

The Feasts of Jehovah

Part 4

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[00:00:00] Leviticus 23 and verse 23 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, and holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein, but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Also, on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same [00:01:08] day, for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest. And ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth day of the month, and even from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath. [00:02:09] We've looked so far at the first four feasts unto the Lord in Leviticus 23. We've seen that the four are a major group together, showing us the basis of Christian blessing, and all blessing, eventually. And within this major group of four, which need to be considered together, we've seen within that major grouping two pairs. The first two, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, telling us that Christ has died as our Passover. Christ, [00:03:13] the Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. That everything depends upon the death of Christ. Without that, no righteous basis for blessing. Linked with that, and flowing from that, from that one death, it has been made plain that those who trust Jesus as Saviour, that they recognize that if that's what he has done for us, the least we can do is turn our back completely on our old sinful life, and live a life which is centered on Christ, and which is empowered by feasting upon Christ as our spiritual food. That will give us the [00:04:07] spiritual power to turn away from evil, to keep away from evil, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly before the Lord. That was the first pair. Last night, we looked at the second pair of the first four, the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Pentecost. We saw in the Feast of Firstfruits that Christ is risen from among the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept, and that God has demonstrated that the personal resurrection of Christ, the third day after he suffered, was, among other things, God's pledge that others would be brought into blessing. [00:05:07] And when we turn to the Feast of Pentecost, which occurred fifty days to the day after the Feast of Firstfruits, counting the Feast of Firstfruits as the first day, we saw that, as the New Testament affirms, the Christian Church was brought into being on the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Christ rose from among the dead. And this is the basis of all our blessing, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, the first one merged in two and gave character to the second. The third came in two and gave character to the fourth. And that is a major [00:06:07] group, the basis for all blessing, particularly the inauguration of the Christian Church. Now, that is the present position.

Christian blessing, Christian privilege, Christian responsibility, is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and those who believe that Christ died for their sins and was raised again for their justification have been built into this wonderful spiritual structure, the Church of the Living God. Now, those four feasts began to be celebrated in the middle of the first month, calendar month, of the calendar of the nation of Israel, [00:07:09] as adapted by God. They had related their months different previously, but God said, when the Passover was celebrated, when it was instituted, God said, this is your new beginning. Everything takes character from this. And so that became the first month. And the first four feasts filled out the time from the middle of the first month to the end of the second month. And where we've read tonight, the feast of trumpets, and indeed the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles, all take place in the seventh month. So there was a gap of four months, where the first four had come to an end, [00:08:06] and the last three hadn't begun, hadn't happened. Now, it is clear that we are intended to learn that the first four had a certain character, and the last three have a different character, and in order to make that plain, there's this quite extended gap between the two. Now, we are going to look tonight, and if the Lord will, tomorrow night, at these last three feasts. Now, to make it simple and plain, if the first four that we've looked at give us the bringing into being, and the basis in which the being began, it is all related to the Christian church. [00:09:02] The death and resurrection of Christ is also the basis for all blessing, but the first four tell us about the bringing into being of the Christian church. The last four, in a particular way, all refer to the nation of Israel, and as the first four were prophetic of the inauguration of the Christian church, and the way that would be done, so the last three tell us about the way in which Israel, as a nation, will eventually be blessed. But there is a gap, a large gap there, for us to think about, between the first four and the last three. To use a long word, [00:10:02] whenever the way God works with men on earth changes from one way to another way, when one dispensation gives way to another, there is often, well, there is always a period of transition, a change from one way of working to another way of working, and as we know from our human experience, transitional periods are difficult to experience, and often difficult to understand. The transition from boyhood to manhood, girlhood to womanhood, not easy.

You're not quite sure whether you're one or the other. Sometimes you feel like one, [00:11:03] but you realize you're acting in the way of the other. It is because you are in that transitional period between childhood and adulthood. When you leave school, and you're just about to get a job, or maybe go on to a different kind of education, it's not easy. You feel betwixt and between. You're neither one thing nor the other. You're in a period of transition. When you change your job, when you change where you live, your home, all these are transitions, and transitions are rarely smooth. Usually there's problems arise, and there's difficulty in identifying which one you're at at the moment, the one you've just left, or the one you are just about to enter. Now, when we look at the Bible, [00:12:08] we find it's very similar. When one dispensation gives way to another, things are often very difficult to understand. Instead of being black or white, you seem to detect various shades of gray. This is one reason why the book of Acts is so difficult to understand. You may have heard the term. If not, you're going to hear it now. The book of Acts is a transitional book. We'll come back to that in a few moments. When there are changes, God's method of approach to mankind changing from one way to another, and we know that's happened because Hebrews 1 verse 1 tells us that God, at different times, at different periods, God has used different means, diverse methods to speak to mankind. [00:13:09] But whenever there's a change, God has ensured that there will be a witness to himself, to God, as the God of absolute standards of holiness and righteousness, but the God who nevertheless desires to bless. If you think of the end of that dispensation when Noah was upon the earth, there was that long transitional period when Noah was saying he was testifying by his life, by building the ark for a period of about 120 years. The old way is unsatisfactory, unacceptable to God. God demands righteousness, [00:14:04] and he's going to sweep away the existing world in judgment. Noah

