

The Feasts (or holy seasons) of the Lord

Introduction

There are many passages in the bible which speak about the Feasts of Israel. It would simply be impossible to mention or discuss all of them during this seminary. But in order to get a systematic overview, there is certainly one chapter mostly relevant, which is Leviticus 23. The book of Leviticus is the so-called Handbook for the priesthood under the mosaic law. Most Jews did not even know a small part of all the 613 laws of Moses, because many of the laws were dealing especially with the priesthood, describing the offering-services in the temple-compound or in the Tabernacle during the wilderness-wandering or during the time in Shilo. However, the priests themselves had to know all of the laws. So they also had to know everything about the Feasts of the Lord, and how to observe them. It is a biblical fact that not all details about the feasts can be found in Leviticus. But the Chapter Leviticus 23 gives us the exact chronological sequence of the Feasts and the exact times of their observance throughout the year. If we consider this, we can now see one of God's great miracles, which is this: Although the order of the Feasts and of their observance was already given during the wilderness-wandering of the people of Israel, there is nevertheless a very strong connection between the feast-seasons and the agricultural seasons of the promised Land, which the people had not even entered at that time. By this we notice that the almighty God of Israel, who is also our God, does actually know all things in advance. This leads us to the fact, that the Feasts of Israel do also have a prophetic meaning for the people of Israel as well as for the church-saints in our days. We can even say that the chronological order of the feasts is in fact a prophetic calendar showing the main events throughout the whole history of Israel as well as throughout the church-history. Let us now first consider several further facts:

- As we all know, there is no people in this world which does not have its own feasts. But it is very important that the biblical feasts were given to the people of Israel alone, because Israel is the covenantal people of God throughout history. The feasts had to be observed as holy seasons. This is also emphasized by the holy number of 7.
- As we can see on our big picture, the feasts are strongly connected to the different harvest-seasons and weather-seasons of Israel. We will see this again later.
- There were 3 pilgrimage-festivals (Unleavened bread, Weeks, Tabernacles), which had to be observed in Jerusalem; the other ones were observed at home (Deuteronomy 16,16).
- The exact calendar-dates of the feasts follow the jewish moon-calendar, which has an average year of 354 days. In relation to the gregorian calendar known in the Western world with its 365 days, the dates of the jewish feasts for us are different every year.
- Furthermore there is a religious year in Israel, beginning with the month of Nisan (March/April), as well as a civil year, beginning with the month of Tischri (Sept./Oct.).
- There are two cycles of the feasts. The first cycle or spring-cycle contains the first four. Then comes a four-month interval. The second cycle or fall-cycle contains the last three. We will see later during this study that the first cycle has been fulfilled by the program of the first coming of the Messiah Jesus, while the second cycle will be fulfilled by the program of the second coming of the Messiah Jesus, which is now still future. The interval of the 4 months represents the time of the Church and the gospel.

The fulfillments of the spring-cycle:

Passover:	The death of the Messiah for our sins.
Unleavened bread:	The offering of the sinless blood of the Messiah and of his sinless body, his body did not corrupt in the grave.
	The sanctification of the believers.
First Fruits:	The resurrection of the Messiah.

Weeks: The coming of the holy spirit, foundation of the Church

The four month interval: The church age and the preaching of the gospel today.

The fulfillments of the fall-cycle:

Blowing of the Trumpets: The Rapture.

Day of atonement: Israels national salvation and the second coming.

Tabernacles: The Millennium.

- The prophetic fulfillment of the feasts has already occurred or will occur exactly in the same chronological order as the feasts occur throughout the year.
- In the Abrahamic covenant God said: "In your (Abraham's) name shall be blessed all nations on earth!" This tells us that the prophetic meaning and the blessings of the feasts do not only extend on Israel receiving the observances, but do also reach far out to the gentile nations. The feasts do also have a prophetic and a practical meaning for us. We will see this clearly throughout the study.
- The sabbatical laws supercede the laws of the feasts. This means that certain observances during the feasts could not be followed if the feast fell on a sabbath during a certain year. Certain observances were considered as being work, and on a sabbath it was not allowed to do any kind of work. We will also see this in our study.

Based on this introduction we are now going to study the feasts one by one. Every feast shall be studied from five perspectives:

- A) Other biblical references to the feast with a short summary of their content.
- B) Other names of the feast with short explanations if necessary.
- C) The biblical practice of the feast.
- D) The Jewish practice of the feast. The Rabbis have added a huge number of traditions and further observances to the law of Moses. It is important to know some of these additions, because the Lord Jesus picked up both mosaic and Jewish elements in his own observance.
- E) The messianic implication, the observance of the Lord Jesus, the meaning for us today.

The Feast of Passover (Leviticus 23,5)

A) Other references

- Exodus 12, 1-51: The first Passover in Egypt. The first ceremony with its special observances concerning the lamb and the blood on the doorframes.
- Exodus 34, 25: Nothing should be left over of the lamb, the leftovers had to be burned by fire.
- Numbers 9, 1-14: The laws to be followed every year after the Exodus out of Egypt.
- Numbers 28: The calendar date: the 14th day of the first month. For those who could not come to Jerusalem right in time, there was another possibility: The 14th day of the second month.
- Deuteronomy 16, 1-2 and 4-7: The details of the Passover-lamb sacrifice of the first morning of Passover (15th day of the first month) at nine o'clock.
- Joshua 5, 10-11: The first Passover in the promised land.
- 2.Ki 23, 21-23; 2.Chron. 35,1-19: The reinauguration by King Josiah.
- 2.Chron. 30, 1-22: The reinauguration by King Hezekiah.
- Esra 6, 19: The reinauguration after the Babylonian captivity.
- Ezekiel 45, 21: The observance in the messianic Kingdom.
- Mt 26, 1-35; Mk 14, 1-26; Luke 22, 1-30; John 13, 17-26: The last Passover, the Lord's table.
- John 2, 13-15: The Passover after the baptism of Jesus was the beginning of his public

ministry. The first cleansing of the temple.

- Hebr 11, 28: The passover in Egypt was an act of faith.

B) Names

- Pesach. This means „passover“. When the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts of the Jewish homes in Egypt during the night of judgment, the angel saw it and „passed over“ these houses. As to the houses of the Egyptians, there was no blood-protection. The angel „passed through“ the houses and killed the firstborn sons of Egypt.
- Seman cherutenu. This means "the time of our freedom". It refers to the Exodus.

C) Biblical practice

1. The killing of the lamb:

- The lamb was set aside on the 10th day of the month.
- The lamb was tested from the 10th up to the 14th day.
- The family-lamb was killed on the evening of the 14th day and eaten by the families.
- The official passover-sacrifice lamb was killed at nine o'clock in the morning of the 15th day, it was roasted and eaten only by the priesthood.
- During the preparation and the eating of the lamb, no single bone should be broken.

2. The biblical passover-meal required three things:

- roasted lamb
- unleavened bread
- bitter herbs

3. There was no wine commanded by Moses! The rabbis added this tradition to the law.

D) Jewish Practice

In Jewish reckoning of time the day begins at 6 o'clock on the evening and ends at 6 o'clock on the next evening. So the Sabbath in Israel begins on Friday evening at 6 and ends on Saturday evening at 6. The same thing is with the passover: it begins with the first passover-night, followed by the first passover-morning and day. The passover ceremony begins at six o'clock in the evening and takes several hours to be observed, sometimes until after midnight. The observance is complicated and it contains various elements. Most of these elements were already well known in the times of the Lord Jesus. The main elements are:

1. The passover plate with six items on it:

- Charoset, a brown coloured apple-mixture, picturing the brown bricks which the people of Israel had to produce during the slavery in Egypt.
- Parsley dipped in salt water (first dipping), picturing the salvation of the young green nation of Israel in its springtime out of Egypt through the salt waters of the red sea.
- Maror, a mixture of bitter herbs, referring to the bitterness of the slavery in Egypt.
- Chaseret, a very bitter mixture of herbs, picturing the severe bitterness of the diaspora.
- Roasted egg in salt water (second dipping), picturing the official lamb of the passover sacrifice of the first morning at 9 o'clock. This is a substitute, because today there is no temple available to offer real lambs.
- The bone of a lamb, picturing the private lamb for the families, also a substitute.

2. The four cups of wine in the following order:

- the cup of thanksgiving, combined with a prayer as an opening of the ceremony.
- the cup of the plagues, combined with the repetition of the plagues over Egypt.
- the cup of redemption, taken after the meal. The Lord identified it with his blood.
- the cup of praise, combined with the singing of the psalms 113-118.

3. The passover-bag, the so-called Mazzatasch:

It is a bag made of cloth which contains 3 loaves of unleavened bread in 3 separate compartments.

