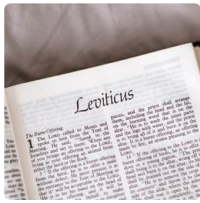


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Leviticus 23



Leviticus - Steve Gregg

Leviticus 23 describes the yearly feasts and festivals of the Lord that happen annually in the tabernacle in Jerusalem. These celebrations were timed to specific times and were marked by singing, dancing, eating together, and laughing. The feasts give us different pictures of the whole age of Christ, with each speaking to moral and spiritual character, judgment, and redemption through the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the feasts show us how Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament laws and will continue to be celebrated until His Second Coming.

Transcript

In this session, we're going to look at Leviticus chapter 23, which has the instructions about the yearly feasts or festivals of the Lord. This was the entire festival year, the calendar. There were several major events for which Israel was supposed to gather together for what was called a holy convocation.

You're going to find that expression a lot of times in this chapter. It should be a holy convocation. A convocation is a gathering.

And in each of these special days, we're told that they were to do no common work because they'd be treated as Sabbath rests. Now, we know that the seventh day of every week was a Sabbath rest, but also the special festival days were all Sabbath rests. The Jews actually would do a lot of resting in the course of a year because they also had the sort of like a Sabbath rest the first day of each month, which was the new moon.

That doesn't come up here. What this is about is those events that happen only annually. So, Israel had weekly holy days on the Sabbath, monthly holy days on the new moons, which was the beginning of each month, and then there were annual holy days.

And this chapter contains the entire calendar of the annual holy days. They are referred to as feasts of the Lord. They're festivals.

Now, three of these are week-long festivals. The Passover and what we usually call Pentecost and Tabernacles. These were week-long festivals so that every adult male Jew

was expected to come to Jerusalem or wherever the Tabernacle was.

The Tabernacle was never in Jerusalem. The Tabernacle was actually in Nob and some other places when they came into the land. Shiloh.

But eventually, the Temple replaced the Tabernacle and that was in Jerusalem. And the Jews forever afterwards were supposed to go to Jerusalem at least three times a year for these week-long festivals. In addition to the week-long festivals, there were certain special days.

And the special interest this has to us as Christians is that the festivals we have seen in the New Testament foreshadow Christ. We've already had occasion to talk about the Passover more than once. In Exodus, it was introduced.

It has been mentioned in other passages we've looked at before. And, of course, we've seen that Paul said that Christ is our Passover. What's interesting about this is that not only is Christ the fulfillment of the Passover, but he fulfilled it on the very day of the Jewish calendar.

The day that the Passover was being celebrated. That is, the things done in these festivals point forward to something that would be true in the New Testament. And the thing in the New Testament they point forward to actually happened on the day that the Jews were celebrating it in their calendar.

Same is true of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, which was another of the festivals, on the day that the Jews were celebrating it, the Holy Spirit fell on the church and that was the fulfillment of what was looked forward to in the Feast of Pentecost. Now, it's rather interesting how these feasts divide into two groupings.

There are those that are in the spring and early summer. And then there are those who are in the late summer or fall. And they are mainly based on the agricultural year, on the harvest seasons.

Passover occurs right around the time that the barley harvest is coming in. And so there's a day where the first barley sheaves are waved before the Lord during the Passover week. Pentecost occurs at the time of the wheat harvest.

The barley would ripen earlier than the wheat. And so the earlier festival has the barley sheaves waved as the first fruits to the Lord. Then the Pentecost comes 50 days later, and that's when it's about time to harvest the wheat.

And then the Feast of Tabernacles, which is later in the fall, is the time when the fruit harvest, grapes and other fruits were being brought in. And so, as it is with most ancient societies and with, frankly, with most ancient religions, their festivals were surrounding times of harvest and times of celebration. Almost every species of animals, other than

humans, lives its life very close to its food source.

Almost all animals spend their entire waking hours looking for food. They don't grow food like we do, they look for food. And so, that being so, eating is a major part of their life day by day.

People used to be that way too. These days, we have a few farmers who grow all of our food and we just go to the store and buy it once a week. And the rest of our time, we don't even have to think about where our food is coming from.

But ancient peoples had to farm for their food. They'd work 12 hours a day many times, six days a week in the case of Israel, to grow their food and to harvest it and to prepare it and so forth. And so, like, well, like the rest of nature, human beings used to, you know, live their life around the idea of eating.

And that's because God made eating to be a type and a shadow of our spiritual well-being. Jesus said that we should not labor merely for the food that perishes, but we should labor for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give. So, the food issue is a major central issue to ancient peoples.

It would be to us too, if we didn't have all the farm machinery and stuff that makes it possible for 3% of the population to grow all the food for the whole country. There was a time when about 60% of the American population were farmers, now 3% are. And those 3% grow all the food for the whole country and for most of the rest of the world as well.

It's an amazing thing. So, we don't live close to the land, close to the production of food. Food isn't really the central thing except when we get hungry and we eat it.

But in those days, bringing in the food, bringing in the harvest that they'd worked for for so many months was a great celebration to them. It was bringing in the next year's supply of what they were going to be eating. And so they had these celebrations that were timed at those times.

But they also had religious significance that not specifically related to agriculture. Obviously, Passover was a memorial of the escape from Egypt. And when they offered the first fruits to God, it was basically their way of saying that God is the provider of everything.