was there as a witness to God's standards, and that the only way to be brought into blessing and escape the judgment was to obey what God said. One transitional period. We've looked at the Passover. The nation of Israel, 430 years in Egypt, suddenly, miraculously, delivered from the hard yoke of Pharaoh, and they were ultimately to go into the land. They were delivered out of the power of Egypt and its Pharaoh on their way to the land, but there was that 40 difficult years, [00:15:06] that transitional period from being in bondage in Egypt and being in liberty in the land.

And as we know, the period of transition in the wilderness was very difficult for them indeed. When we come to the end of the Old Testament, again the end of a dispensation, very difficult to see the spiritual position of those at the end of the Old Testament and in the Gospels. See, Christianity didn't begin, as we've learned in the first four feasts, until the day of Pentecost. Now, the Old Dispensation had run its course, was coming to an end, [00:16:01] the Old Dispensation had run its course, was coming to an end, and really in the Gospels, some of the things that are said are very difficult to understand. Now, in the days of Noah, there was Noah and his witness that he gave. In the wilderness, there were those like Joshua and Caleb who were maintained in witness to the righteousness of God and his desire to bless. At the end of the Old Testament, we read in the book of the prophet Malachi of that little handful who fought upon the name of their God and opened their hearts to him and sought to be true to him. When we come to the beginning of the Gospels, we read of those like Anna and Simeon, [00:17:02] a little remnant, a little handful, a little fragment of the nation of Israel who bore a witness to the value of trusting in the living God. But again, some of the puzzling things in the Gospels make sense only when we consider it in that way. Now, when we come to the book of Acts, again, the transition from either Judaism to Christianity for those who'd previously been Jews, or the transition from paganism or Gentile culture of one sort or another to Christianity, was something that they found difficult to understand and put into practice. And that tells us why there are so many difficulties in the book of Acts, if we regard it as an entirely [00:18:01] Christian book. But there were those, individuals, groups here and there who were true to their God. Now, at the end of the Christian dispensation, when the last believer on the Lord Jesus Christ as the savior of sinners has been ingathered, you remember on the day of Pentecost, we read that those that were being saved daily were added to the church. The Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved. That was the beginning of the Christian period or dispensation. We are assured that until the end of the dispensation, there will be those who believe on the name of Jesus. The last one, when the last one turns to Christ in the faith of his soul, [00:19:05] then the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thessalonians 4, will descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead Christians will be raised, the living Christians will be changed, and so they'll be taken to be with the Lord in the end. Now, one way of remembering the limits of the Christian period, the Christian dispensation, is that they both begin and end with a descent. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and inaugurated the church. The Christian, that's act two, 1 Thessalonians 4, the church age or dispensation will come to an end by another descent, the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ, in what [00:20:05] scripture speaks of as the catching away, the rapture, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. There is no scriptural reason for delay other than God giving the word. There is no prophecy that needs to be fulfilled to bring this present dispensation to a close. It can happen in a moment, at any time, and certainly it could well happen at any moment tonight. Now, that will bring to an end the church period inaugurated on the day of Pentecost. Now, as indicated by this four-month gap in the calendar of the feasts, there will then be a gap. There will be a period, elapses, [00:21:03] before the inauguration on earth of the state of Israel as the center of blessing. Yes, they are a political state now, but God says they are going to be the hub of the activities for the whole of the earth. Center of trade, center of learning, center of administration. Read the prophets, you'll find that the scriptures certainly support that. Now, after that time, after a time has elapsed, which scripture suggests most strongly, is a period of probably a little over seven