At a certain point of the ceremony, the middle-loaf is taken out of the bag. The loaf is unleavened, striped and pierced. It is called the Afikoman, the Aorist II of the greek verb hikneomai, which means: „I came“. It is broken in two, wrapped into a linen cloth and hidden away for some time. Later it is searched and brought back by the children, unwrapped and distributed among all members of the family. Everyone must have a piece of it. This Afikoman-ceremony is the main ceremony of the whole passover-evening. It is a fact that the jewish believers of the 1st century introduced it as a substitute for the passover lamb into their „lambless passover“, since the temple had been destroyed in the year AD 70, and since the final passover lamb, the Lord Jesus, had already been sacrificed on calvary! The unbelieving jewish rabbis did not really understand the meaning. They simply integrated the Afikoman into the passover ceremony. They say that the 3 loaves of bread represent the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jakob. It will be further explained under messianic implications. The chronological sequence of the whole passover-ceremony is principally as follows:

- The lighting of the candles by the woman of the house. Beginning and providing light!
- The first cup (thanksgiving) with the Kiddusch (prayer of sanctification)
- The first washing of the hands.
- The fresh herbs eaten.
- The breaking and hiding away of the Afikoman.
- The four passover-questions, asked by the youngest son, always in Hebrew.
- The reading of the Haggadah (passover-story) by the oldest man of the family, together with the second cup (plagues). Passover garment and hat (Levites, priesthood)
- The second washing of the hands.
- The opening of the meal by distribution of the Charosset and the items of the plate.
- The meal (normally chicken as a substitute for the lamb, because there are no temple-offerings possible today).
- The searching of the Afikoman, unwrapping and distribution. The third cup (redemption).
- The fourth cup and the singing of the praise (Psalm 113-118).
- The searching for Elija the prophet (the youngest son goes out into the street). According to jewish tradition Elija shall come back on passover, the Messiah will then come back within the next year.
- „Next year in Jerusalem!“ They have to wait for one more year. Elija did not come.

There are still many more elements, but it would be too complicated to mention them all. For example there is the cleansing of the homes from leaven, which is a symbol of the cleansing-away of sins in order to be worthy to observe the passover. It is performed on the evening of the 13th day by the father of the family. One day before passover, the firstborn son of the jewish family has to fast. This is observed in order to remember the salvation of the firstborn sons of Israel before the Exodus. In the synagoges the song of Solomon is read on passover. They also pray for the beginning of the dew-season in Israel. There are 2 main seasons in the country. From mid April to mid October, there is the so called dew-season. No rain falls in Israel, just heavy dew is there every morning. Then comes the rain-season from mid October to mid April, when the early rains and the latter rains fall. The feast of passover marks the beginning of the dew-season, while the feast of Tabernacles marks the beginning of the rain-season.

There are also several harvest-seasons in the country.

- The barley-harvest comes in April at Passover.
- The first figs come in May.
- The wheat-harvest comes in June around the Feast of weeks.
- The grape-harvest comes in September/October at the feast of the trumpets.
- The harvest of olives comes in November, short before the early rains.

E) Messianic implication

The messianic implications of this feast reach very far and they are important for Jews as well as for us. There are different gospel ministries among the Jews of the world today. What they all see is this: When a Jew today really understands the connection between the Passover-ceremony and the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will recognize Jesus Christ as being his Messiah and come to believe. The reason for this is, that the Lord himself picked up both biblical and Jewish practices and combined them in his own observance of the feast. He identified himself with certain parts of the ceremony and explained this to the apostles. The Old Testament prophets and the writers of the New Testament also refer to the ceremony. There are several passages which can only be well understood on the background of Passover. We will now try to see this, explaining several parts of the ceremony.

In John 1, 29 and 36, John the Baptist introduces the Lord Jesus to the Jewish people twice as the Lamb of God. He could have used some other well-known introductions like the son of David or the son of man, or the son of God or the Messiah, but he did not do so. Why did he choose this special name? If we go back to the first Passover in Egypt, we will see the reason. In the first Passover-night, every Jewish family had to kill the lamb by shedding the blood. But this alone would not have saved any firstborn son of the Jews. After the shedding of the blood, there had to be another thing which was the application of the blood. Only by applying the blood to the doorframe of the house a blood-shelter could be reached. When the angel of judgment could see the blood, he would pass over the Jewish home! So the blood had to be shed and it also had to be faithfully applied in order to be saved. The offering of the lamb had been the main ceremony in the tabernacle during the wilderness-wandering and during the time in Shilo as well as in the temple in Jerusalem. Every little child in Israel knew about the history of the lamb. And now they came to know the Lamb of God! John identified the Lord Jesus as being the final Passover lamb, the Lamb of Isaiah 53, providing the final atonement and the redemption!! For us today it is the same way like: The Lord Jesus gave his sinless blood on the cross. He died for our sins. He rose from the grave on the third day. But this alone does not save anybody. In order to be saved, we have to apply the blood to ourselves, we have to believe!! This is explained in John 3, 16, 1 Peter 1, 18+19 and Rev. 5, 12. If you have heard the gospel of Jesus, you have received every information necessary to be saved. But if you do not believe, you will not be saved. The salvation is only by grace through faith!

If we go back to what we said under C), the biblical practice, there is also a strong connection between the preparation and the offering of the lamb and the death of the Lord Jesus. The lamb was set aside on the 10th day of the month. The Lord Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey exactly on the 10th day of the month. This was the setting aside of the Passover-lamb of God. The lamb was tested from the 10th to the 14th day of the month. The Lord Jesus was tested from the 10th to the 14th day of the month by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and Scribes. He was without spot and without blemish.

The lamb for the families was killed on the evening of the 14th day. The Lord Jesus had his last Passover together with the apostles on the evening of the 14th day.

The lamb of the official Passover-sacrifice was offered in the temple-compound on the morning of the 15th day at 9 o'clock a.m. The Lord Jesus was crucified on Calvary on the morning of the 15th day at 9 o'clock a.m.

No single bone of the Passover-lamb could be broken during the whole ceremony. John 19, 36 says that the Roman soldiers did not break the bones of The Lord Jesus.

The lighting of the candles by the woman of the house: This refers to the birth of the Messiah by Mary. When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he said in chapter 5 that our Passover has been killed, which is the Lord Jesus. In this passage, the Lord Jesus in his life and death is

identified with the passover-ceremony as a whole! Thus the lighting of the candles at the very beginning of the ceremony shows the beginning of the life of the Messiah, when the light of God came into this dark world! Read John 8,12 and Is. 9, 1.

The opening of the meal by distribution of the bread dipped in salt water:

In Matthew 26, 20-23, the Lord Jesus makes an announcement of the betrayal, and he gives the first clue to the identification of the betrayer. The first clue is this: There were several small dishes with salt water on the passover-table. Each one of them could only be reached by three or four persons sitting around the table, but not by all persons, because the passover table was too big. The betrayer would dip his bread together with the Lord into the same dish! In John 13, 21-26, there is the second announcement of the betrayer. The second clue is this: The Lord Jesus opened the meal. He would have to take a piece of unleavened bread, dip it into the salt water and give it to each one of the Apostles. This ceremony had to be repeated 13 times, because there were 12 apostles and the Lord Jesus himself present. But the betrayer should receive the very first piece of bread. It was Judas who received it and who was identified as being the betrayer! At this point Satan came into his heart and he left the room!

The ceremony of the passover-bag and the Afikoman („I came!"):

The bag has three compartments: There is the triune God: father, son and holy spirit.

The middle loaf was taken out of the bag: The son left the heavenly sphere of the trinity and became flesh in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The loaf is unleavened: The body of the Lord Jesus was unleavened, which means sinless.

The loaf is striped: The body of the Lord Jesus was striped by the roman whip.

The loaf is pierced: The body of the Lord Jesus was pierced by the nails and by the roman spear.

This does also refer to Zechariah 12, 10 where it says: „They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

The loaf is broken in two: The Lord Jesus died.

The loaf is wrapped into a linen cloth: The body of the Lord was wrapped into burial clothes.

The loaf is hidden away: The body of the Lord Jesus was buried.

The loaf is brought back and unwrapped: The resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The bread is distributed among the whole family: Every believer partakes of the salvation.

Jewish unbelievers are normally unable to understand this without any explanation. But if it is explained, many of them understand it and have the chance to come to belief.

It is simply wonderful that this ceremony is a perfect picture of the whole gospel of Jesus!!

It has often been used in evangelizing Jews and many of them have been saved because of the connections between passover and the gospel. If you happen to know a Jew in your life, you can also use these things in order to present the gospel. And never forget: Those who bless the Jews shall be blessed (1.Mo 12, 3).

In Luke 22, 14-20 the two jewish elements bread and wine are focused.

In verses 14-18, Jesus takes the first cup, the cup of thanksgiving.

In vers 19, he takes the middle loaf, the Afikoman („I came!") and breaks it in two. He clearly identifies his sinless body with this loaf of unleavened bread.

In verse 20, Jesus takes the third cup, the cup of redemption, saying: „this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood."

We come to our conclusion.

The actual fulfillment of the jewish passover is the death of the Messiah Jesus Christ, the final passover-lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. He died for both jews and gentiles who believe in his person and in his work. If we spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood according to

John 6, 54, we have eternal life and will be resurrected on the last day. But in between we should live a life of sanctification by purging out the old leaven (which means the sin) according to 1. Cor. 5, 8 . By sinning we can never lose our eternal life, but the fellowship in the family of God can be broken. The actual purging out of the sin is by means of confessing personal sins to the Lord according to 1. John 1, 9. This makes us worthy to partake of the Lord's table. For us it will not be necessary to keep the whole passover ceremony. We are only partakers of the middle loaf of unleavened bread and of the third cup, which is the cup of redemption. We are commanded to keep this observance regularly until he comes. It is the true wish of our Lord. How often do you observe it?