And the offering of the first fruits to Him is a way of saying that He owns the whole harvest. He's going to let us eat most of it, but we're going to give Him the first memorial portion to acknowledge it. Sort of like when the people would bring a grain offering to the Lord, the priest, before he'd take the grain for himself, he'd have to throw a portion of it, like a first fruit, as it were, on the fire on the altar to be God's.

And so these festivals were to remind people of God. They did so at times when they

would normally have occasion to celebrate. And the Jews were a celebrating people.

They sang, they danced, they ate together, they laughed. And that's an amazing thing, considering all the tragedies they had in their lives. But God had a lot of celebration built into their year.

And here in this chapter, we are told, in order as they occur in the year, what festivals they were supposed to observe. Now, there's a bit of a problem here, because the first of the sacred year was the first month. It was Abib, the same month as also called Nisan.

And that was the year that the Passover occurred and that the Exodus occurred. I mean, the month of the year. And God had said back in chapter 12 of Exodus that that month should be the beginning of their years, the first month of the calendar.

And so it is on the sacred calendar. But for reasons I've never fully understood, the Jews have a separate calendar for their civil year. And Abib is not considered the first month of their calendar.

It's the seventh month. The first month is six months later, the month of Tishri, which the Bible calls the seventh month. The seventh month of the sacred calendar that is acknowledged here today to the Jew is considered to be the first month of the seventh month.

The seventh month is the first month. So they've got the calendar jogged just six months from what it should be. And the first day of the seventh month was the is what they call Rosh Hashanah.

And that's the Jewish new year. So strangely, the Jews celebrate their new year seven months after the time that God said is the first month of their year. So we're here looking not at their civic or civil calendar.

We're looking at their religious calendar. And the year begins in the springtime. Abib or Nisan, as the month is called, it corresponds with our months of March and April.

It overlaps the two. The months don't begin at the same time our months begin. So this first festival Passover occurs either in March or April of our calendar.

And it says the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, the feasts of the Lord, which shall proclaim to be the holy convocation. These are my faith. Six days shall work be done.

But the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work in it. It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwelling.

So before he talks about the annual feast, he reminds them, as he does so many times of the need to keep the Sabbath on a weekly basis. But then he talks about the feast of

Passover and unleavened bread. These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

On the 14th day of the first month at twilight is the Passover, the Lord's Passover. And on the 15th day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to the Lord. Seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

On the first day, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it, but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation.

You shall do no customary work on it. Now, the emphasis in these instructions is not on the sacrifices. It does say for seven days you will make an offering by fire, but it doesn't even talk about what animals will be offered.

That information is given elsewhere in Numbers chapter 28. It is specified what specific animals they must offer every day during the feast of unleavened bread. But clearly, the emphasis in this chapter is not going to be on the specifics of the sacrifices, but more the need for them to do no work and the need for them to have a holy convocation.

And in the case of the feast of unleavened bread specifically to avoid eating leaven, that would be the main feature of that week is that they don't eat leaven in their food. Passover, you recall, is so called because when the death angel or the destroyer went through Egypt, those doors, those homes that had the blood on the doors, on the doorposts, on the doorframe, those homes were passed over by the destroyer and their firstborn was not killed. And so this was the event that broke Pharaoh's resistance.

And after nine previous plagues, this one actually caused Pharaoh to let the people go. And so it was God's action of freeing the people from slavery and establishing them as a free and independent nation. It was like their Independence Day.

It was like in America, July 4th would be. And so they celebrated it, but they especially it's the Lord's Passover. It's not something that's just a political holiday celebrating their political establishment as a nation, but it's it's to remember that the Lord is their founder.

It's the Lord's Passover, as he says in verse five. And this feast was kept. We're not told how it was kept here, but it was kept in a manner that is described in Exodus chapter 12 in some detail.

And of course, rabbis added more details as time went by. So there's an elaborate ritual associated with it, but it basically involves a family meal. The Passover night itself is just one day.

It's on the 14th of a bead and it is it does not require any animal sacrifices. Instead, it's

just a family meal. No one has to present themselves at the tabernacle on that day.

They just eat with their family, but they have a meal that's ordered a certain way with a lamb and with matzos or unleavened bread with certain bitter herbs on the table and a ritual that goes through the whole meal. And it is a memorial of the sufferings of their people. The bread that they eat is the bread of affliction that their fathers suffered in Egypt.

The bitter herbs on the table remind them of the bitterness of their bondage during that time. And then the wine they drink reminds them of the blood by which they were redeemed out of Egypt. We know that Jesus took that feast with his disciples and transformed it.

And he said that the bread now is his body. And the wine is his blood and that the new exodus that he was establishing was going to be celebrated by his disciples afterwards so that it would actually eclipse the exodus of Egypt. In Isaiah, there's a place where it talks about how the exodus from Egypt, it's going to be eclipsed, as it were, by the deliverance that God's going to do in the future for Israel.

That deliverance, I believe, is a reference to our salvation in Christ. But it says they will no longer say, blessed be the Lord who delivered us out of the land of Egypt, but blessed be God who drew us out of all the nations. And it specifically says that remembering the exodus will not be what they do anymore, but they'll be remembering instead a different salvation that God would bring about.

And that salvation, I believe, is the salvation through Christ. And that's what Jesus basically said in the upper room, is that from now on, when you keep this feast, you do it in remembrance of me, not in remembrance of the Egyptian captivity and deliverance from that. And that's what the Passover was for.

