, Aviv 16th; this is the regular weekly 7th day Sabbath. I already mentioned that while for the past several centuries Firstfruits has been celebrated on Aviv 16 (as a permanent tradition), in fact it was only the Rabbis (who were Pharisees) who long ago ordered it done this way, as opposed to the way it was done in Jesus’ day. And this change occurred AFTER the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. when the priesthood became defunct. Remember that the Sadducees were the High Priests and in charge of the Priesthood so with the end of the Temple it was essentially the end of the priesthood and so the Sadducees lost much of their control over matters of ritual and tradition. As a result the Pharisees were able to get their way and they ordered that rather than Firstfruits moving around on the calendar it would henceforth ALWAYS be Aviv 16th that Firstfruits would be celebrated on.

Let me say again: in Jesus’ day Firstfruits was the day AFTER the 7th day Sabbath no matter what the calendar date. Therefore in Jesus’ era Firstfruits was always the 1st day of the week (Sunday in our modern terminology).

Notice that by this timeline Yeshua has (indeed) been in the tomb for 3 days and 3 nights just as the prophecy of Jonah in the belly of the great fish explained. I hope as you can see that this is not at all straightforward and that if a scholar is not a student of the Torah and to a degree of Jewish Tradition there is no way he can understand how the passion week of Yeshua’s death played out. After all; the NT that was written by Jews who assumed that

anyone reading these documents would be familiar with the Jewish customs and their nuances and the political circumstances of that day. But for now I want to move on to talk about Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks.

Open your Bibles and let's re-read a bit of Deuteronomy 16.

RE-READ DEUTERONOMY 16:9 - 12

The festival of Shavuot comes 7 weeks (hence the name Feast of Weeks) from the day of the ceremonial first cutting of the harvest that comes sometime during the overall springtime festival of Passover/Matza/Firstfruits.

The original instruction does NOT give a specific day; there is some wiggle room because it is not known year to year when the first day of the Barley harvest will actually happen. So technically, and scripturally, the 50 day period can move around by about 1 week. Let me reiterate from last week that even though Aviv 16th is called Firstfruits, and that the first sheaf of Barley is waved, Firstfruits does NOT mark the beginning of the harvest; rather, a sheaf of GREEN (unripened) Barley is cut and presented to be waved by the priests at the Temple. Firstfruits (Bikkurim) is a PRE-harvest ceremony that is asking the Lord to make the harvest a good one.

Because we have learned that Firstfruits moves around on the calendar from year to year, therefore so does the summertime festival of Shavuot since it is dependent on when Firstfruits comes. Technically one counts 50 days from the day after the 7th day Shabbat that occurs the day before Firstfruits and that tells us when Shavuot occurs. After the Temple was destroyed and the Rabbis took over control of Judaism, they decided that it was better for all concerned (especially those far away in the Diaspora) to have fixed days on a calendar to celebrate Firstfruits and then Shavuot, and that's how it is to this day.

Another Biblical reality is this: Shavuot is another pilgrimage festival. It is the 2nd of the 3 annual feasts that requires all Hebrew males to journey to the central sanctuary (starting with David the sanctuary was located in Jerusalem) to make a sacrifice. Since Hebrews soon became scattered over thousands of square miles of the Holy Land, and later over millions of square miles of Asia and then the Roman Empire, a moving target for the day of Shavuot was nearly impossible to implement. And depending on where you lived growing, ripening, and harvesting would occur at widely varying times. Therefore it was necessary (in their view) that a firm day be decided upon as that 50th day from the first sheaf of Barley being waved. So the countdown to Shavuot began each year on the day of Bikkurim, Firstfruits; this was NOT

Scripture, but it was Rabbinical Tradition and it is a practical solution to a tough problem.

Christians know Shavuot better as Pentecost; Pentecost is but the Greek translation for Shavuot. Pentecost is known to the Church as the day that the Holy Spirit of the Lord came to reside within those who trusted Yeshua as Messiah. It was the day that all those Jews started speaking in tongues (foreign languages). I've said this on a number of occasions but as a teacher I guess I get a pass for repeating myself: Pentecost was NOT a day that was created by Christians to commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was already a 1300 year old holy day by Yeshua's time and we're reading about it here in Deuteronomy 16:9 – 12. Pentecost (Shavuot) was a prophetic foreshadow of the coming of the Holy Spirit. And naturally, as all prophecy is 100% accurate and flawless, that is exactly what happened; the Holy Spirit DID come on the summertime Feast Day of Shavuot.