years after Jesus comes for his own. And then, what we read of in the last three feasts will occur. But between the end of the [00:22:10] church period and the beginning of the thousand years reign over the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, again there's a very difficult transitional period. If you like to use prophetic words, Daniel's 70th week. Transitional, Christianity has ended, Israel as the center of blessing hasn't yet started. Now, there are scriptures which talk about the fact that after the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn from the earth, second Thessalonians chapter two, coincident with the church going to be with Christ, it will be necessary for power to be available for those who in that difficult transitional period [00:23:09] will be witnessing to God as the one who is all holy, all righteous, who demands obedience who demands sorrow for sin. And there are certain scriptures which I've listed, I think I'd better just read them out and then pass on, which confirm this matter of the transitional period. For instance, the word, the verse I didn't read last night in Leviticus 23, verse 22, there is provision for those who weren't brought into the blessing indicated by the day of Pentecost. If you look at Malachi 4 and verse 5, [00:24:02] if you look at the witness of John the Baptist in the opening chapters of the gospels, if you look in Revelation chapter 11, you will find that in each of those cases there's a difficult in-between period where the old dispensation has been brought to an end, the new hasn't quite begun, but God causes witnesses, adequate witness, to bear testimony to the need for repentance, for repentance from sin and self and obedience to God's testimony of the day. Now those sections deal with that matter of things. Now we'll have to say a little bit about the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement.

[00:25:03] It was a big help to me when it was pointed out many years ago now that in the epistle to the Romans, the first eight chapters, great detail about the way in which God has brought us has brought us Christians into blessing, the mercies of God. Chapter 12 to chapter 16, the answer in our lives. If that's what God has done for us in his wonderful mercy, this is the way our lives should be lived as those who appreciate the mercy of God. But in between, there are three chapters which take up the case [00:26:01] which puzzles many clever minds. What about the nation of Israel? Did God make a mistake in picking them out? Have they missed the blessing? Are God's promises to the nation of Israel without avail? Now the splitting of the chapters is not a matter of inspiration. It was a matter of spiritual judgment by men hundreds of years ago. But in many cases, their spiritual judgment seems to have been very good, and so in the split of Romans 9, 10, and 11. Well, like most things, we learn from others, and then we have the opportunity to make it our own. It was helpful to me to have it suggested that chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Romans, in that order, [00:27:06] if we look at the text, are very good illustrations of the distinction between the Feast of Trumpets, the Great Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. In other words, if you want to learn something about the Feast of Trumpets, have a look at Romans 9. If you want to learn something about the features of the Day of Atonement, chapter 10. And if you want to learn something about the Feast of Tabernacles, chapter 11. Same order as in Leviticus 23. Now, perhaps there may be just an opportunity to say something about that later on. But first of all, and perhaps as an example of that, let's look at Romans 11, where that, again, that transition from Christian teaching and blessing [00:28:06] to Christian duty and practice, uh, comes in. Look at chapter 11 of Romans. Romans 11, 25.

Romans 11, 25. I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant. Now, there's a good tip for you. There are six occasions that I found in the New Testament where either Peter or Paul say, now look, this is important. I don't want you to be ignorant about it. If either Peter or Paul say, don't be ignorant about this, learn it, it's something important. And this is one of them. I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own [00:29:03] conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. We'll leave it there for the moment. Why the gap between the fourth feast and the fifth? God, in his long-suffering, has allowed a gap so

that you and I, and many others might be brought into Christian blessing. Unless the long-suffering of God had lasted almost 2,000 years, none of us would have been built into the Christian Church. God delayed the ushering in of the fifth, sixth, and seventh feasts by way of fulfillment so that we and others might be blessed. There it is. [00:30:07] Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness, until the full complement of the Gentiles until the full complement is made, until the last Christian believer is gathered in, until the harvest, to talk in terms of the feasts, until the harvest is safely home. Now, after that, and only after verse 25, we read, and so all Israel shall be saved, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so on. This is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins as concerning the gospel. They are enemies for your sakes as touching the election. They are beloved [00:31:03] for the Father's sakes, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God hasn't changed his mind. One of the beauties and the joys of studying the feasts is to see there's, God has a cause, God has a reason for everything that he does. The rejection of the promised Messiah by the nation of Israel at Calvary opened the door for Christian blessing to be brought in, part of God's master plan, and that position continues until the church is complete and gathered in to the Lord Jesus Christ personally.