And it was followed, as we saw in verses five through eight, by a feast of seven days length, which is unleavened bread, during which certain sacrifices were offered on a regular basis, on a daily basis. And also, the other thing was that people just did not put leaven in their bread. Now, it was not wrong to put leaven in their bread all the rest of the time, but this was the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

And we saw, when we were talking about this under another heading in an earlier lecture, that the Apostle Paul makes an application of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover. The Passover is the 14th of Abib. It's the next day that the seven days of unleavened bread begins, so that the two are back to back.

It's really the Feast of Passover and unleavened bread. But in First Corinthians five, Paul puts those two things together and says, First Corinthians 5:7 says, Therefore, purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed,

Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast, meaning the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Now, obviously, he's saying that our whole lives would be lived without malice and wickedness, which he likens to leaven. And our whole life should be like unleavened bread, characterized by sincerity and truth, without that leaven of malice and wickedness and so forth.

So he is saying that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is, although it was celebrated for seven days a year in Israel, the number seven means completeness or total. It represents our total lives. Our total lives are to be unleavened with the unleavened, with the leaven of malice and wickedness and so forth.

And so the Passover is what Jesus accomplished. And the seven days of unleavened bread represent the life we live as a result of what Jesus did. Now, an interesting thing about this is that on the Sabbath after Passover was followed by a day called the Feast of the First Fruits.

And really, it was primarily just characterized by taking the first sheaves of the barley harvest that was ripening and waving them before the Lord. And we read about that Leviticus 23, 9. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land which I give you to reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted on your behalf.

And on the day after Sabbath, the priest shall wave it. Now, notice on the day after Sabbath, after what Sabbath? Apparently, this is the first Sabbath after Passover. Now, Passover falls always on the 14th of a week, but it's not always the same day of the week.

It's not always going to be on a Friday or Tuesday or Wednesday. It's going to be on a different day of the week each year, just like our Christmas is on a different day of the week every year because it's a certain day of the month, as opposed to, say, Thanksgiving, which we celebrate on the last Thursday of every November. It's always going on Thursday because it's determined by the day of the week.

But many holidays, most of them are based on the day of the month. Christmas is December 25th, and therefore it might fall on Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or any day of the week. And likewise, Passover being on the 14th day of a week, it could fall on any day of the week.

But whatever day Passover fell upon the next Sabbath and then the day after that Sabbath, the next Sunday, in other words, Sabbath is Saturday. The following Sunday,

they would wave the first fruits. And it says you shall offer on that day when you wave the sheep, a male lamb of the first year without blemish as a burnt offering.

Its grain offering shall be two tenths of an ephod, fine flour mixed with oil and offering made by fire to the Lord for a sweet aroma and its drink offering shall be of wine, one fourth of a hymn. And you shall eat neither bread nor parts grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought the offering to your God. It should be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling.

Now, that is to say, you're not supposed to eat any of that harvest until you've offered the first fruits to God. You, of course, can still eat whatever left of the previous year's harvest. You're not you're not forbidden to eat, but of the new harvest, you don't eat any of it until God has been offered the first fruits.

Now, what's interesting about this is that the way of offering for reasons not really explained. Of the first, which was supposed to be offered on the Sunday following Passover. Now, that's important to us because Jesus died on Passover and he rose on the Sunday following Passover is the first fruits of those who had left.

He's the first born from the dead. His resurrection occurred on the Feast of First Fruits. And in talking about the resurrection of the dead.

In First Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul refers to Christ's resurrection as being first fruits. Paul says that as in Adam all die. So in Christ, all should be made alive.

He said that everyone in his own order, Christ, the first fruits. After those who are his at his coming, what is the verse there? That's 20. Thank you.

So it says that Christ rose as the first fruits of the resurrection. In verse 23, first Corinthians 15, 23, and Paul could not have failed to recognize that Jesus rose on at the Feast of First Fruits, first fruits of the barley harvest, the early harvest. Christ was the early token of the future resurrection.

And of course, it was on the Sunday after the Passover that this happened. So that is an interesting correspondence, not coincidental, I would imagine. It means, of course, that not only did God foresee when he ordered these feasts to be kept in this way on these days, he foresaw that Jesus would die on a certain day and would rise on a certain day.

And fourteen hundred years before Christ came, he had the Jews already celebrating those days in ways that looked forward to Jesus being the Passover lamb and being the first fruits of the resurrection. Why would the waving of barley be representative of the resurrection? Well, it's not so much the type of grain, but any grain. Remember what the Bible says? Remember what Jesus said? Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. How? By coming back to life, by resurrecting. The grain has to die in the ground, then it resurrects, it comes to life.

And so every grain that is produced is a resurrection of a seed that was planted. And so giving the first fruits of that resurrected crop to God is the way to represent the first fruits of the resurrection in general of people, which will come at the end of the age. And then it skips to the following festival.

We've had Passover, we've got unleavened bread and we've got feast of the first fruits. All of those happen within an eight day period. The first and the last days of that period are also treated like Sabbath.

Then verse 15, and you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, that is from that Sunday, which is the wave of the barley sheaves. The sheep, the Sabbath from the day that you brought the sheep of the way of offering seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath.

