

## **Oh, by the way...one last thing**

**Isaiah 61:1-2a; Luke 4:16-21**

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God of the Old Testament--*Grace?*

**(Part 1 of 2)**

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Labor Day is here. The harvest is on. In fact, the harvest has been going on now for almost 2,000 years. Actually, the harvest has been going on since Adam, Eve, and Satan fell. This makes me wonder about the harvest of souls before Jesus came. God in the Old Testament seems so harsh. Was grace and reconciliation available to those born before Jesus came?

From the very beginning, when the host of heaven fell (**Gen. 3; Rev. 12:1-4**--Adam, Eve, and Satan being the examples), God gave us everything we needed to be restored to a relationship with Him. Adam and Eve were to pass onto the generations after them the story of the fall and Satan...and the story of the Savior and salvation. God gave Adam and Eve the prophecy of a Savior to come (**Gen. 3:14-15**). God also gave the story of salvation for all to see in the heavens--the Zodiac (*Mazzaroth* in the Hebrew--**Job 38:31-33**). Zodiac means *the way*, or *the path*, in Hebrew, and also in Sanskrit. In other words, a picture of the way of salvation. I'm always amused by so-called scholars who ignore ancient man's history, and believe that history only began with the Babylonian tablets—and proclaiming (falsely) that the Bible is the result of these pagan myths.

I'm always amused by so-called scholars who ignore ancient man's history, and believe that history only began with the written records of the Sumerians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians—and then proclaim (falsely) that the Bible is the result of these pagan myths being passed on later to Israel.

In all the ancient nations, the *same* 12 constellations, in the *same* order, with the *same* pictures, are referenced as far back in antiquity as we can go. There had to be a common source for these 12 constellations...they are too obscure for nations all over the world to just come up with on their own. The common source was God the Creator (see the Study on **The Zodiac**, and **The Queen of Heaven**, or books *Science, Origins, & Ancient Civilizations*, or *God's Plan / Satan's Plan*, at [Target Truth Ministries.com](http://TargetTruthMinistries.com)).

It has been pointed out by scholars and historians, like Josephus, that the common source for the Zodiac is God's Gospel, given to Adam and Eve, and passed down through the generations of Noah, to the 70 nations. In the Arabic tradition, these signs in the heavens are said to have come from Seth and Enoch, again going back to the very beginning of creation. **Genesis 1:14** says God gave us the stars for signs: 12 constellations, 12 tribes—each tribe had a standard of one of the constellations (see also **Rev 12:1**). We know from Scripture that God named the stars (**Psalms 147:4; Isa. 40:26**). But, it is also noted that God's Gospel story in the Heavens has been perverted, just as the Bible today is perverted by many. Satan was active then, and now. The exact original story which began with the virgin Virgo has been perverted and lost. However, the stars names have survived. And, they do present a story of a Savior!

So, Adam and Eve had the prophecy from God of a Savior to come--A Savior--*grace*--a free gift we do not deserve. Adam and Eve had the story of salvation and reconciliation, and even the ritual of the blood sacrifice do demonstrate that only an *innocent* life (such as an animal--**Gen. 3:21**--the first sacrifice), could pay the debt we owe because of our sin. Our sin causes death, and the blood sacrifice was a constant reminder of what sin does. Sin causes death. Sin causes blood to be shed. The blood sacrifice portrays what the Savior must do--be a perfect innocent sacrifice, and give His life to save us. God's plan was grace—a free gift of a Savior—but, Satan intervened in God's plan by corrupting the bloodlines, the generations, of man (**Gen. 6:1-4**), and these generations, after Adam and Eve, failed in passing on God's plan. Satan knew that if the human population could be destroyed through corrupting our DNA—by essentially mutating humans into something only akin to humans, that the human Savior could not be born (see Study on “*Giants*”—[Target Truth Ministries.com](http://TargetTruthMinistries.com). There are two views on what the giants / Nephilim exactly were, but the overwhelming consensus is that fallen angels produced hybrid, human-like beings--not truly human, and for this reason, the generations produced by this corruption of the angels had to be destroyed).