The Feast of the Unleavened bread (Leviticus 23, 6-8)

A) Other references

- Exodus 12, 39: The remembrance of the Exodus.
- Exodus 12, 14-20; 13, 6-8; 23, 15; 34, 18; Leviticus 23, 6; Deuteronomy 16, 3-8: The total absence of leaven, which is a symbol of sin, was commanded. There should be no leaven in the houses, no leaven in the city, no leaven in the whole land!
- Exodus 12, 15: The one who eats leaven shall be purged out of the people.
- Numbers 28, 17-25: The special sacrifices to be offered on this occasion.
- 2. Chron. 30: Hezekiah reinaugurated it together with the passover.
- Esra 6, 21-22: Esra kept it together with the passover.
- Ezek 45, 21-24: It will be observed in the Messianic Kingdom.
- Mark 14, 1: The Lord Jesus kept it in Jerusalem.
- Luke 2, 42-47: The observance of the Lord Jesus together with the passover as a 12 year old boy in Jerusalem. (2. Chron. 8, 13).

B) Names

Hag ha mazzot: this means „the feast of the unleavened bread“.

C) Biblical practice

It began on the 15th day of the first month and continued for 7 days. It followed passover immediately without one single day in between. This is why the two feasts together were also called „the 8 days of passover“. But really there are two different feasts occurring without an interval. The passover itself is just one day, namely the 14th day. The first day and the seventh day of unleavened bread were holy days when no work was allowed to be done. It was allowed to work from the second to the sixth day. The total absence of leaven in the meals, in the houses, in the city and in the whole land was strongly emphasized.

D) Jewish practice

The Jewish practice followed the biblical one, but with one exception: During the „Bedikat Chamez“-ceremony on the 13th day of the 1st month, the leaven had to be purged out of the homes symbolically. The father of the family went through the house with a wooden spoon and a feather in his hands, cleaning away the leftovers of leaven out of the house. All the leftovers were burned by fire. Then the passover could begin on the evening of the 14th day. The Jews created special meals for these days. The special breakfast is the „Mazzabrei“, comprised of scrambled eggs with milk and pieces of unleavened bread, fried up. There are also some other things like „Mazzakugel“ etc.

E) Messianic implication

Leaven in the bible is always a symbol of sin. The fulfillment of this feast is given in Hebrews 9,

10-11, 18. As the passover is fulfilled by the actual death of the Messiah, unleavened bread is fulfilled by the offering of his sinless blood and body, by the burial of his sinless body and by the fact that this sinless body did not undergo the corruption in the grave. This is also the reason why these two feasts are connected together: the death of the messiah was immediately followed by his burial. He was not buried among the criminals, but in the grave of a rich man, just as David had seen it before in Ps 16, 10.

But there is also an individual application for us as believers. 1.Cor. 5, 8 also deals with the unleavened bread. According to this verse, we should purge out of our lives all the old leaven. This means spiritually that we should try to live an unleavened life of sincerity, truth and sanctification. We should try to purge out our old personal sins. If sins happen in our lives, we should confess them to the lord according to 1.Jn 1, 9. This will reestablish our fellowship with the father.

The congregational view is as follows: We should not tolerate leaven, which spiritually means open and unconfessed sin, in the local church-fellowship. We must exercise church-discipline and remove the sinning brother or sister from the fellowship. This should not be done in order to destroy the brother or sister, but in order to give to him or to her the chance of repenting and coming back. Some people say that tolerance of open sin should be a better way to serve the sinner in a lovely manner. But this is not true. The sinner will always go on to influence the others and in the end the whole church will be leavened. We have to exercise discipline, but in a humble way, always being aware that we could also be able to fall into a sin.

The Feast of the first fruits (Leviticus 23, 9-14)

A) Other references

-Numbers 28, 26-31: The special sacrifices to be offered on this occasion.

-Deuteronomy 26, 1-10: The description of the ceremony and the thanksgiving prayer.

B) Names

Reschit qatzirchem: This means „the first fruits of your harvest“.

C) Biblical practice

There was a strong connection to the agricultural system of Israel, because this feast marked the beginning of the two months period of the spring-harvest. The fruits which were actually reaped and offered were the first fruits of the barley-harvest. For the national observance, some plants were marked before in the special barley-field in the valley of the ashes, which was situated behind the Kidron-valley.

At the evening (the beginning of the festival day) there was a festival procession with three members of the Sanhedrin and many spectators, who went out into the barley-field. The marked plants were reaped with a sickle, bound together to a bundle containing about one Efa of barley and brought back into the temple to be threshed, grinded into flour and mixed with some oil and incense. The mixture was partially offered on the next morning by being burned on the altar. The leftovers were eaten up by the Levites. For the family observance, every farmer reaped his own bundle of barley and brought it to the temple in Jerusalem.

There are two different traditions concerning the exact day of the observance.

The first tradition puts it on the 16th day of the first month. This would mean a certain calendar-date in the jewish religious year, two days after Passover.

But the second tradition is spiritually much more interesting. Here the important thing is not the day of the month, but the day of the week. It always had to be observed on the first sunday after Passover. If Passover fell for example on a Monday, then a whole week would pass by until the Feast of the

first fruits occurred. If Passover fell on a Friday, only two days would pass by until the Feast of the first fruits occurred. It is the same thing in Christianity for example with Christmas day, which always occurs on the 25th of December in the western countries or on the 6th of January in the eastern orthodox countries, whereas for example the feast of Easter always has to fall on a Sunday, which makes the actual calendar date different every year! Why this is interesting, will be discussed later. Just notice it for now!

D) Jewish practice

For the passed 2000 years the Feast was mostly ignored because of the diaspora. There was no temple available to do the offerings. What they keep until today is the counting of the omer, which means the counting of the 50 days between the Feast of the first fruits and the Feast of weeks. On the 33rd day of this period is the so called „Lag-ba-omer“, a day of rejoicing. It is also a very well known day for Jewish weddings.

During the diaspora, the Jews were not allowed to own land in the countries where they were living. So they could not have harvests and thus no first fruits. After the reestablishment of the state of Israel, they began to cultivate the land in their Kibbuzim. So they established a new, observance of the Feast: The first fruits are reaped and brought into the public dining-hall. Then they are spread all over the tables. The whole community has an evening of thanksgiving and rejoicing. This happens only in Israel.

E) Messianic implication

1. Cor. 15, 20-23 tells us that the fulfillment of this Feast is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus! This is the first reason why the second tradition for the timing of the Feast is much more interesting than the first one. The Feast of the first fruits occurred on the first Sunday after Passover. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus also occurred on the first Sunday after Passover! This was the first day of the new week! As the week in Israel finishes with the Sabbath, it represents the six days of the old creation in the book of Genesis and the seventh day of rest, when God looked at his creation, observing his own Sabbath-day. Until today there is a particular synagogue service kept on every Sabbath worldwide. In both biblical and Jewish tradition, the first things or persons were very important to God as for example the firstborn sons (Luke 2, 23), who inherited a double part of their father's goods, or the first fruits of all harvests which had to be offered as well as the firstborn of the kosher animals. But these were all first things or firstborn of the old creation. Concerning the old creation, the Lord Jesus also was the firstborn son of Mary.

But the Lord Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the new week! So the first Sunday after Passover does no more symbolize the last day of the old creation but the first day of the new creation in the resurrection!!

On the first day of the week, which is the day of the Lord, Jesus reappeared to Mary. On this day he reappeared twice to the apostles in the upper room, when they had closed the doors. On this very day he appeared to the apostle John at the island of Patmos.

And on this day the Christians come (or should come!!) together every week in order to proclaim his death by partaking of the Lord's table, and to remember his resurrection!

According to Hebrews 12, 23 and James 1, 18 all the Christians of today are firstborn sons of the new creation in the resurrection of Christ! Even if they should die before the Lord comes back, they will surely be resurrected on His Day! (1. Cor. 15, 22; Dan. 12, 2; Jn 5, 28-29).

If they should stay alive until the Lord Jesus returns, they will be transformed in a moment at the rapture and then be taken up to heaven together with all church-saints (1. Thess. 4, 13-18). But this will be discussed later in the study.

The second reason why the second tradition concerning the timing of the feast is more interesting than the first tradition is this: The last feast of the first cycle will be the Feast of weeks or Pentecost, which will be discussed next. This feast will occur exactly 50 days after the Feast of the first fruits.

As the Feast of the first fruits has a different calendar date every year, it is the same with the Feast of weeks: it does also have a different calendar date every year, because it is based on the Feast of the first fruits. As we will see, Pentecost is fulfilled by the birthday of the church. As we already know, the fulfillments of the feasts occur exactly in the same chronological order as the feasts themselves are observed. So the Feast of weeks will be followed by the Feast of trumpets. The Feast of trumpets has a certain calendar date every year, which is the first day of the 7th month, the month of Tischri. This means that the interval between the Feast of weeks (no certain calendar date) and the Feast of trumpets (certain calendar date, 1st day of the 7th month) will be different every year. If we know that the feast of trumpets will be fulfilled by the rapture of the church, we can now say this: The interval between weeks (birthday of the church, no certain calendar date) and trumpets (rapture of the church, certain calendar date) can not be finally determined. This means spiritually that the day of the rapture cannot be determined. Perhaps the Lord Jesus could come and take us home during this night!!

The Feast of weeks (Leviticus 23, 15-21)

A) Other references

- Exodus 23, 16: It is called the first fruits of your labours.
- Exodus 34, 22: It is called the first fruits of the wheat-harvest.
- Numbers 28, 26: The actual name is the feast of weeks.
- Deuteronomy 16, 9-12: It is a time of rejoicing.
- Acts 2, 1-4: It marks the coming of the holy spirit on this occasion.
- Acts 20, 16: Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem for this feast.
- 1.Cor. 16, 8: Paul wanted to be in Ephesus until this feast.