Then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. Now that new grain offering would be from the wheat harvest by this time, this being the summertime, 50 days, obviously a little over a month and a half after Passover time. And so by this time, the later crops we have ripened and can be offered for the first time to the Lord.

Now, this is going to be called most of the time in the Old Testament is called the feast of weeks because of the seven weeks. It's seven weeks following the piece of the first groups from that Sabbath after the Passover, they count seven Sabbath, that's seven weeks. And then the next day is Pentecost.

Pentecost means 50th 50 days. And so this piece is sometimes called Pentecost. That's a Greek word for it.

It's called that, for example, in Acts chapter two, when it says when the day of Pentecost had fully come. It's also called that in Acts chapter 20 and verse 16. It talks about the feast of Pentecost or the day of Pentecost.

But the Old Testament doesn't use that term because the Old Testament doesn't use the Greek terms. Pentecost is Greek for 50th. The New Testament is that term in the Old Testament is called the Feast of Weeks for obvious reasons, because it's counted seven weeks after Passover.

But it's also called in Exodus chapter 34 and verse 22, it's called the Feast of Harvest. Exodus 34, I take that back, Exodus 23, 16 in Exodus 34, 22, it is called the Feast of Weeks. But in Exodus 23 and verse 16, the same feast is called the Feast of Harvest.

And he also calls it the first fruits of your labors. But he means the first fruits of the wheat because the first fruits of the barley had already been offered seven weeks

earlier. But in Exodus 23, 16, this same feast, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks is called the Feast of Harvest and it's associated with the wheat harvest.

Now, here's how it's described. Verse 16 of Leviticus 23, count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath, then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring from your habitation two waved loaves of two tenths of an ephod.

They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven. They are first fruits to the Lord.

Now, this is not the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so they can bake them with leaven. They're not offered on the altar. So you can't put leaven on the altar, but they're given to the priests to eat and the priests can eat the leaven bread because it's not the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

So they are first fruits to the Lord. So you take your the first fruits of your wheat harvest instead of just bringing it in the form of sheaves, you actually grind it into flour and then make loaves with it and then you give the first loaves from that harvest to the priest. You shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year without blemish, one young bull and two rams.

They shall be as a burnt offering to the Lord. So we've got 10 animals they offer as burnt offerings with their grain offering and their drink offerings and offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of peace offering.

The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits as a way of offering before the Lord with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest and you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it.

It should be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations when you reap. Now, in verse 22, just repeats the law of gleaning. That was back in chapter 19, verses nine and 10.

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger. I am the Lord, your God.

This is mentioned again, perhaps because it's in connection with the harvest, the wheat, the feast of the harvest. During the feast of Pentecost, there is the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Now, Pentecost, we know, is when the Holy Spirit fell on the church in Acts chapter two.

So just as Jesus was crucified at Passover, the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, begins to

look like a pattern here. Jesus rose from the dead on the feast of first fruits. It begins to look predictable that these feasts are experiencing their fulfillment on the day that they are celebrated.

But thousands or hundreds of years later, they are fulfilled. Why is it that Pentecost would look forward to something like the day of Pentecost in the New Testament, pouring out of the Holy Spirit? Because apparently that is the beginning of the harvest of souls. When the Spirit came, it was the first fruits.

Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection. What happened at Pentecost was the first fruits of the church came into being so that the Jews who believed in Christ and received the spirit were the beginning of a general harvest that has been going on for 2000 years since then. We are we are part of that harvest.

But I would point out to you that in Revelation chapter 14, Jewish Christians are referred to as the first fruits, and that would be the first Christians of the day of Pentecost and following in Israel. In Revelation 14, we have a reference to 144,000 in verse one, Revelation 14, when these people had been mentioned earlier in Revelation chapter seven. And in that chapter, it had said there were 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

In Revelation seven, the 144,000 would be 12,000 for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. So we know they're Jewish. And then we are told here about them in verse four, Revelation 14, for these are the ones who were not defiled with women for their virgins.

These are the ones who follow the lamb. That's Jesus, wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men being first fruits to God and to the lamb.

So these are the Jewish Christians who were the first fruits of the church, and they were saved at Pentecost or they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That was the beginning of it. Some of these people perhaps were saved after Pentecost.

But the point is the Jewish remnant who came to Christ in the new covenant, who received the Holy Spirit beginning at Pentecost. They are the first fruits. And so James tells them when he writes to them in James chapter one, because James is addressing Jewish Christians in the first century.

In James one, one, he says, James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes, which are scattered abroad. You know, it's Jewish people. He's writing to Jews of the diaspora spread abroad.

He is clearly writing to Christian Jews, not just ordinary Jews, because in chapter two, verse one of James, he says, my brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with partiality. The assumption is they are Christians. They are holding the name of Jesus as their Lord, but they shouldn't do so with partiality.

They shouldn't be inconsistent. So these are Jewish people of the 12 tribes who follow the land, just like the 144,000 are said to do in Revelation 14. But in James one, 18, James was one of these first century Christian Jews writing to other first century Christian Jews says of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

That is James and his fellow first century Jewish Christians were the first fruits. And so we read of the feast of weeks that it is a feast of harvest of first fruits, the first fruits of the wheat harvest. And so Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came with the beginning of that and the first fruits of that general harvest, the whole age of the church then is the harvest.