Eventually, a great flood came because there was evil everywhere--the bloodlines of mankind had been polluted and destroyed (**Gen. 6:1-4**). Except, that is, for a preacher named Noah (**2 Pet. 2:5**). Noah's bloodline was

perfect, not corrupted by Satan (**Gen. 6:9**—the King James says “perfect in his generations” and the NAS says blameless in his time—the Hebrew is “*without blemish in his bloodline*”). God was going to use Noah to continue the plan of salvation...a plan of grace and forgiveness where eventually a Savior would come (**Gen. 6:8**). The message has always been to trust in God our Savior (**Isa. 43:3, 11, 45:20-22**), and be saved—and, not just for Israel, but for everyone (**Isa. 42:5-6, 45:20-22, 49:6**). From the very beginning God had given us grace (grace--a free gift we do not deserve)—the promise of the Savior to come. Within three generations after the flood, the great-grandson of Noah (Nimrod--**Gen. 10:8-12**), established what is known today as the Babylonian false faith, and he set himself up as god on earth. Satan was again destroying God's plan of love, forgiveness, and grace--a promised Savior. God's plan of grace, the plan to give freely the promised Savior to pay for the sin of all who would trust in the Savior, has been around from the very beginning. But, mankind, influenced by Satan, continually ignores God's plan, and goes after false ways. In only a few generations after Noah, the peoples of the world were again drowning...not in water, but in sin...again.

Eventually, in the area of Babylon, in a city called Ur, God calls Abram to leave his father (his father makes idols for a living—including idols to the moon god), and to go where God leads him (**Gen. 12:1-3**). Through this relationship that God developed with Abram, Abram (later called Abraham), was to raise up a generation of people who put their trust and faith in the one true God, and the Savior that was promised to come (**Gen. 22:9-14**). But, from Abraham's weakness (not trusting totally in God's ability to give him an heir with his wife), Satan was able to cause another line of descendants to come from Abraham (through the Egyptian surrogate Hagar—**Gen. 16:1-5**). These descendants from Hagar's child worship “the god of Abraham” which turns out to be the god of Abraham's father in Ur—the moon god Sin (the moon god Sin, also known as Al-ilah, meaning the highest of gods—today known as Allah—see the book “*Science, Origins, & Ancient Civilizations*—[Target Truth Ministries.com](#)).

Eventually Hagar's descendants enslave the nation of Israel in Egypt—Satan's plan again seems to be working. But, out of that enslavement comes Moses. And, once again, God tells the people of a Savior to come...a free gift (grace), a great Prophet (even greater than Moses), who is to save the people—Jesus (**Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:18-22**). Of course we all know the stories of how the generation which eventually did enter the Promised Land, also eventually were corrupted by false gods and practices which God had forbid. Israel was supposed to carry the message of grace to the whole world (**Isa. 42:5-6, 49:6**)—but it failed. Isaiah also gave us the prophecy in **Isaiah 7:14**, of our Savior to come...called God with us (**Matt. 1:20-23**)! **Hebrews 8:7-13**, sums it up for us—the Messiah Jesus will replace the old sacrificial ways and temple practices (and they did finally disappear a few years after Jesus' death and resurrection—in 70AD). Again and again, God in the Old Testament provides for grace to save us. Grace—a free gift that we don't deserve—a Savior—God with us. You see...God does not really desire our sacrifices (**Psalms 51:16-17**). God desires our humility and love.

So, God, in the Old Testament, demonstrates His desire to forgive us and save us. By grace we are saved (**Eph. 2:8-9**). People get confused in trying to understand God, when God is depicted in the Old Testament as a tyrant calling for the killing of people for adultery and worshipping false gods, etc. But, we forget two important things. One, is that God's plan from the beginning has always been one of grace—giving us a free gift we don't deserve—a Savior. And, the second thing is that we have an adversary (Satan), who will do anything and everything to see us fail. Satan sent angels to corrupt the human population (**Gen. 6:1-4**), so that the humans God had created would no longer exist, having been corrupted by the DNA of another kind (the angels), and thus destroying the bloodline (generations) of humans (see the book *Eden to Evil*...[Target Truth Ministries.com](#)).

If Satan's plan had succeeded, a Savior to be born from humans would have been impossible. Because that failed, Satan provides alternatives to God. Satan wants us to worship anything and everything *except* Jesus...thus all the “other ways” (**John 14:6**). This is the reason that God required severe penalties for going the way of Satan—the way of the world (**Rom 12:2**). In order for the Messiah to come to save us, Satan must not be allowed to infect and destroy the people. They needed to remain as pure as possible. Thus the need for severe penalties for disobeying God's ways. We worship a God who is focused on saving us, and He will not allow Satan to deter Him from that goal. Any follower of Satan's ways (the world's ways), thus faced death,

and not tolerance. God does not tolerate sin. God's objective is to save all—every person who will trust in Him, and to do this Satan will be defeated! So, yes, God in the Old Testament called for harsh punishment for those who would allow Satan to corrupt His plan of salvation and reconciliation with all of us who have fallen. But, we must remember that God was also the giver of grace, providing from the very beginning, the assurance of the Savior to come to save us. Tough laws were needed to provide for grace—so that God could give us what we don't deserve—Jesus, the Messiah, our Savior.