Only after that, not immediately, but certainly not before then, will the trumpet clarion call [00:32:09] go out, calling the nation of Israel into the blessing. Now, have a look at Romans 9, and you'll see that there is scope there for seeing that when the Christian church has been called home, there is the trumpet call going out, answering to the feast of trumpets. Now, it is there by suggestion. Now, I think I'd better list for you other scriptures to look at. The greater gain of a session like this is when all of us, old or young, go home and in the Lord's present present, mull over these scriptures and establish, berean-wise, that these things are so. [00:33:07] Now, if you link Leviticus 23, verses 23 to 25, Isaiah 18, verses 1 to 7, Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37, and Matthew chapter 24, verses 27 to 31, and there's a parallel portion in Luke 21, if you look at them, you will find that after the church period ends, about three and a half years after the church period ends, there will be ushered in a most difficult, trying, trebulous time for the nation of Israel. Those, and he with whom they had aligned [00:34:09] themselves, made a bond, they find themselves betrayed, and they commence the last, most difficult period called the great tribulation, and at a time about seven years after the Lord Jesus has taken the Christian church to be with himself, the Jews that are obedient and faithful to God will be in Jerusalem, and we are merging on to the day of atonement, and that's not bad, that's not a bad thing. There will be a gathering from all four corners of the earth, scripture says, and God's national people will be drawn towards Jerusalem, [00:35:01] and unbeknown to them, perhaps even, the trumpet sound of God is calling them to where they belong, the land of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem. Now, those scriptures that I read tell us that that will occur when God begins to work in the hearts of many of his earthly people, Israel. Now, follow that through in that feast of trumpets, and you'll see that that is the indication of what God will do. Now, that cannot begin to happen until after the church period has ended. In other words, that long gap indicated by that four-month period between the fourth feast and the fifth feast will have come to an end, and God says, now, I'm going to start again with the nation of Israel. They don't deserve [00:36:09] the blessing. I will bring them into blessing because I love them, and I want them to be blessed. I will bring in a new covenant, a new bargain, a new contract. The old bargain was on the basis, you do what I say, and I will bless you, I will reward you according to what you deserve, which is what the nation of Israel said to God, tell us what to do, we will do it, that is the way to bless them. They proved they were incapable of earning the blessing as God knew they would, but God says in the details in Jeremiah 31, God says, the only way is to bless you on the line of grace because I love you, and I want you for myself, but again, it can only be as sin is dealt [00:37:05] so the trumpet sound will go out, there will be those in that difficult transitional period who will witness to the faithfulness of God amidst unfaithful and disobedient people, and that period

indicated by the feast of trumpets will come to a climax in the great day of atonement. Now, again, I have time to read you a list of scriptures, which I think will be well worth your studies as to the day of atonement. There isn't time to read them all, but they all have similar features. If you find you don't get all of the scriptures down, ask me afterwards, I'll fill in the gaps. Genesis 45 verses 1 to 4, [00:38:03] Leviticus 16 verses 1 to 34, that gives all the detail about the day of atonement, what happened. Leviticus 23 verses 26 to 32, I will read those in a moment. Chapter 25 verses 9 and 10, Isaiah 53 verses 3 to 6, Zechariah 12 verses 1 to 14, Hebrews 9 verses 1 to 14, and Hebrews 10 verses 17 to 22.

Now, all those scriptures add up to this. God is still determined to bless the nation of Israel.

[00:39:10] In order that they might be brought into the blessing, it will be necessary for God himself to deliver the nation, and he'll do it in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the great tribulation, there'll be enemies in every direction. Those who are of the nation of Israel seeking to be true to their God will be hemmed in, besieged in the city of Jerusalem. There'll be the sea to the west, [00:40:03] there'll be enemies to the north, the east, and the south. They will be on the brink of defeat, just about to be exterminated, annihilated as a nation. And, as we would say, when they're on their last legs, when they've given up all hope, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will intervene miraculously, and he will deliver them. He alone has the power to do it, and yet how gracious he is. They couldn't do it without him, but if you turn to the book of the Prophet Zechariah, you will learn that while it is the personal intervention of the Son of God, Messiah, who comes to liberate, deliver his people when they are about to go down for the last time, [00:41:06] for the last time, we'll read that he graciously allows some of the faithful of the nation to be involved with him in defeating the enemies. He could destroy all the enemies by the word of his power, and certainly, largely speaking, the leading elements, the leading antagonist will be dealt with personally by the Lord. But we learn in Zechariah and other places that the Lord Jesus allows with him those who've been faithful to him at that time. Now, that personal deliverance that could only be achieved by the intervention of Messiah, the Prince, brings about a tremendous change in the attitude of the faithful in Israel.

[00:42:08] It produces national repentance. Sometimes, you know, we get into the mood of thinking that people must repent before they can have any idea of the blessing of God. Certainly, there are scriptural exhortations to repentance. Romans, it is that tells us, it is the goodness of God which bringeth repentance. It is when the soul realizes what God has done in working a mighty deliverance and in making blessing available that repentance comes. The 16th book, the 16th chapter of the book of Leviticus outlines the day of atonement.