While the descending of the Holy Spirit is the Christian reason for the day, the Jewish people see it as something else. In fact for the Jew it has a dual purpose; first is that from an agricultural standpoint the nearly 2 month period from the time of Firstfruits until the time of Shavuot covers the grain harvesting period of BOTH the Barley and the Wheat harvests. So while Firstfruits signals that the harvesting of the Barley will begin within a few hours or days, Shavuot signals the end of harvesting wheat. That is, the Barley harvest begins around the time of Firstfruits and then ends around a month later. At the proper moment during the 2nd half of that 7-week period the wheat harvesting begins, and then at Shavuot (the end of the 7 week period) the wheat harvesting ends.

The second meaning of Shavuot for Hebrews is that it is celebrated as that time that Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai. The Scriptures show us that it was around 50 days after Israel fled Egypt that Moses received the Law from God (however, the Scriptures do NOT actually verify that exact amount of time, rather it is Tradition).

Something tells me that this Tradition is probably accurate because note the amazing connection between Moses receiving the Law of God written on stone tablets and the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is prophetic from Jeremiah that a day will come that God will write His Laws on the hearts of those who love Him. The New Testament confirms that it was on the day that the Holy Spirit came (Pentecost, Shavuot) that God wrote His Laws on our hearts.

By the way (as long as I'm repeating myself) let me say that God told Moses when He gave them the Law at Sinai that the PEOPLE were to write the Law on their own hearts; this to be done by means of thinking on these laws night and day. Then in Jeremiah the Lord says prophetically that when He renews the giving of the Law THIS TIME HE is going to write those Laws of the hearts of His people. In BOTH cases the Law was to be written on the human heart; it's just that in the first case the individual was to do it himself, and in the second God would do it supernaturally. Let me also take this occasion to mention that in the Biblical

era.....OT or NT.....heart did NOT mean how we think of it today. The heart was the seat of conscious THOUGHT in Bible times; it was the human intellect, our minds; later, long after the Bible was closed, the Greek culture made the heart into the seat of human erotic desires and emotions. So when the Bible says “heart”, just substitute the word “mind” because that is what it meant then and should mean that to us now.

What else is revealing about Shavuot (Pentecost) is its uniquely inclusive nature; Israel is told to include males, females, slaves, free, Levites, orphans, widows, even strangers (**ger**). **Ger** are NON-Hebrews (gentiles) that have decided to bond themselves to Israel BUT they are not circumcised. That is, those who may be included in the meaning of Shavuot do NOT have to become official Hebrews by means of the b’rit milah, the circumcision ceremony.

Isn’t that an interesting parallel to the New Testament situation that those who wish to call Yeshua their Lord can be Hebrews or non-Hebrews, but they MUST bond themselves to Israel (as Paul says, “be grafted in”); yet that bonding does not mean that a **ger** need a circumcision ceremony that makes them (us, Believers) official physical Hebrews. We can remain gentiles and yet still be part of Israel on a spiritual level, just as the scenario is in the Torah.

Let’s move on now to Moses’ exposition on the regulations concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, **Sukkot**. To that end let’s re-read a few more verses of Deuteronomy 16.

RE-READ DEUTERONOMY 16:13 – 17

Each of the festivals is known by a handful of common names; the festival of **Sukkot** is no different. **Sukkot** (Hebrew) is also called the Feast of Booths, or The Feast of the Ingathering, or the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of the 7 festivals also reflects a certain tone ranging from somberness and sobriety all the way to unbounded joy. As an example: the Feast of Firstfruits reflects a certain anxiety and anticipation; a bit of uncertainty in what the outcome of the current year’s harvest might be. So the focus of Firstfruits is to wave a sheaf of green (not yet ripe) grain before God asking Him to bring a good harvest. The Feast of Weeks, Shavuot, reflects a tone of rest and relief. The Barley and Wheat harvests are over and the results (hopefully good) are known. The feverish pace of the fieldwork to bring in the harvest before it spoils in the field relaxes for a time.

Sukkot, though, is unmitigated joy! In fact yet another name for this festival is “the time of our rejoicing”. Let’s see why that is.