In the New Testament, the flip side is often emphasized...Jesus is seen as offering God's grace (**Eph. 2:8-9**), and seen as a God of love and forgiveness. Many present Jesus as a loving, caring, totally tolerant God who will never harm a soul. However, we will discover that God has not changed. The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. There is only one God (**Deut. 6:4**), and God does not change—God is just. God has always offered grace...and, God has always demanded justice. God will separate Himself from those who do not love Him, and that separation will be for all eternity—that separation is called hell.

The fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah, a Savior, was fulfilled when Jesus was finally born. And, Jesus Himself gave the proclamation when He quoted from Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 61:1-2a**, that one of the things that he was sent to do was to tell everyone that there is good news if we trust in God (Isaiah goes on from there...but, we will look at that later). Jesus also picked up on the message of Isaiah, and His remarks are recorded for us in **Luke 4:16-21**. In **Luke 4:21**, Jesus claims to be the promised Messiah, foretold by the Old Testament prophets (you'll note that Jesus reads no further from Isaiah at this point, and we will look into this later). In other words, God's *grace*, foretold from the very beginning (the promise of a Savior), was being fulfilled by Jesus. The proclamation had been made by Jesus that God's promise of *grace* (the free gift), had been fulfilled.

Later on, when John the Baptist was in jail facing death, he questions whether Jesus was truly the promised Savior (**Luke 7:19-22**). In answering, Jesus again pointed to the prophet Isaiah (**Isa. 29:18-19**), pointing out that these things were all being fulfilled, and therefore John the Baptist (and all of us), could be assured that Jesus was truly the promised Messiah...the Savior. *Oh, by the way, there is one last thing* that Jesus included in His statement in Luke 7 that the prophet Isaiah did not mention. Jesus knows more than Isaiah. Jesus, after all is the promised Savior, God in the flesh. What did Jesus tell John the Baptist that Isaiah never mentioned? Jesus said "*The dead are raised*"...the resurrection of the dead will now take place, now that the Savior has come. The harvest of souls has been going on since the days of Adam and Eve, and even in the oldest book in the Bible, in **Job 14:7-14**, Job was concerned with the resurrection to come one day...to be with God in His kingdom forever more. Now, Jesus proclaims that the prophecies of Isaiah have been fulfilled, and furthermore, that the dead will rise! This is the harvest everyone has been waiting for—the final harvest—the resurrection.

This brings me to the Feasts of Israel which were given by God to Moses, and which were centered around the *harvest periods* in Israel, and which were also a prophecy, or foretelling of Jesus. Again—*grace* from God—a gift we sinners don't deserve—a Savior. These feasts are found in **Leviticus 23**. The Hebrew word translated as Feasts, is actually a word meaning "*appointments*." They were feasts in that they were gatherings where meals were shared by all, but they were primarily appointments commanded by God, for Moses and Israel to keep for all time. And, these appointments were centered on the times of the year when the harvest was a central part of the life of the people. Three of these feasts, or appointments, were in spring (the early harvest). One feast, or appointment, was at the beginning of summer (at the beginning of the long harvest period). And, the last three feasts, or appointments, were at the time of the final harvest—at *this* time of the year just after the Labor Day period. So, Labor Day to me means that soon the *final harvest* period will begin. Let's review these "Feasts" / "Appointments."

**FEAST # 1 – PASSOVER - Leviticus 23; Exodus 4, 12:** This feast was commanded, by God, to occur in the springtime (March/April) and, this feast occurs on the first day of what will be a total of eight days in a row of celebration. These eight days also include the next two feasts. The Passover feast celebrates, for Israel, the day God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, in order to persuade the Pharaoh of Egypt to release Israel from bondage. On this day, at the time of Moses and the Exodus, the people of Israel were to select a perfect lamb,

kill it, and eat it that night, and they were also to put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses, so that God would see their obedience, and pass over them (Passover). The Egyptians, who did not obey God, and did not put blood on their doorposts, lost their firstborn.