And that's not too surprising. It was seven with seven days. Seven days is the number of completion, just as the seven days of unleavened bread represent our whole lives, living an unleavened life.

So the seven days of the harvest piece of harvest represents the whole period of time as a time of harvest. It gives us these feasts, give us different pictures of what the whole age of Christ is from the time of Christ coming, apparently, to the second coming is a time of harvest. It's a time during which we're to live an unleavened life.

And we'll see that the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles probably has a similar application to our whole lives when we get to it. But the seven day feast, there were three of them, unleavened bread, harvest and what we call tabernacles. It's also called the Feast of the Ingathering.

Those feasts are seven days long, and I believe that what they represent is something that lasts for a whole. Our whole lifetime and during the whole period of time, really, from the time that Jesus left to the time he comes back, I believe that's when the fulfillment comes. Now they skip over quite a few months here to September.

And the month of Tishri on the Jewish calendar, it's the seventh month and the remaining feasts of the year are all in the seventh month. Now, the fulfillment of these feasts is considerably more obscure than of the feasts that we've talked about so far, because the New Testament identifies for us what the Feast of Passover is and what the Feast of Pentecost fulfillment is. And the Feast of Firstfruits.

The New Testament talks about all of those festivals and says they are fulfilled in Christ, in his death, his resurrection and in the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. But there is not quite the same clarity in the New Testament in talking about the fulfillment of these fall festivals. And because of that, there are many people believe that they refer to things that are not yet fulfilled.

And that's why the New Testament does not identify their fulfillment, because the

fulfillment hasn't come yet. That is possible. If they have not yet been fulfilled, then the most likely theory is that they represent things of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

Now, we have three significant festivals in history in the fall. There is the Feast of Trumpets, which is primarily just a day in which trumpets are blown. Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year now, and it is described in verses 23 through 25 very briefly.

And the main thing it does mention that certain offerings will be made, but they're not specified here what they will be. The emphasis here is on the blowing of trumpets as a memorial. So it's called the Feast of Trumpets.

Rosh Hashanah is how the Jews refer to it. Now, what it represents is probably, we would imagine, connected with the other feast near it, the Feast of Atonement, the Day of Atonement, about which we have read in detail in chapter 16 of Leviticus. Leviticus devoted a whole chapter to the rituals of the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and that is on the tenth day.

So we've got the first day of the seventh month is Rosh Hashanah, the Feast of Trumpets. The tenth day of that month is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. And then on the fifteenth day of that month begins the week long Feast of Tabernacles.

And so these are all in the same month. I will read about them and then we'll see if we can identify their meaning, since the New Testament does not just come right out and identify it for us. It may, however, give us hints.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, verse 23, saying, speak to the children of Israel, saying 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. You shall do no customary work on it and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. Here it does not go into the specifics of what that offering consists of.

Verse 26, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying also the tenth day of the seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It should be a holy convocation for you. You shall afflict your souls as we saw that means fast and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

That offering was explained in much more detail in our prior consideration of the Day of Atonement in Chapter 16. And you shall do no work on the same day for it is the Day of Atonement to make atonement for you before the Lord, your God, for any person who is not afflicted of soul on the same day, he shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.

You shall do no manner of work. It should be a statute forever throughout your generations and all your dwellings. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest and you shall afflict your souls on the ninth day of the month at evening.

From evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbath. OK, that is nothing new. In fact, it's much less on this subject than we've already studied.

And then we come to the Feast of Tabernacles. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel, saying the 15th day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. Now, by the way, this is also referred to as the Feast of In Gathering in Exodus Chapter 23 in verse 16, Exodus 23, 16.

That's the place where it refers to Pentecost as the Feast of Harvest. In that place, it refers to this Feast as the Feast of In Gathering. In Gathering and Harvest are obviously very similar ideas.

But in this case, it's because it corresponds with the In Gathering of the Fruit Harvest or the Vintage of the Grapes. And so, again, it's like the other two major festivals. It coincides with part of the In Gathering, the first fruits of the barley harvest at Passover time, the first fruits of the wheat harvest at Pentecost, and now the gathering into the fruits late in the summer or early fall after they've ripened at what's called the Feast of Tabernacles.

On that day, there shall be a holy convocation. You should do no customary work on it, for in seven days you shall offer, excuse me, four seven days, you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day, you shall have a holy convocation and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

It is a sacred assembly and you shall do no customary work on it. These are the Feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and a drink offering, everything on its day, besides the Sabbath of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows and besides all your free will offerings, which you give to the Lord. Notice your Sabbaths, your vows, your regular offerings are made all year long, every week and every day you can do those things.

But but these are special days that are in addition to those. But he's not finished talking about the Feast of Tabernacles. He says in verse 39, also on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the Feast of the Lord for seven days.

On the first day, there shall be a Sabbath rest and on the eighth day, a Sabbath rest. Nothing very surprising about that. And you shall take your for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of beautiful trees.

Now, the word fruit is not really talking about fruit, it's talking about foliage, the branches and the leaves of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of the leafy trees and willows of the brook. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for

seven days. You should keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year.

It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths.

The word booth is Sukkah, and it's called the Feast of Sukkah to the Jews, the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. The word Sukkah can mean a booth, as in this case, made with branches and foliage, sort of a makeshift lean to a temporary shelter, or it can actually mean a tent or a tabernacle. The word Sukkah can mean either one, booth or tabernacle.