B) Names

- Hag ha Shavuot: The feast of weeks. This is the most common jewish name, because this feast occurred exactly seven weeks plus one day after the feast of the first fruits.
- Hag hakatzir: The feast of harvest. It marks the end of the spring harvest.
- Yom habikkurim: The day of the first fruits, because it marks the beginning of the summer harvest, which is the wheat-harvest.
- Hag Atzeret: The closing festival, because it marks the end of the first cycle of the feasts.
- Atzeret shel Pesach: The closing of the Passover. This name is because the first cycle of the feasts began with Passover and was closed by this feast.
- Zman matan Torah: The time of the giving of the law. The jewish tradition says that the law was given to Moses on this day. The bible also says in Exodus 19, 3 that Moses climbed up onto Mount Sinai on the first day of the third month, and again on the third day of the month (Exodus 19, 20).
- Pentecost: This means „50" according to the fact that the feast occurred 50 days after the feast of the first fruits. However, it is a greek name which has become the most common name among the Christians.

C) The biblical practice

This was one of the three pilgrimage festivals (unleavened bread, weeks, tabernacles). Everyone had to observe it in Jerusalem. Therefore we can read in Acts 2 that many Jews from everywhere had come together in Jerusalem, when the holy spirit came down.

No specific calendar-date was given. This is because the feast of weeks was based on the previous feast (first fruits of the barley-harvest), which also had no specific calendar-date, as we already discussed before. But it had to occur exactly 50 days after the previous feast. In between there was

the counting of the omer, as already mentioned.

They reaped the first fruits of the wheat harvest, brought them to the temple, grinded them into flour and baked it. As a result they got two loaves of leavened wheat bread. As it was not allowed to offer leavened bread on the altar according to Leviticus 2, 11, they just waved to and fro the two loaves on one single sheet before the Lord and then set them aside to be eaten up by the priests during the later festival-meal. All other meal-offerings had to be unleavened, only this one had to be leavened. As we will see later, it represents sinners.

D) Jewish practice

After the destruction of the temple and the City of Jerusalem during the year AD 70, when 1.100.000 Jews had died, and after the second destruction of the City during the revolt of Bar Kochba in AD 135, when again 580.000 Jews had died, the Romans rebuilt the City under the new name Aelia Capitolina, thus referring to the Roman religion at that time (especially to the gods of the capitol-hill in Rome, which were Jupiter, Minerva and Juno). Because of this, the Sanhedrin met at Haifa in the year AD 140, and made the following decision: The feast should further be connected to a historical event, and no more to agricultural procedures. So they decided to call it the feast of the giving of the law of Moses according to Exodus 19, 3 + 20, as already discussed before.

In the synagogue-service, the Book of Ruth is read on this occasion. The rabbis give several reasons for this.

Firstly it is mentioned in the book itself, that the events took place at the end of the spring harvest and at the beginning of the wheat harvest (Ruth 2, 23).

Secondly, Ruth was a moabite woman, but she did later accept the law of Moses as she was married to Boas and converted to Judaism.

Thirdly, there is a jewish legend saying that King David should be born just on this occasion, and David was a descendant of Ruth (Ruth 4, 22).

Fourthly, the name of Ruth has the numerical value of 606 in the jewish Kabbalah. Before she was a convert to Judaism, she had been under the Noahic law. The Noahic law contained 7 commandments. If you now add these 7 to the numerical value of the name of Ruth which is 606, you can sum it up to the number of 613. And this is exactly the number of laws given to Moses!!

The Jews break down branches from trees, cut grass and spread it all over the synagogue-floor in order to remind themselves of praying for a good harvest.

They stay up all night to study the law. The tradition says that when the law was given to Moses, there were thunders, lightnings and very loud trumpet-sounds coming from above Mount Sinai. Because of this, the people was kept awake during the whole night.

According to food-items, there is a special emphasis on eating milk-products, because God gave the land of milk and honey to his people. The special items are:

Firstly the two rectangular Cheese- Blintz which should be eaten on this day, representing the two rectangular tablets of the law given to Moses.

Secondly there is the so called Kreplach, which is a kind of a triangular jewish cheese-ravioli. It should represent the 3 Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as the three parts of the Hebrew bible: the law, the prophets and the writings. It should also remind them to the fact that Moses was the third born son in his family and to the fact that the people of Israel had to sanctify themselves for three days before receiving the law in the wilderness.

E) Messianic implication

The actual fulfillment of this feast occurred when the apostles received the holy spirit in Jerusalem on Pentecost and began to preach the gospel of the Messiah Jesus Christ to all the Jews of many nations who were present at that time. On one single day, 3.000 Jews came to belief and were baptized. The fulfillment was the birthday of the church!!

Throughout the old testament, the holy spirit had already been very active. He had indwelt people for some time, he had come upon people, filled people and had done many other miraculous things. But in the fulfillment at Pentecost in Acts 2, he came down to do a brandnew ministry which he had never done before: the work of spirit baptism! There is an inseparable connection between spirit baptism and the existence of the church; the one can not exist without the other. The replacement-theologists say that the church had always been in existence, also during the old testament. They say that the church is the true and spiritual Israel and that when God had made his covenants with Israel in the old testament, he had actually made them with the church. But this is not true, it is a wrong teaching. Throughout the whole bible there is a permanent separation between Israel, the gentiles and the church. If we miss this clear distinction, we will be absolutely unable to understand the dispensations of God and the whole bible-prophecy.

The church came into existence after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This can be clearly stated by studying at least two passages of the scripture.

Firstly, the Lord Jesus announced the establishment of the Church in Matthew 16, 18: „on this rock I will build my church". This means that the church was still future at that point of time.

Secondly, the Lord said in Acts 1, 5: „...and you will be baptized by the holy spirit within a few days". Here the church was still future, although ten days later it was born on Pentecost in Jerusalem. But we will now have to find a clear biblical proof for the inseparable connection between spirit baptism and the church. If we can see when spirit baptism really began, we will see when the church actually came into existence. The proof can be found by studying five passages of the Bible.

Col. 1, 18 clearly states that the church is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Cor 12, 13 tells us how we can enter into the body of Christ: it is by means of spirit baptism („we are all baptized by one spirit into one body"). These two verses clearly state the inseparable connection between spirit baptism and the church!

Acts 1, 5 tells us that the spirit baptism would now occur within a few days. Because of the inseparable connection this would mean that the church was about to be born at the same time! But when would this be?

In Acts 2, 1-4, the holy spirit came down from heaven in order to indwell the apostles. But how can we prove that this was the spirit baptism? The passage does not at all speak about spirit baptism!! So we will have to study another passage.

In Acts 10 Peter has a vision and goes to the gentiles. At that time the first gentiles are baptized into the body of Christ. When he returns to Jerusalem in Acts 11, 1-3, Peter is accused by the Jewish believers in Jerusalem of having eaten together with uncircumcised gentiles. In Acts 11, 4-14 he gives the account of his vision and of the events in Acts 10. In verse 15 he tells that the spirit fell on the gentiles „...just like on us in the beginning". Who is „us"? Peter speaks about the Jews who first became believers. When was „the beginning"? It was in Acts 2, 1-4 !!! In Acts 11, 16, Peter even quotes Acts 1, 5 in order to point out that Acts 2, 1-4 was the actual fulfillment of Acts 1, 5!! So we can now clearly state that the spirit baptism which is the birthday of the church, occurred in Acts 2, 1-4. Pentecost is the actual birthday of the church!! It is the fulfillment of the feast of weeks! And it is also the fulfillment of the first fruits of the wheat harvest. In John 12, 24 the Lord identifies himself with the wheat seed. The seed fell into the ground and died. The Lord Jesus died and was buried. The wheat seed produced a tremendous amount of fruit. After his resurrection, the Lord Jesus went into heaven and sent the holy spirit to this earth on Pentecost. By believing the gospel, 3.000 Jews became believers on one single day. This was the first fruits of the wheat harvest!!! Hebrews 12, 23 also mentions the firstborn sons of the church, the first fruits of the summer-harvest. James 1,

18 mentions the first fruits of his new creatures, which means the first believers of the first century. But there is still one question remaining: Why did they offer two loaves of leavened bread? It was two loaves because the church is comprised of both Jewish and Gentile believers. It was leavened, because both Jews and Gentiles were sinners, saved by grace through faith. (Eph. 2, 11-16 and Eph. 3, 4-6).

The interval period of 4 months between the 2 cycles of the Feasts (Leviticus 23, 22)

This time was the normal summertime of labour between the feasts, where life in Israel continued along its normal lines. The people prepared the fields for the final harvest. When the final harvest came, they had to leave a portion behind for the poor and the sojourner.

D) Messianic implication

The Lord Jesus himself makes a very clear reference to this time in Jn 4, 35. Let's read this verse:

On the physical level there was still a period of 4 months left until the harvest should come. But on the spiritual level there was no need to wait such a long time, because there was already a spiritual harvest ready to be reaped at once! The Lord proved this by saving the Samaritan woman and many of her relatives on that very day. The messianic implication therefore is this: The four months represent the church age which interrupts the sequence of the feasts of Israel and their fulfillment in prophecy. While the church is gathered today by preaching the gospel, Israel has been set aside for some time. But when the number of the church saints shall be complete, the prophetic clockwork of Israel will restart, ticking down until the second coming of the Lord Jesus in his Kingdom. In the meantime we are commanded to preach the gospel to the poor and to the sojourner, which is nicely pictured by the portion left behind during the harvest. We must be actively involved in gospel evangelism to get a spiritual harvest for the Lord in this age, because the fields are already white!!