For the Christian, this feast celebrates the exact day which Jesus, the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**), was killed for our sins. Jesus sacrificed Himself for us, so that the wages of sin, which is death (**Rom. 6:23**), were paid off, once and for all, for those who trust in Christ. Those who trust in Christ will now live forever in His kingdom—death will not separate us from God. This exact day (commanded by God, 3,500 years ago), was exactly fulfilled by Jesus. He died on Passover (**1 Corin. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-20**).

**FEAST # 2 – UNLEAVENED BREAD - Leviticus 23:6; Exodus 12:** Today, this is the common name which Israel uses to identify these first three feasts (#'s 1, 2, and 3), which occur over eight days. This whole feast period of eight days is commonly called “The Days of Unleavened Bread.” The actual Feast of Unleavened Bread is celebrated on one day, beginning at 6 p.m., immediately after Passover ends. For the Jewish people the day ends at 6 p.m. (not midnight, like our day ends). For Israel, this feast celebrates the fact that Israel had to take unleavened bread with them on the long trip they were about to begin with Moses, called the Exodus. They had no time to add yeast to it, and allow it to rise. Unleavened bread is flat, with no impurities, no yeast to puff it up and to give it extra taste—no additives. This is a picture of pure bread (symbolic of no sin). All the families could do was bake enough bread to hit the road. They had to wrap up the rest of the dough in linen to take with them.

For the Christian, this day was the exact day which Jesus, the bread of life (**John 6:33**), was wrapped in linen and placed into the tomb, at the exact same time (6 p.m.), when Israel was baking their bread in the ovens, and wrapping the bread in linen for the Exodus journey. Jesus was wrapped in linen, and placed in the tomb at 6 p.m., at the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This feast day, commanded by God, 3,500 years ago, was exactly fulfilled by Jesus, even to the hour, 1,500 years later (**1 Cor. 5:7-8**).

**FEAST # 3 – FIRSTFRUITS - Leviticus 23:9-14:** This feast is to be celebrated on the day after the Saturday Sabbath, after the Unleavened Bread feast day. In other words, Israel would celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then a Saturday Sabbath would occur, and the very next day (Sunday), was to be celebrated as the day of Firstfruits (feast # 3). For Israel, this feast was to celebrate their *first* harvest, the *early* harvest of the year, when Israel entered into their Promised Land.

For Christians, this day turns out to be the exact day which Christ rose from the dead, Easter Sunday (**1 Corin. 15:20-23**). Again, Jesus fulfilled this feast on the exact day which God gave to Moses 3,500 years ago, by becoming the first fruit harvested, the first to rise from the dead—the beginning of the harvest.

**FEAST # 4 – WEEKS - Leviticus 23:15-17:** This feast is to be celebrated 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits. This feast, for Israel, is to celebrate the day which Moses received the Word of God on Mt. Sinai, in the desert, 50 days after they had left Egypt. And, it also celebrates the beginning of the *long* harvest season...just beginning (it begins in June, and extends through the rest of summer).

For the Christians, this exact day was fulfilled by Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, as this is the day which Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come to Jesus' followers. Today, Christians call this day Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**). And, of course, now we know, prophetically, that the *long harvest* has been underway for about 2,000 years. As people die, their body goes back to the ground to await the resurrection, and their spirit goes back to God, to await the final judgment at the resurrection (**Eccl. 12:7**).

Next time, we will discuss the *final harvest* period, and what comes *before* that final harvest. Our God is a God of grace...yes—providing for us the Savior from the very beginning with Adam and Eve. Our God is a God of love...yes, and forgiveness...yes, and reconciliation...yes (**Rom. 5:10-11**). But, just like in the Old Testament, our God is also a God of justice—more on that next time. **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

## **Oh, by the way...one last thing**

God of the Old Testament—*Grace?*

**Isaiah 61:1-2a; Luke 7:22-23**

(Part 2 of 2)

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People get confused in trying to understand God, when God is depicted in the Old Testament as a tyrant calling for the killing of people for adultery and worshiping false gods, etc., and, in the New Testament God is depicted as loving and forgiving. But, we forget two important things. One thing is that God's plan from the beginning has always been one of *grace*—giving us a free gift we don't deserve—a Savior (**Gen. 3:14-15**). And, the second thing we need to remember is that we have an adversary (Satan), who will do anything and everything to keep us separated from God. At the very beginning, Satan sent angels to corrupt the human population (**Gen. 6:1-4**), so that the humans God had created would no longer exist, having been corrupted by the DNA of another kind (the angels), and thus destroying the bloodline (generations) of humans (see the book *Eden to Evil*—Target Truth Ministries.com).