Now, in Leviticus 23, there are two major—well, there are more than two, but I'll point out two [00:43:07] major marks. Verse 29—no, verse 27, That is a reference to the repentance which comes about as a realization of the delivering power of the mighty God. The other thing that's mentioned, verse 31, when you are celebrating the day of atonement, you don't do any work that day. There had to be no doubt in any of their minds, no suspicion in their minds, [00:44:01] that anything they were doing was contributing in any way to the great deliverance of the mighty God. It's all of grace, not because they deserved it. There are other features, but they are good to take away. Now, I mentioned Genesis 45 as an example of repentance, as Scripture gives it. Joseph provides for his brethren. He delivers them from their need. He lets them see himself. He lets them realize who he is, and they are stricken when they realize that it's the one that they'd treated so badly. Now, that's a person—Joseph and his brethren of his own family. I listed Isaiah 53— [00:45:05] wonderful Scriptures that tell us how the nation of Israel will feel when they are delivered, and as they look at the one who delivers them, and

they say, it's him, the one that was despised, the one that we thought was crucified because he deserved to be crucified, because he was an imposter. We never knew it would be him that was going to deliver us. It is at the point of deliverance that they are afflicted in their souls, they are stricken, and they repent. Now, if you want to read that, if you want a good picture of repentance in Scripture, and the thoroughness of it, and the comprehensiveness of it, read Zechariah 12. [00:46:09] Put that together with the verses I suggested, verses 3 to 6 in Isaiah 53, and you'll know what repentance is about. Having done with sins, having done with self, coming to the conclusion that what God has been telling us about ourselves from the outset is absolutely true, and being determined to turn our back upon the old life, the old attitudes, and sin. Mourning on account of sin. Now, when we get to Hebrews 9 and Hebrews 10, we find that if the blessings to be enjoyed, [00:47:02] if deliverance is to come, not only for Christians now, but the nation of Israel when it occurs at that time, it will be on the basis, and only on the basis, of the shedding of the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9 and 10 tell us, not only does the blood ensure the shedding of the blood of Christ, not only does it ensure that every sin has been dealt with, but that the whole tainted sphere where sin has been committed will be seen to have been cleansed by the in virtue of that same precious blood. And that the blood which delivered us from the claims of [00:48:03] which delivered us from the claims of God as to sin is the very blood that encourages us and gives us liberty to draw near into the very presence of God. No accident, you know, in Genesis 45, the words Joseph uses are, draw near to me, my brethren. Everything was settled, no reason why they shouldn't enjoy communion with him and draw near. Now that's true of Christians now. It's going to be true for the nation of Israel, and I'm sure that's why that when we examine the day of atonement, the fifth feast, the first of the last set of three, we see a comparison but a contrast with the first feast [00:49:01] of the first four, the Passover, and it's the way in which the blood is applied. In the Passover, which tells us not only that Christ died for individual sinners now, but that he died that Israel too might have every claim of God upon them, dealt with righteously and fully. But when the Passover was celebrated, when it was instituted the first time, we find that the blood was applied to the outside on the doorposts and the lintel. When we come to the great day of atonement, we find that the blood is applied on in the inside place. We find that on that one day in the year to satisfy the claims of God as to the whole of the nation for the whole of the previous year, we'll find that on that day of atonement, [00:50:07] of atonement, the high priest went into the holiest and that the blood was applied on and before the mercy seat. Now, the capacity, the privilege of the nation of Israel drawing near to God will be on the same basis that we draw near now. That which is true of Christians now, Hebrews 10 verse 19, let us therefore draw near. Having therefore boldness, holy boldness by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near. True of Christians now as individuals, true of Christians now collectively when we come together in the name of the Lord, [00:51:04] it will be true nationally for the nation of Israel. And when Israel in the wilderness had the privilege on their way to the land and before they got there, they had as part of God's provision for them the opportunity every year of calling to mind, of giving a memorial, of having this ceremonial to celebrate the fact they'd been delivered, yes, by blood. Their sins had been dealt with in virtue of the blood, speaking, looking forward to the blood of Christ. And the privilege of entering into the holiest, in their case representatively in the person of the high priest, that he might function. Another feature was that [00:52:01] there was blood, the claims of God were met, but there was also incense arising to God, worship to the very God who brought them into blessing, opening the way for the feast of tabernacles that we hope to look at tomorrow evening. But now let us sing our closing hymn number 43. Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away its stain, but Christ the heavenly lamb took all our guilt away, a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.