The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23, 23-25)

A) Other references

- Numbers 29, 1-6: The sacrifices to be offered on this occasion.
- Esra 3, 1-6: The altar was rebuilt on this day, and the trumpets were blown.
- Neh. 8, 1-2: The whole law was read in front of the people (Exodus 20-40, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy 1-28), because they were hungry for the word.

B) Names

- Yom truah: the day of the blowing of the trumpets.
- Zicharon truah: The remembrance of the blowing of the trumpets. If the feast fell on a sabbath, no work was allowed. The blowing of the trumpets was a kind of work. Therefore it was not allowed in such a year. It could only be remembered.
- Yom ha zicharon: The day of remembrance. The Jews remember their sins of the last year and they confess them to each other. This will be explained later.
- Yom Hadin: The day of judgement. On this day every Jew undergoes a spiritual judgment from God and it will be determined whether he shall live one more year or not. This will also be explained later.
- Rosh ha shana: The head of the year. This is today the most common among the Jews, because it

marks the beginning of the Jewish civil year. This symbolizes the dark day of Israel, connected to a serious warning against the coming judgment day (Amos 5, 18-20; Zeph. 1, 14-16; Joel 3, 4; Is 13, 9-10, 34, 4+8; Acts 2, 20; Rev 6, 12-17). It is actually the Jewish new-year, and they send greeting cards to each other.

C) Biblical practice

It was observed on the first day of the seventh month Tishri, it was the only new-moon-feast throughout the whole year. Apart from blowing the trumpets there was no work allowed. Moses gave no special reason for blowing the trumpets, but this will be explained later.

D) Jewish practice

1) The Selichot: Prayers of repentance during the week before the feast in preparation to it.

2) The blowing of the Schofar.

a) The Schofar is the actual horn of a ram. In the early times all kinds of kosher horns were used except from the horn of a bull (because of the sin of the golden calf in the wilderness). But today only the horn of a ram is used in order to remember the offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah, where the ram was a substitution for Isaac.

b) The three purposes. As Moses did not say anything about the purposes, the rabbis added a whole lot of traditions in order to find their own reasons for the observance.

- First purpose: In order to serve as a call to repentance, because the judgment was at hand.

- Second purpose: To remind Israel of its covenantal relationship with God. The Mosaic covenant on Mount Sinai was preceded by the loud sound of a trumpet.

- Third purpose: In order to confuse Satan's mind when he is trying to accuse Israel. According to Zech. 3, 1 Satan goes into heaven then and then in order to accuse Israel of its sins.

According to the rabbis this happens exactly on Rosh ha Shana! Just when Satan opens his mouth to tell the sins of Israel, in all synagogues around the world the blowing of the trumpets begins. By all this noise the mind of Satan is totally confused, he can no more utter one single accusation against Israel! If you do not believe this story, you could go into a synagogue on Rosh ha Shana. There you will experience at least the confusion of your own mind by the blowing of the trumpets.

c) The three meanings.

- First meaning: It symbolizes the regathering of Israel (Is. 27, 12-13).

- Second meaning: It symbolizes the resurrection of the dead (1. Cor 15)

- Third meaning: It announces the judgment of God. Rabbinic tradition says that God in heaven opens three books on this day.

- The first one is the book of life (Exodus 2, 32-33 and Psalm 69, 29). It contains the names of those Jews who are completely righteous and who will live one more year.

- The second one is the book of the dead. It contains the names of those Jews who are completely wicked and who are going to die within the next year.

- The third one is the book of the in-between. It contains most of the Jewish names because most of the Jews are like this! The judgment over them will occur ten days later on Yom Kippur. So they have now actually 10 days left in order to repent. These ten days until Yom-Kippur are the so-called days of repentance, when the Jews confess their sins to each other in order to be worthy to survive for one more year. They do also apologize to people whom they have offended. But it is only a temporary repentance, because after Yom-Kippur life goes on like before until the next year.

3) The trumpet-sound

The complete blowing-ceremony contains 100 different sounds in a changing sequence. The first 99 sounds are all different combinations of three types of notes:

- the teqiah: one long, smooth single blast, symbolizing joy.

- the schwarim: three short blasts, which symbolize weeping or crying.
- the truah: nine very short staccato blasts, symbolizing fear.

The 100th sound is the so-called teqiah gedolah: It means „the great trump" or „the last trump". It is the longest of all notes, as long as the blower can hold his breath. It symbolizes the final redemption, resurrection and regathering of Israel. This one is picked up by Paul in the new testament.

4) The Taschlich: „the casting away". According to Micha 7, 19 the Jews go out in the afternoon. They go to a river or lake or to the beach. Then they empty their pockets from their sins and throw them into the sea.

5) Other practices

There are many legends told around this day. According to the rabbis, many particular events took place on this very day: The creation of the heavens and the earth, the creation of Adam, the fall of Adam, the birth of Cain and Abel (both with a twin-sister), the Killing of Abel, the drying-up of the flood. The birth of Abraham, Isaac and Jakob. The death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Elisha blessed the shunamite woman with a child (2.Ki 4, 16). The offerings were started in the second temple. All these things are merely traditions, there is no biblical proof. Concerning food items, there was an emphasis on grapes, pomegranates and apples dipped in honey. On the table there is the head of a ram in order to remember Isaac's offering.

The scriptures read in the synagogue are Genesis 22 (remembrance of Isaac) and the seven times repeated reading of Psalm 47, which mentions the Schofar in verse 6.

E) Messianic implications

This feast will actually be fulfilled by the rapture of the church. The rapture-event itself shall now be discussed. John 14, 1-3 tells us that the Lord Jesus was soon going to return into heaven. There he would be preparing a place for the believers to take them there. This promise is for every church-believer: the Lord will come and take us home into heaven. 1.Thess. 4, 13-18 tells us about the actual process of the rapture event. Paul had founded the young local church of the Thessalonians, and he had begun to tell them the whole council of God, as he had done before with other local churches. But because of severe persecution, the apostle had to leave the Thessalonians very early. So many questions remained unanswered. The Thessalonians wanted to know something about the future of those who had died during the persecution. Would they also reach heaven? This is the historical background of our passage. Paul uses the term „in Christ" and similar terms referring to those who were baptized by the spirit into the body of Christ, as we discussed earlier. This should point out that the rapture concerns the believers of the Church. The resurrection of the old testament believers and the tribulation-believers will occur at some other point of time. The chronology of the rapture event itself will contain seven elements:

- The Lord Jesus himself will stand up from his throne in heaven, leave the throne and come down into the atmosphere of the earth.
- As the chief-commander he will issue the order to begin the process by giving a loud shout in form of a military commandment.
- The voice of the archangel will repeat the commandment of the chief-commander.
- Then the trumpet will sound. This is the connection to the feast of trumpets as mentioned before under the three meanings.
- Then the dead in Christ will rise first. They will even proceed the living believers in partaking of the blessings of the rapture.
- The living believers will then be transformed within the twinkling of an eye and will also receive their glorified heavenly bodies.
- All believers together will meet the Lord in the air and be with him for ever and ever.

If we connect all this with our passage in Jn 14, 1-3, we see that the believers will not immediately return to the earth as some teach, but will immediately go to the place in heaven

which the Lord Jesus has prepared for them in advance. We will not have to face the tribulation on this earth. 1. Cor. 15, 50-58 emphasizes the change of the nature of our bodies at that time. Our present body is unable to enter the eternal order, because it is a subject to mortality and corruption. In the context of 1. Thess. the change of the body takes place in the moment of the rapture. Paul here mentions this as being a biblical mystery. According to Eph. 3, 4+5, a biblical mystery is something which has been completely unrevealed during the time of the old testament, but has now been revealed to the apostles to be told to the believers. The resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ are not a mystery, because they were often mentioned by the prophets of the old testament. But the rapture has never been mentioned, you will never find it in the old testament.

It is a brandnew revelation to the apostle Paul. As Moses also did not know the mystery of the rapture, he was unable to give any reason for the observance of the feast of trumpets. But in the 1. Cor 15 passage, the resurrection of the dead church saints is directly connected to the blowing of the last trumpet, the tekiah gedolah. This is a strong proof for the fulfillment of the feast of trumpets by the rapture. There will be a whole generation of believers who will enter the heavenly places without having died before. You and I will perhaps be in that number, if the rapture will occur during our lifetime!! There will be a complete change within the twinkling of an eye. In your new body you will never lose your own identity; everyone will recognize you as being the person which you have always been before. But you will be glorified. There will be no more corruption, no more pain, no more illness at all. If you lost for example one leg during this life, you will again have two legs, jumping around with joy. For the living believer at the rapture, mortality will put on immortality, for the dead believer corruption will put on incorruption. (1. Cor. 15, 55 and Jn 11, 25-26).

The last trumpet of verse 52 has often been identified with the 7th trumpet in Revelation 11. But this is not a correct teaching. Paul speaks about the last trump, because the Corinthians knew about this trump! Paul had told them the whole council of God, which naturally contained the knowledge about the feasts of Israel and their prophetic fulfillments. They could not know anything about the 7th trumpet in Revelation 11, because the book of Revelation did still not exist at that time, it was written about 30 years later!! It is just the first letter to the Corinthians which strongly refers to the Feasts of Israel! Jesus Christ is connected to many of the feasts:

- in chapter 5, 6-7 to the Passover
- in chapter 6, 8 to the unleavened bread
- in chapter 11-14 to the feast of weeks
- in chapter 15, 20-33 to the feast of the first fruits
- in chapter 15, 50-58 to the feast of the trumpets.