This Fall season festival is the 3rd and final of the 3 pilgrimage festivals; we've had the Feast of Matza in the Spring, the Feast of Shavuot in the Summer, and now the Feast of Tabernacles in the Fall whereby all the Hebrew males must make a journey to the central sanctuary for praise and worship of Yehoveh that necessarily involves sacrifice. Just as the Feast of Matza begins on a regular and steady calendar date, so does Sukkot. Just as the Feast of Matza is a 7-day feast, so is Sukkot. And just as the 1st and last days of the Feast of Matza are declared as festival Sabbaths so are the 1st and last days of the Feast of Sukkot declared as festival Sabbaths.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins each year on Tishri 15. Tishri is the 7th month of the Hebrew religious calendar year. But Tishri is ALSO the 1st month of the Hebrew civil calendar year. Therefore the 1st day of Tishri is Jewish New Year.

This agricultural based holy day celebrates the end of the threshing of the grains. It marks the time when the separation of the wheat from the chaff is coming to a close. It also marks the time when the vineyard harvest is complete and the winemaking is ending and the new wine is ready.

And like Shavuot, those invited to participate and benefit from the Feast of Tabernacles include Hebrews and non-Hebrews from all classes of folks who have attached themselves to Israel's relationship with Yehoveh.

Let me close out this section of Deuteronomy 16 on the 3 Pilgrimage festivals by quickly showing you the parallel between the festivals mentioned and the prophetic ministries of Jesus that they represented.

Passover represented Yeshua's substitutionary death, and His blood that protects all who have faith in what He has done from eternal death at the hand of the Father. He shed His blood on Passover day.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is that time when Christ went into the tomb, without sin (without leavening) and His body did NOT decay. It was the day that His sacrificial death and burial brought the release of all His followers from the power of evil and sin. Christ was put into the tomb to begin the 1st day of Matza.

Firstfruits represents that day when the first of what would be harvested in the near future was lifted up and waved before the Father. It is that day when with anxiety and anticipation Christ, as that green sheaf of Barley who was cut from the field, was the hope and forerunner of a bountiful harvest of Believers. Yet, He was NOT the first of the actual harvest; the harvest was

yet to come. Christ arose on the Feast of Firstfruits.

This ought to give us all the chills. The entire sequence of His death, burial and resurrection occurred precisely on the appropriate Biblical Feast days. But that's not all. 50 days later on Pentecost (the Feast of Shavuot) the Lord sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within men. The Lord harvested His Believers. They were His, they were put away for safekeeping, where no one and no thing could ever forcefully take them, us, away from Him. But there is more harvesting to come.

The High Holy Days of the Feast of Trumpets and of Yom Kippur (which we have discussed in other lessons) represent Yeshua HaMashiach coming for the 2nd time, and this time in great power and glory, bringing the world to it's knees, cutting down the evil and laying low the rebels.

The Feast of Tabernacles (or more appropriately as it is also known, the Feast of Ingathering) is the entry into the 1000 Reign of Christ: the Millennium. I won't go into all the details today but let me just point out the amazing parallels between the focal point and grand finale of the Feast of Sukkot: the Water Libation ceremony at the Altar of Burnt Offering. The earthly purpose for this event was to ask God to bring rain to the land to water the crops. In the final moments of the final Biblical Feast of each year, the closing event is that seven trumpets are blown 3 times for a total of 21 blasts of the trumpet, as a Golden Pitcher of water from the spring of Siloam is brought by the High Priest through the WaterGate of the Temple Mount. Then the water is poured out from that Golden Pitcher while the people of Jerusalem say in unison, "God save us now!" These 21 trumpet blasts represent the 3 series of 7 final judgments that will be rained down upon the world in man's final hours. After these 21 judgments, it is finished. The history of man as we know it is over. Yeshua HaMashiach is now in total control of a world that has not one single rebel; not one single person is alive who does not know the Lord and bow down to Him. And so it will remain for 1000 years.

Even more, the commemoration of this day will continue forever. For we are told in Zechariah that every year for time unmeasured the Feast of Sukkot will happen, including the culminating event: the water libation ceremony. ^{RSV} **Zechariah 14:16** *Then every one that 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. ¹⁷ And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them.*

Next week we'll finish up chapter 16.