That's why it's called the Feast of Sukkah, Feast of Tabernacles. It could be translated Feast of Booths and sometimes this. What they're told to do is to take leafy branches and with all the Jews doing this, this would fairly denude the trees, I would think.

But they were supposed to take branches and build these temporary shelters for one week and actually camp out in the streets like in like it's a camp out. This actually, I'm told, was the favorite festival for the children because it was really like a family camp. They go out and they build a little lean to with branches and they'd sleep under it.

And they were to do that to remember the wandering of the wilderness. It says they're supposed to dwell in booths. It says in verse 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

I am Yahweh, your God. So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord. Now, this Feast of Booths and the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, all of these belong to the seventh month and the second group or the last group of festivals are kind of clustered together.

The most common view about this is that they are associated with the second coming of Christ. For example, the Feast of Trumpets has almost nothing about it except that it proclaims, well, it doesn't actually say what it proclaims. It's just the blowing of trumpets.

To the Jews today, it is their new year. Rosh Hashanah is the new year, the beginning of their civil year. So the blowing of trumpets would suggest a beginning of a new start, a new age, a new year begins on that day.

And those who associate these festivals with the second coming of Christ would point out that Jesus said that he would send out his angels with the sound of a great trumpet and gather his elect from the four winds. In Matthew 24, Jesus said that or Paul said in First Thessalonians, chapter four and verse 16, Paul said the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

So they would say the Feast of Trumpets is the time when the trumpet of God sounds and the voice of the archangel and the dead in Christ will rise. In other words, what we call the resurrection and the rapture of the church. Some people place this like not really at the end of the world and some places at the very end of the world, because the common view that has been held throughout history by most people in churches at the rapture and the resurrection happened when Jesus actually comes to earth on the last day.

There are many, of course, today who have a different view and they believe that the rapture will happen seven years prior to that. And therefore, they believe in a pre-trib rapture. Nonetheless, both groups would be inclined to see this sounding of the trumpet is probably a reference to that trumpet that will raise the dead and begin the new age, the new phase of reality, like the new year in the Jewish calendar.

It's a suggestion that has some merit, because these happen in the seventh month and seven speaks of completeness. And therefore, it's possible that as the age of the church began with Passover in the first month, it might well end in the seventh month. Symbolically, seventh month would be the complete time when it's all over.

And so that is one view of it. And then there is also, of course, around that time, 10 days later, you've got the Day of Atonement. Now we've seen in Hebrews that the Day of Atonement fulfillment is really in Christ's going into heaven, into the Holy of Holies, but waiting for him to return again.

So the Day of Atonement is not really completely fulfilled until he comes out again. There's a sense which the whole age of the church is the Day of Atonement, but it's not over until it's over. It started with Jesus going into heaven, but it hasn't finished yet.

And therefore, the second coming of Christ would be presumably the fulfillment of the the complete fulfillment of the Day of Atonement when the high priest comes out of the Holy of Holies again. That was really how the ceremony would come to its completion. And in Hebrews chapter nine, where the writer of Hebrews is talking about the Day of Atonement and Christ as his fulfillment, he says in Hebrews 9, 28, So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many to those who eagerly wait for him, he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation.

This apparently is referring to the high priest coming out of the Holy of Holies at the end of the ceremony and Jesus coming back a second time. So it would be entirely possible to associate the second coming of Christ with the Day of Atonement and with the Feast of Trumpets. And then what would the Feast of Tabernacles be? Well, there are many Christians today who are what we call premillennialists, and they believe that when Jesus comes back, he will set up a millennial kingdom, a thousand year reign on Earth.

And many of these people would associate the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles

with that, with the millennial reign. One reason I think they would do so is because the way the Feast of Tabernacles is spoken of in a prophetic passage, in a post exilic prophet, Zechariah, who looks forward to the Messianic age. Zechariah is almost the last book in our Old Testament.

And in the last chapter of that book, it says. In verse 16, Zechariah, 14, 16, it should come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, on them will be no reign.

If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall not have any reign. They shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, this keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles is said to be something that is done by all the nations. And many people think that this chapter of Zechariah is describing conditions after the second coming of Christ and that this is the millennial reign that so many believe will be established when Jesus comes. And so the millennial reign, they say, will be characterized by the nations coming to Jerusalem to worship according to the Jewish festivals.

And perhaps even that the Feast of Tabernacles might represent the whole millennial reign. Or maybe it is simply a season during which all the nations keep the yearly Feast of Tabernacles. There are Messianic Christians today who actually go to Jerusalem as often as they can at the Feast of Tabernacles.

And there's a big Christian celebration in Israel every year at the Feast of Tabernacles because of their expectation that someday when Jesus comes back, we're all going to be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Now, that is the way that many people understand these festivals of the seventh month. Feast of Trumpets seems to speak of the resurrection and the rapture of the church.

Feast of the Day of Atonement could refer to the high priest coming out of heaven, the second coming of Christ, the high priest coming out of the Holy of Holies at the end of that festival. And then, of course, the Feast of Tabernacles could correspond with the millennial reign of Christ. Because they associate Zechariah 14 with the millennium, and it does talk about keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.

So these are probably the most common ways that people, Christians, talk about the fulfillment of these other feasts. Now, it strikes me that there could be some legitimacy to some of this, as I've tried to point out, especially with the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of the Day of Atonement. I could easily see those being associated with the second

coming of Christ.