Paul points out that the term „the last trump“ of 1. Corinthians means the tekiah gedolah, the last and longest note of all the 100 notes of the feast of trumpets. As we already said, the feasts will be prophetically fulfilled exactly in the same chronological order in which they occur throughout the year. As the feast of trumpets is followed by the day of atonement which is fulfilled by the tribulation, the national salvation of Israel and the second coming of the Lord Jesus, we can clearly state that the rapture will occur before the tribulation starts. This view is also supported by many statements of the prophets. But there are also several further biblical facts:

- a) Whenever the bible speaks about the tribulation (for example in Rev. 6-18 and many other passages of the old and new testament), the church is not mentioned one single time!
- b) Some say: „There are saints in the tribulation. As all saints are church-saints, there must be the church in the tribulation!“ But this is not true. Not all saints are church saints. There are saints in the old testament and in the tribulation. But they are never, never, never called church saints at all!
- c) The replacement-theologists say: "The church is the true Israel. As Israel is in the tribulation, the church is also there!" But this is not true at all. Whenever Israel is

mentioned in the new testament, it is very clearly distinct from the gentiles and from the church. There are three different entities!!

- d) According to Luke 21, 35-36, the judgments fall upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth. When you will live on this earth at that time you will never be able to escape the tribulation. Believers and unbelievers will suffer during the tribulation!! The tribulation saints will have to suffer as well as the unbelievers!!
- e) There is but one way out of the tribulation: You must be taken away from the face of the earth in order to be able to stand in front of the son of man. The church will indeed be taken away when the rapture occurs before the tribulation. Every church saint will stand before the son of man in heaven, before the judgment seat of the lord Jesus, in order to be rewarded or to remain unrewarded. But no single church saint will live on the face of the earth when the tribulation starts.
- f) 1.Thess. 1, 9-10 says that the Lord Jesus will come to deliver the believers from the coming wrath of God.
- g) 1.Thess. 5, 1-11 says that the day of the Lord (the tribulation) will not overtake the believer, but the unbelievers. It will be a day of night and darkness. But the believers are not of the darkness and of the night, but of the light and of the day. This also refers to the new-moon-observance of the feast: it symbolizes this darkness and the warning against the coming judgment.
- h) Rev. 3, 10 says that the believers will be kept from the hour of trial which is going to come upon all the earth in order to try all people dwelling on the face of the earth. Those who teach us that the church will have to go through the tribulation, but will be kept safe during this period, must have read another bible than we did. In many chapters of the Revelation (6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18,) saints are getting killed. The Antichrist will even overcome them! If this should be the keeping safe by God , the Lord would have done a very bad job!! But these saints in the tribulation are never called church saints. There will simply be no church saints in the tribulation!!
- i) Revelation 19, 1-10 shows the marriage of the groom Jesus Christ and the bride, the church. This is an event in heaven just before the second coming of Christ in 19, 11. The Church is already in heaven before the second coming of Christ, and has already undergone the judgment seat of the Lord! So the fetching of the bride, which is the rapture, and the second coming of the Lord together with his bride must be two separate events!

The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23, 26-32)

A) Other references

-Leviticus 16: The details of the observance of the feast.

-Leviticus 25, 8-12: The details of the observance, when the day of atonement fell in a sabbatical year or in the year of Jubilee.

-Numbers 29, 7-11: special offerings on this occasion for every year.

-Hebr 9, 11-10; 18: Emphasis on the superiority of the Messiah's blood against the blood of the animals offered on the day of atonement. Blood of bulls and goats (as being offered on this day) only covers the sins, whereas the blood of the Messiah takes all sins completely away. Animal blood cannot cleanse, the conscience, but the messiah's blood can.

-Hebr 13, 10-16: Makes an outside of the camp-comparison. The emphasis is on the gate of Jerusalem and on the camp of Judaism. The offerings of the day of atonement had to be burned outside the city. Only the blood of the first goat was taken into the holy of holies and sprinkled onto the mercy-seat. When the Lord died for the sins of the people, he carried his blood into the heavenly holy of holies, but his body was offered on calvary outside the gate of Jerusalem and outside the camp of Judaism,

because the Jews had rejected him. Only those who came out of Judaism at that time as well as today and believed in the Lord Jesus, would be able to benefit of this final atonement. For the gentiles there was no connection to Judaism, and simple repentance was sufficient in order to be saved, and is still today!

B) Names

-Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement.

-Yom ha Kippurim: The Day of the Atonements. This emphasizes the fact that the observance provided not an individual atonement, but a national one!

-Shabbat Shabbaton: The Sabbath of Sabbaths: This is the holiest day of the year. It is observed as a Sabbath and called a Sabbath, no matter on which day of the week it occurs.

C) Biblical practice

There is a calendar-date for this feast: the 10th day of the seventh month (Tischri), ten days after the feast of the trumpets.

It was not a pilgrimage festival. This means that the Jews could also observe it at home. The Jews were not commanded to come to Jerusalem with their own sacrifices. Individual sin-sacrifices were offered throughout the whole year. But this one was a national sacrifice. One goat died for the sins of the whole nation, another goat carried away the sins of the whole nation.

The observance was not a day of joy but a day of repentance and prayer. The main thing which should have characterized the believers was the affliction of the soul!

This was a very important day for the priesthood. The high priest had to leave his private home already one week before the observance and had to move to the special residence in the temple compound. During this week he was twice sprinkled with the ashes of the young red cow (Numbers 19) in order to avoid ritual uncleanness because of accidental touching of a dead body during this time. There was also appointed a second person who was supposed to perform the ceremony in case of a ritual immersion, severe illness or death of the high priest. On the day of atonement there was a morning service and an afternoon service. The high priest had to undergo five ritual immersions during the day, he did the most important afternoon-observance wearing a completely white garment instead of his multicoloured garments.

The details of the main observance are given in Leviticus 16.

In verses 1-2 we see the restriction of the holy of holies: Only one person of one family from one clan from one tribe from one people from one race of humanity could have the access to the holy of holies into God's presence, and this only once a year!!

Verses 3-5 show the preparations. The high priest is wearing his white garment, the bull to be sacrificed for the sins of the high-priest and the two goats to be offered for the people are presented.

In verses 6-10 the animals are again presented. The lots are cast over the two goats. One goat is determined to be killed, one goat is determined to be driven out of the city. Verses 11-14 show the atonement for the high priest by offering of the bull. Verses 15-22 show the atonement for the whole people. The first goat is killed, the blood taken into the holy of holies and sprinkled onto the seat of mercy. Then the second goat is presented. The high priest puts his hands onto the head of the goat, thus giving over all sins of the people to the goat. Then the so-called scapegoat is driven out into the wilderness in order to carry away the sins of the people.

Verses 23-28 show the next ritual cleansing of the high priest, his change of clothes and the cleansing of the participants.

Verses 29-34 show the further specifications of the sacrifice.

At the end of this ceremony we should be aware of the fact that there were two key-elements: The first one was the offering of the two goats. The second one was the affliction of the soul among the people. The atonement was only applicable to those who believed!!

D) Jewish practice

As the temple was destroyed in the year AD 70, the offerings of the day of atonement became impossible to be observed. This is why the Jewish rabbis tried to establish a substitutional observance of the feast in order to reach their atonement. They teach that every single Jew today is able to achieve his own atonement for his sins. Secondly there is the affliction of the body necessary instead of the affliction of the soul. So they have actually left the biblical principles commanded by Moses!

- Although Moses never commanded fasting, this is the main observance of today in order to reach the affliction of the body instead of the affliction of the soul. Yom Kippur today is not a day of feasting, but a day of fasting.
- Instead of the blood offerings in the temple you can have three substitutes: repentance, prayer and giving to charity. The very orthodox Jews of today do still have a blood sacrifice in form of a hen for the female and a rooster for the male. This is the so-called Kapparat-ceremony. These orthodox Jews are aware of the fact that the offering of animals has been forbidden since the destruction of the temple. But they are also aware of the fact that according to Leviticus 17, 11 the soul is in the blood. But they do not know that the final atonement has been achieved on Calvary and thus they made a wrong conclusion.
- The five self-denials of this day are:
 - the denial of washing and bathing
 - the denial of anointing with oil, hand creams or face creams
 - the denial of wearing leather sandals or shoes (because the whole earth becomes holy)
 - the denial of sexual intercourse between the married couples and
 - a total fast for both solids and liquids for 24 hours in order to reduce blood and fat (the two elements which were especially offered to God on the altar)
- The Kol nidrei, which means „all vows". This is a ritual song which is sung three times during the synagogue service on Yom Kippur. It is an annulment of all vows made during the last year under duress or innocently. It is especially applicable to forced conversions from Judaism to other religions (which often occurred during the Middle Ages).
- The book of Jona is read in the synagogue-service. This book shows that a man can not run away from God, but that atonement can also be reached by repentance. Although they read the book, they cannot understand the new-testament fulfillment.
- They eat Kreplach (Jewish ravioli) with chubbed meat, onions and garlic on the day before. On the day after the observance they eat salty herings and drink very much.

The legend of Azazel: Azazel means „removal". But it has become a technical name for the scapegoat in the ceremony, which carried away the sins of the people into the wilderness. According to Is 1, 18 (...) the rabbis added another practice. They tied a red ribbon to the horn of the scapegoat before it was chased away. The legend now says that the red ribbon turned white miraculously every year as a visible sign for the national atonement. So far, so good. But the legend still says something else: The red ribbon stopped turning white during the last 40 years before the destruction of the temple. What does this mean? The meaning is this: when the Lord Jesus was offered on Calvary 40 years before the destruction, he provided the final atonement. When he cried out: „It is finished!", everything was atoned! So there was no more animal blood necessary to be offered in the temple. From this year on, God did no more accept the whole temple service as well as the two goats offered on Yom Kippur!!!

Although the Jews know about this legend, they have failed to draw the right conclusion. The conclusion would have been that Jesus Christ is their Messiah who has already atoned their sins if they would believe it.

E) Messianic implication

The atonement itself is fulfilled by the fact that the Messiah Jesus Christ offered his own blood and carried it into the holy of holies in heaven. Hebrews 9, 10-16 states this very clearly. He was a perfect high priest who did not need a special offering for his own sins, because he was completely clean and sinless. He did not enter the holy of holies with the blood of an animal, because this would not have been sufficient. He entered with his own sinless blood. This blood is sufficient to take every sin completely away and provide an eternal and total atonement for every believer. As it says in Hebrews 10, 14, every believer has now been made perfect for ever and ever. There is no other sacrifice necessary. The Lord Jesus uttered this by saying: „It is finished!". We know, that the Lord Jesus actually died on Passover in Jerusalem. But when he died, he fulfilled several feasts at the same time. He was the final passover-lamb in his death. His Body and his sinless blood were the unleavened bread. In his resurrection he was the first fruits. But when we read Is 53, we will clearly see that he was also the two goats as well as the high priest, and that he achieved the final atonement. So we can say that the day of atonement spiritually occurred on calvary. This is a fact concerning every believer of the church, both jewish and gentile believers.

But the actual day of atonement will be fulfilled for the nation of Israel. They have to be atoned, because they have rejected their Messiah during his first coming. When the Lord Jesus lived in Israel, he showed himself to the people as being the Messiah by performing all messianic miracles which had been announced in the scripture and in the rabbinic traditions of the Sopherim and Tannaim. The three main messianic miracles were the healing of a jewish leper (Luke 5), the healing of a man born blind (John 9) and the casting out of a mute demon (Matth. 12). After having performed the last miracle, the Lord Jesus was officially rejected by the Leaders and the people of Israel in Matthew 12. They could not deny his miracles, but what they could do was this: They could say that the miracles came out of a demonic source. By doing this they committed the unpardonable sin. The definition of the unpardonable sin is this: It is the national rejection of the Messiah Jesus Christ by his people Israel, while he was personally present at that time, on the basis of demon possession. In Matthew 12, 32-33, the Lord clearly stated that this specific sin of this particular generation of Israel would never be forgiven to them. When they now asked him to perform another miracle, the Lord said in Matthew 12, 39.40 and Matthew 16, 4 that to Israel as a whole nation there would only be given one more public sign, which is the sign of Jonah, the sign of resurrection. This sign was given to them two times. Firstly at the resurrection of Lazarus in John 11, secondly at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus himself. It was rejected in both cases. Thirdly it will again be given to Israel in the future at the resurrection of the two witnesses in Jerusalem in Revelation 11. This last sign of Jonah will be accepted by the future generation of Jews in Jerusalem and will lead to the salvation of many Jews. But today the nation as a whole is still not atoned! Shortly before his crucifixion, the Lord Jesus condemned the Pharisees in Matthew 23. In verse 39 he said: „You will not see me again until You will say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" The jewish Leaders had accused the Lord Jesus on the basis of demon possession, saying that he had come in the name of Satan. But there must come a day in the future, when the Leaders of Israel of that future generation will greet their Messiah Jesus Christ by saying that he comes in the name of the Lord. On that day the Lord will forgive the sin of his people, come back and provide the final atonement for his nation Israel as a whole. But today Israel is still an ungodly nation, most of the Jews do not believe in God at all. This raises one question: How will God be able to bring about such a tremendous change of mind in Israel that the Leaders and the whole people will call for the Messiah Jesus Christ to come back? In order to answer this question we will have to study some more passages of scripture.

In Dan 12, 7 it is said: „...and when the destruction of the power of the holy people will be complete, then the end will come." In this passage, the Lord connects his second coming, which will be the end, clearly to the destruction of the power of his holy people, which is Israel. We can say that Israel must be completely weak and desperate before the Lord can come back.

In Hos 5, God speaks to his people throughout the whole chapter. But let us read verse 15:...God had left his place (which is heaven) in the person of The Lord Jesus. The Lord was rejected by his people. So he went back to his place until they would again call for his coming This passage shows the people of Israel as being in severe affliction which leads to the calling back of the Messiah in chapter 6, 1-3.....But How will God produce this affliction in the souls of his people? The answer is: by means of the Tribulation!! As we discussed before, Moses commanded the affliction of the soul as being very important at the day of atonement. This affliction of the soul has been replaced by the affliction of the body. We studied this before under D) Jewish practice. By means of the Tribulation, God will bring a very severe affliction of the body upon his people Israel. This affliction will be so severe that it will finally lead again to a real affliction of the soul! The people of Israel and their leaders will be in a total despair and will then really call for the Messiah Jesus Christ to come back: „...in their affliction they will seek me earnestly." They will then study the word and finally see in Is. 53, that the Lord Jesus is their final day of atonement sacrifice. They will confess their national iniquity (which was the unpardonable sin of Matthew 12) to the Lord by praying the words of Isaiah 53, 1-9. This passage carries

- the concept of a national confession of the unpardonable sin (verses 1-9)
- the concept of a national atonement and of the first goat (verse 10)
- the concept of a penal substitution (verses 4-8), because the Lord Jesus took upon himself the penalty of the law and suffered the curse of the law instead of his people.
- the concept of the second goat, the scapegoat (verses 11-12).

The same things are also shown in Zech. 12-14.

Chapter 12, 1-9 show the severe affliction of the body of Israel.

Chapter 12, 10 shows the real affliction of the soul: „... and they will look upon me whom they have pierced, and they will cry over me..."

Chapter 12, 11-13,6 show the affliction of the soul of the whole nation, they will no more tolerate the false prophets among themselves.

Chapter 13, 1: The sins are forgiven.

Chapter 13, 9: The one third of the people that has survived comes to belief.

Chapter 14, 1-15 : The salvation of the people will bring forth the coming of the Lord.

Chapter 14, 16-21: The Millennium.

The conclusion is that the whole day of atonement for Israel will be fulfilled in the future by the Tribulation and by the second coming of the Lord Jesus. This leads us on to the last feast.

The Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23, 33-44)

A) Other references

-Exodus 34, 22: The feast of the ingathering after the summer-harvest.

-Numbers 29, 12-34: The special sacrifices to be offered on this occasion. There was a number of 70 bulls to be offered during all seven days of the feast. This could represent the 70 gentile nations of Genesis 10. The feast is anyway connected to the gentile world. During the millennium there will also be a great blessing for the gentiles. They will even partake of the temple services!

-Deuteronomy 16, 13-15: This is a time of rejoicing, you have to stay happy for all 7 days.

-Neh 8,13-18: It was reinstuted after the babylonian captivity. This was the first time that it was kept since the days of Joshua. Even David and Solomon, Hesekiah and Josiah did not reinstitute it. Perhaps it had been too difficult to stay happy for all the 7 days.

-John 7, 1-10. 21: This passage tells us what Jesus said and did during the feast of Tabernacles.

B) Names

-Hag: The Feast.

-Hag ha Succot: The feast of the tabernacles.

-Hag ha Asiph: The feast of the ingathering. It comes after the ingathering of the summer harvest. It was the third pilgrimage festival which had to be observed in Jerusalem.

-Shemini atzeret. The eighth day of the assembly. Moses added an attached 8th day to be observed as an independent sabbath or holy day. This day marks the end of all the cycles of the festivals. It is not the last festivity of the whole year but the last one of the seven holy seasons of the Lord.

-Simchat Torah: The rejoicing over the law. The 5 books of Moses were divided into 54 portions which are read continuously and simultaneously in the synagogues all over the world. On this day the end of the fifth book of Moses is read, and the new cycle is immediately started by reading Genesis 1, 1-5 in order to show that the reading of the law never ends. After the reading they go outside the synagogue, dancing around the scrolls.

C) Biblical practice

It was a 7 day festival, beginning on the 15th day of the 7th month. They had to build small booths to live in, because they should remember the wilderness wandering. It was to be observed with 4 species: palmbranches, myrtlebranches, willowbranches and the citron (mixture between grapefruit and lemon). It was a time of rejoicing, following the afflictions of the day of atonement. It would mark the end of the summer harvest and the first fruits of the fall harvest. It also marks the end of the dew season and the beginning of the rain season. There was the added eighth day distinct from the feast, closing the second cycle of all the feasts.

D) Jewish practice

1) The three symbols.

a) The Succah, the booth or tabernacle. It is a negative symbol of the lost national hope of Israel since the destruction of the temple and the diaspora, giving to the people a sense of insecurity. It symbolizes a temporary abode. It is a positive symbol of the hope of future restoration based upon Amos 9, 11: The Messiah would come back and build again the succah of David.

b) The Lulav: it refers to the palmbranches and to the holder of the branches. There were 6 different branches in the Lulav: 1 palmbranch, 2 willowbranches and 3 myrtlebranches. It was held in the right hand, waved to and fro, up and down. This was in order to hold back bad wind and bad rain. It has to do with the beginning of the rain season which was marked by this feast. The Jews asked God for the early rains, for the main body of rains and for the latter rains. If all the rains would occur right in time, this would produce good fruits.

c) The Etrog, the citron. It is in the left hand, symbolizing the fruit of the promised land.