But what about the Feast of Tabernacles? What does it commemorate? Well, in Leviticus 23, 43, it says, they'll keep the Feast of Tabernacles so that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. Now, the dwelling in booths of the children of Israel occurred as a result of them coming out of Egypt, that is, getting saved. We know in the New Testament that corresponds with our being saved.

And although at the time this law was given, the Israelites had no idea that they were going to dwell in booths for 40 years. At this point, they were anticipating moving on to the promised land, probably within a few weeks time. But as it turned out in the afterward parts of the story, there was a rebellion, there was a delay, there was a curse, there was a forbidding of going in to that generation, and they had to wander in the wilderness and live in booths for 40 years.

And then the next generation went in. So this living in booths ended up being like 40 years in duration for the Jews. They didn't know that was the case at this point.

They thought they were going to live in booths for a few weeks, maybe until they moved into the promised land. But their wanderings in the wilderness actually do correspond to something that is identified in the New Testament. And we see that in First Corinthians 10, a passage we've looked at before.

We cannot read through the laws of the Old Testament without coming to passages like this from time to time. In giving a New Testament cross reference, First Corinthians 10, Paul said in verse one, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers, the Jews who came out of Egypt, were under the cloud and passed through the sea. That is the Red Sea.

All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the same spiritual food, meaning the manna, and all drank from the same spiritual drink, for they drank from that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with most of them, God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now, verse six, these things became our types. In the Greek, it says types, tupos, tupoi. These were types of our own experience.

These became our pattern, our types, to the extent that we should not make the mistakes they made, Paul says. But notice that Paul sees the Jews coming out of Egypt is like us getting saved. They're passing through the Red Sea.

It's like being baptized. They're being led by the clouds, like being led by the Holy Spirit. They're eating spiritual food.

The manna is like our feasting on salvation in Christ. The drinking of the spiritual drink that came out of the rock, that's like the living water that Christ gives us, which is the Holy Spirit. Paul is saying the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness corresponds to our experience of having been saved, now living in this present life.

In other words, if there is something in our experience or in the New Testament that corresponds to the wilderness wandering, it is the Christian life. Having come out of Egypt, having been saved, we now are on our way to a promised land. But in the meantime, we are in the world and we drink that spiritual drink.

We eat of Christ. Now, if that is true, then the Feast of Tabernacles, which is intended to be a memorial of that, could easily have its fulfillment in the Christian life itself. And it would then make it very much like the other seven-day feasts, because with unleavened bread and with the Feast of Weeks, each of those feasts, like this one, were seven days long.

And each of them, as I tried to point out, corresponded to something that applies to the whole period of the age of the Church and of our lifetimes in that age. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the seven days, represented the whole period of what Christ has inaugurated by being the Passover, a life of unleavenedness, a life of holiness, a life of separateness to God. That's one characteristic of this age, which is characterized by the seven days of unleavened bread.

The in-gathering of the harvest in the Pentecost is another aspect of this whole age, the age that Jesus inaugurated and that really began at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came. That was the beginning of the harvest. The harvest has been going on and will go on until Jesus comes.

God is harvesting his people to himself. So if those festivals, as would appear to be the case, those seven day long festivals represented the whole age of the Church in a way, then the Feast of Tabernacles, which is also another seven day feast, could readily be seen to represent the whole age of the Church also, our whole lives of wandering between the time that we came out of Egypt in salvation and the time that we die and go on to our promises or to the promised land. Remember, it says of Abraham in Hebrews chapter 11, they looked for a city whose builder and maker was God and they were looking for a heavenly land.

And so are we, is what the writer of Hebrews is suggesting. Now, if that is so, then the Feast of Tabernacles would simply be representative of our present life as strangers and sojourners. At the end of their wilderness wanderings, when the Jews moved out of their booths, out of their tents, they moved into houses in the promised land.

They came to be a settled people in cities. But in the wilderness wandering, they were strangers in the land they were in. They didn't belong there.

They were pilgrims traveling on a mission to get to their home. And so we are referred to in the New Testament. You know, it's interesting because Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are referred to as being strangers and pilgrims, even in the promised land.

In their day, they didn't own it. And in Hebrews chapter 11, in speaking about them, it says in verse 13, Hebrews 11, 13, all these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they were sure to them and embrace them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And so are we.

So that Peter in First Peter, chapter two, verse 11, First Peter to 11. He says, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Now, we are strangers.

We're sojourners. We're pilgrims in the world. We're on our way to a promised land and we will die in faith that maybe if Jesus doesn't come in our lifetime, we may die in faith, not having received that promise.

We will receive it then. We'll pass over to Jordan then into the promised land. Our life in this world is a life of pilgrimage, like the Jews traveling through wilderness, living in booths.

The fact that they lived in booths speaks of pilgrimage. It speaks to the fact that they are not settled. They don't have houses yet.

They're they're movable dwellings. And so the Feast of Tabernacles, it seems to me, represents the current age of the saved as people who are not yet in the promised land, but who are in motion pilgrims in the world. They are not settled here.

So that as the Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of our moral character and spiritual character of being unleavened during this present age. And the Feast of Pentecost speaks of the harvest aspects of the present age. In fact, that we're involved in the harvest.