2) The second temple period (515 BC - AD 70). There were several key ceremonies during that time, which was also the time of the Lord Jesus. The Lord also refers to both of them, as we will see later.

a) The outpouring of the water. This occurred on every day of the feast. In the morning the high priest went down to the Pool of Siloam, filled a golden pitch with water and went back to the temple. When he entered the water-gate, there were 3 trumpet sounds and the priests repeated Isaiah 12, 3. When he ascended the 15 steps between the outer and the inner court of the temple, the psalms 120-134 were sung, one psalm for each step. This is why they are called the songs of the ascent. Then he went to the base of the altar and poured out the water together with a pitch of wine. The rabbis say that this symbolized the outpouring of the holy spirit upon Israel in the last days. It caused immediately a tremendous rejoicing among the whole people. At this moment there were again three trumpet sounds and then the „Hallel" (Psalm 113-118) was sung by the choir of the levites. The priests walked around the altar once. When psalm 118, 25 was sung, all the people waved their palm branches, crying out „Hoshanna rabba!!" which means „save us in the highest!!"

- b) The seventh day, „Yom hasvi i shel arava". This means „the seventh day of the willow", because the emphasis on this day is on water. There was one more willow branch in the Lulav, because the willows mostly grow on the waterbanks, on this day the Hoshanna-Rabba-ceremony occurred. They did not have only three trumpet blasts but three times seven blasts. They did not only walk once around the altar, but seven times. They sang the „Hoschanna Rabba" seven times! In John 7 the Lord Jesus referred to this ceremony as we will see later.
- c) The kindling of the lampstands: There were 4 mighty lampstands with 4 arms in the outer court of the temple compound. Starting from the second evening of the feast, the lampstands were kindled by the young members of the priesthood. Again the 15 songs of the ascent were sung on the 15 steps in front of the Nikanor-gate between the inner and outer court. The elders of the Sanhedrin were dancing all night long in the court. There was such a tremendous amount of light, that every home in Jerusalem was illuminated. The rabbis say that this light symbolizes the Shekina glory of The Messiah when he comes. Jesus came back from the mount of olives to the temple on the added 8th day, when he said in John 8, 12: „I am the Light of the world". On the same day he healed the man born blind in John 9, 5 saying: „As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
- d) When they prayed for rain, they didn't do it before the seventh day. If you would have asked any rabbi for the reason, you would have received a very practical answer: Imagine that we would pray for rain on the first day and God would choose to send rain at once! It would be very difficult to live in those wet clumsy booths and to stay happy for all seven days. Therefore we start praying on the last day.

3) Other practices. In the synagogue service the Book of Ecclesiastes is read.

E) Messianic implication

Before we come to the observance of the Lord Jesus and to the actual fulfillment of the feast, we will first study two misapplications of the feast, which occurred during the first coming of the Lord. The first one is the misapplication by the apostle Peter on the mount of the transfiguration. In Matthew 16 the apostles already knew who Jesus was: Peter confessed him clearly as being The Christ, the son of the living God." They knew that Jesus was the Messiah. But then the Lord announced to them that he would go to Jerusalem in order to be killed there. Peter and the other apostles didn't understand this at all. Peter even said to the Lord: „...but this will never happen to You! ". The Lord told them that some of them would not die until they would have seen the glory of the messianic king in his kingdom. What they didn't understand at all was the fact that the Messiah Jesus would first have to die and be resurrected before he would come back later in order to set up his messianic kingdom. They didn't understand the program of the two comings of the Lord. If we now go to Matthew 17, we can see the fulfillment of the promise of chapter 16. The three apostles who would not die before they would have seen the kingdom glory of the Lord, were Peter, James and John. And they saw this glory in the transfiguration. They saw him exactly in the way he will look like during the Kingdom.

Moses and Elijah were together with the Lord. Luke tells us in his account that they discussed the things which were about to happen with the Lord in Jerusalem. But Peter did not understand the program of the two comings! He expected the kingdom to begin right now in this very moment!! And he has often been judged by the bible teachers for what he is now doing. He wants to build three tabernacles for the Lord, for Moses and Elijah. The teachers often interpreted this as an offence against the Lord, humiliating him down to the level of Moses and Elijah. But according to what he knew and what he did not know, he gave the correct biblical answer to what he saw. He knew from the old testament and from the Jewish tradition that the coming of the messiah in his shekina kingdom glory would be the fulfillment of the feast of tabernacles. And this is exactly why he wanted to build the three tabernacles. But based on the fact that he did not understand the

program of the first and second coming, he produced his reaction at the wrong time. He did not understand that the Messiah first had to become the final passover lamb of God on Calvary. He did not understand that Passover comes first, longtime before Tabernacles can occur.

The second misapplication occurs at the triumphal entry of the Lord on a donkey to Jerusalem in Matthew 21, 8-9. At this moment the Lord Jesus is proclaimed by the people of Jerusalem to be the Messianic King. They call him the son of David and sing the Hoshanna Rabba, which will be the official messianic greeting at the beginning of the Millennium. In John 12, 12-13 they break down palm branches and wave them before the Lord, again singing the Hoshanna Rabba. In Luke 19, 38 they even call him the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Remember that this is the time of Passover!! The Lord is about to enter the city in order to become the final Passover lamb for his people!! And although it is Passover, the people are doing things which they normally would not do on Passover but on Tabernacles. In verses 41-44 of the same chapter the Lord issues the word of the final judgment over the present generation in the city, even crying over Jerusalem, why is this? Why did the Lord not begin his kingdom on earth at this very moment? The answer leads us back to what we discussed on the day of atonement. The people of Israel and their spiritual leaders had committed the unpardonable sin in Matthew 12! They had as a whole nation of that time reached the point of no return. No amount of repentance or obedience which they might have had from this point on would have been sufficient to avoid the coming physical judgment of death and destruction, which eventually happened in the year AD 70 at the destruction of the city and the temple. Some of them were saved later after the resurrection of the Lord at Pentecost and even later under the preaching of the apostles, but the nation as a whole was already lost. The Lord had issued the judgment over them in Matthew 12, 43-45 and in Matthew 23, 38-39. At that moment the people just wanted to proclaim the coming king, because they expected the Kingdom to be set up at once. They did not realize that the unpardonable sin had already been committed and that the Messiah had to be killed without having anything according to Daniel 9, 26!!

The observance of the Lord Jesus himself is shown to us in John 7, 1-10. 21.

He observed the outpouring of the water on the seventh day of the feast in John 7, 37-40. He clearly connects the ceremony with his own person and with the holy spirit. Those who become believers in Him will have living waters within themselves. The living water represents the holy spirit. The spirit will indwell every believer permanently.

John 8, 12 refers to the light given by the lampstands. The Lord Jesus says that He is the light of the world. He is the shekina glory which was only symbolized by the light of the lampstands. The fulfillment is present in Jerusalem on that day and the priests as well as the people do not realize it! The Messiah has come to his temple according to Mal 3, 1 and nobody has recognized him!

In John 9, 5, on the eighth day of the feast, the light of the Messiah comes to the man born blind. The Lord says: „As long as I am in this world, I am the light of the world." and heals the man. The man moves from physical darkness and blindness to physical light and sight. But he has to walk through the whole city in order to reach the Pool of Siloam. When the miracle becomes apparent, there is a tremendous number of eyewitnesses present at the pool, because on Tabernacles this is one of the most crowded places of the whole city! Thus the news of the messianic miracle is spreading very quickly. Some time later, after having been thrown out of the synagogue, the man meets the Lord again and comes from spiritual blindness to spiritual sight. He has already been healed before, but has now come to know the person of the Lord Jesus better than before. It is the same thing with us. If we have been saved by grace through faith, we should follow the Lord and be a witness for him. Then we will come to know him better and better. And in heaven we will see his face in glory! Those who never accepted the Lord Jesus as the son of God and as their personal redeemer, will finally remain in eternal darkness and blindness.

Last but not least we will now see the actual fulfillment of the feast in history for Israel and for the gentile nations. It will be the Messianic Kingdom, the Millennium. When he comes, he will send

out his angels to reap the earth. This is the connection to the agricultural system of Israel, where the feast occurs at the end of the summer-harvest. The harvest in the bible often symbolizes judgment (Hos 6, 1 1; Joel 4, 13; Matth 13, 39; Rev. 14, 15). There will be a clear separation between the believers and the unbelievers in the judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat according to Matthew 25. After the feast comes the harvest of olives, which symbolizes the final regathering of Israel in belief at the beginning of the Millennium (Is 27, 12-13; Is 11, 11-12; Jer. 23, 7-8). The Lord will dwell visibly among his people (Hes 37, 27-28; Rev. 21, 3). The Shekina Glory will be seen over Mount Zion (Is 60, 1; Zech 2, 9). It will be a shelter against the rain and the heat (Is 4, 5-6). Zech. 14, 1-15 describes the second coming. Verses 15-21 of the same chapter describe the establishment of the Kingdom. Every gentile nation will have to send a yearly delegation to Jerusalem in order to serve the Lord at tabernacles. The nations who fail to come will be judged by a drought. Egypt is mentioned as an example, because the feast of tabernacles is one of the feasts which result from the egyptian defeat shortly after the Exodus. So they might say: „Why should we go to Jerusalem to observe our own defeat?" But if they fail to come, they will surely never repeat this mistake. The bible has many other things to say about the Jews and the Gentiles during the Millennium. It would take another long seminary in order to mention all these many things. But as these things often have no direct connection to the feast, they will now have to be missed in our study. Just read for example Is 11, Is 64-66 as well as many of the psalms or other passages.