We are harvesters. And then the Feast of Tabernacles would seem to commemorate the situation in which the Jews were a type of us as wanderers on their way to the promised land. That's what we are in this age.

It seems to me like the Feast of Tabernacles then represents the age of the church, as do the other seven day feasts and not something else. And in my own understanding of Zechariah, where we saw in Zechariah 14, the feast, all the nations come to the Feast of Tabernacles or they're under God's curse or they don't receive rain. This is all, you know, imagery here.

But the idea, I believe, as I understand that passage in its context is talking about the age of the church. It is not talking about something inaugurated by the second coming of

Christ. It is something inaugurated by the first coming of Christ.

I don't have time to go into Zechariah in detail, and many people have great difficulty seeing Zechariah 14 as anything other than the second coming of Christ and its aftermath. But to me, when you compare scripture with scripture, it seems obvious to me that it is talking about the aftermath of the first coming of Christ. So the Feast of Tabernacles there would actually represent the age of the church, which followed the appearance of Christ.

And that would mean that all the festivals do. They all represent the age of the church. They all have their fulfillment in the age of the church, but also perhaps in something else.

The trumpets, it would be strange for the Feast of Trumpets to represent the second coming of Christ. And yet the Feast of Tabernacles, which follows later in the month to represent the Christian life at present time. And I would like to suggest there's at least another possibility.

I cannot really say whether it's true or not. And that is the Feast of Trumpets may represent not trumpets of celebration, but trumpets declaring judgment. You might remember when Israel marched around Jericho seven times.

On the seventh day, they blew the trumpets and it was the destruction of Jericho. In the book of Revelation, a judgment scene occurs when seven angels having seven golden trumpets come out of the Holy of Holies and they each sound their trumpet individually. And each trumpet blast brings an aspect of destruction and judgment.

Now, different people have different ideas about what Revelation is about. My understanding of that passage in Revelation is that's the fall of Jerusalem, that the trumpet blast, the seven trumpets are heralding the destruction of Jerusalem, even as in an earlier age, trumpet blasts, seven trumpets had brought about the fall of Jericho. And in the book of Revelation, there's many Old Testament pagan entities that Jerusalem is likened to.

It's like Babel and the great. It's like spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, that it would be likened to Jericho is not out of character for Revelation to do, to take images of pagan cities that had to be judged. And to say now Jerusalem is like them.

And so I don't know, but it's possible that this trumpet blast is not the trumpet blast of the second coming of Christ, but it may correspond to the trumpet blasts that caused Jericho to fall as a type in a shadow of Jerusalem falling. That happened within the church age. And it even happened in September.

Now, I don't I don't think it happened, the fall of Jerusalem was in stages, the Romans besieged it for a long time, starting actually at Passover season. The Romans allowed the

Jewish pilgrims to go into Jerusalem for Passover, but they didn't let them come out so that the city was clogged with people. When the siege took place, that would mean they'd run out of food more quickly.

But the siege of Jerusalem began at Passover season and Jerusalem fell in different stages. It's hard to know exactly when the final fall should be attached because, for example, the temple was burned down in late August. But there was still a great deal of fighting, a lot of resistance, and the Romans didn't take full control of the city until sometime in September, about September 7th, I believe, is the date that's given as the time of the Romans finally secured things in Jerusalem was under their control and had fallen.

There was, of course, a lot of battle going on in a lot of different stages of the Roman conquest. But I've read that September 7th is the day when Rome had got control of the city completely and subdued all the Jews. Well, September 7th probably does not correspond with one of these dates here, but maybe something that happened then does.

I don't know. It's possible that the Feast of Tabernacles also represents the coming of Christ the first time. Because Jesus tabernacled with us, the word became flesh and tabernacled with us.

It says in John 1, 14, I've wondered sometimes if maybe he was born in September, maybe he was born at the Feast of Tabernacles or conceived, since in Asian countries sometimes a person's life is measured from conception, not from their birth. We don't really have any way of knowing, but the date of Jesus birth or his tabernacling with us, maybe even when he came into the womb, when he was conceived, could have been at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles. And it was the beginning of this age that we now live in the Feast of Tabernacles age.

I am not sure. And I'm sorry to have to be so obscure about something when we could be so sure about some of the earlier things. I warned you that the Feast of the seventh month are obscure in their meaning.

The New Testament doesn't just tell us what they mean. We see, however, that the Feast of the first part of the year are all fulfilled in a very obvious way on the day that they occurred. And therefore, one would expect that the fulfillment of the Feast of the seventh month either did or will occur when those are being celebrated.

And that is why many people who have made predictions about the date of the second coming, which is always a foolish thing to do because we don't know the day or the hour. But those who have made predictions about specific dates of the second coming, almost always it's been in September, the date that they identify as the date he should come because they expect it to be at the Feast of Trumpets or the Feast of Tabernacles

because they feel that these look forward to that. Maybe they do.

I don't know. I'm going to leave you undecided because I'm undecided. I don't know what they refer to because it's possible they do refer to things yet future.

It's possible they do refer to the second coming of Christ, at least trumpets. But I believe that the Feast of Tabernacles must refer to the church age as to the other seven day feasts. And that would be at least my opinion.

Obviously, it's not a universally shared opinion, so you're welcome to form your own. But that's all we can do with these feasts. We can't do more than what the New Testament tells us.

And it doesn't tell us the answers to these last feasts at all.