If Satan's plan had succeeded, a Savior to be born from humans would have been impossible (I suggest that you see the Study on "*Giants*"—Target Truth Ministries.com, because there are two views on what the giants / Nephilim exactly were. The overwhelming consensus is that fallen angels produced hybrid human-like beings, not truly human). Only Noah was perfect in his generations. Noah's *bloodline* was perfect, not corrupted by Satan (Gen. 6:9—the King James says "perfect in his generations" and the NAS says blameless in his time—the Hebrew is "*without blemish in his bloodline*"). But Satan is not deterred. If Satan cannot stop the promised Savior from coming, then Satan gives us various options to put our faith in—even scientific "theories" like evolution to replace our Creator, and other books to take the place of God's Word—the Bible. Satan wants us to worship anything and everything *except* Jesus...thus all the "other ways" (**John 14:6**). This is the reason that God required severe penalties for going the way of Satan—the way of the world (**Rom. 12:2**). In order for the Messiah (our Savior), to come to save us, Satan must not be allowed to infect and destroy the people. They needed to remain as pure as possible. Thus the need for severe penalties for disobeying God's ways, and allowing Satan in.

We worship a God who is focused on saving us, and He will not allow Satan to deter Him from that goal. Any follower of Satan thus faced death, and not tolerance. God does not tolerate sin. God's objective is to save all—every person—who will trust in Him, and to do this Satan will be defeated! So, yes, God in the Old Testament called for harsh punishment for those who would allow Satan to corrupt His plan of salvation and reconciliation with all of us who have fallen. But, we must remember that God was also the giver of *grace*, providing from the very beginning, the assurance of the Savior to come to save us. Grace means receiving something we don't deserve. We are all sinners (**Rom. 3:10-12, 23**), and do not deserve a Savior. Praise God—He loves us, and came to save us anyway!

In the New Testament, the flip side is often emphasized...Jesus is not viewed by the world as harsh. Jesus is seen as offering God's grace (**Eph. 2:8-9**), and seen as a God of love and forgiveness. Many present Jesus as a loving, caring, totally tolerant God who would never harm a soul. However, we will discover that God has not changed. The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. There is only one God, and God does not change—God is just (**Deut. 6:4**). God has always offered grace...and, God has always demanded justice. God will separate Himself from those who do not love Him, and that separation will be for all eternity—that separation is called hell.

The fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah, a Savior, was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus (**Isa. 7:14**).

Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 61:1-2a**, that one of the things that he was sent to do was to tell everyone that there is good news if we trust in God (Isaiah goes on from there, and we will look at that later). Jesus picked up on the message of **Isaiah 61:1-2a**, and also **29:18-19**, and His remarks are recorded for us in **Luke 4:16-21**. In **Luke 4:21**, Jesus claims to be the promised Messiah, foretold by the Old Testament prophets (you'll note that Jesus reads no further from Isaiah at this point, and we will look at this in a moment). In other words, God's *grace*, foretold from the very beginning, was being fulfilled by Jesus. God is freely giving us a Savior which we don't deserve...Why? Because God loves us! The proclamation had been made by Jesus that God's promise had finally been fulfilled—the Savior is here!

God also gave to Moses and to Israel, seven feasts (appointments), to celebrate for all time, which also point to forgiveness, and salvation, and the Messiah to come. The last three feasts (appointments), occur at the end of the harvest season, which is from September to October (this time of year). One by one, these seven feasts are being fulfilled, exactly on the very day, and in certain cases, at the exact hour, which God gave to Moses 3,500 years ago. The first four feasts were exactly fulfilled by Jesus to the very day and hour by Jesus at His death and resurrection (see Feasts of Israel--Target Truth Ministries.com). What about these last three feasts, at the end of the harvest season, the end of summer—will they also be fulfilled exactly by Jesus?

Before we get to these final harvest feasts, we need to return to what Isaiah said, that Jesus only partly read...there is more that Isaiah revealed that God will bring about. Isaiah, who foretold of the favorable day of the Lord, when the blind would see, and the lame would walk, etc., then went on to tell of much more...and it wasn't all good.

Let's go to **Isaiah 29:18-19** (which Jesus quoted from before), and read further on to verse **20**. And, let's also return to **Isaiah 61:1-2a**, and read further on to verse **7**. First, Jesus proclaims that the first part of Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled. Jesus proclaims the favorable year of the Lord...the lame walk, the blind see, the prisoners can be set free. But Isaiah's prophecy continues beyond this proclamation. Isaiah foretells of judgment by God of those who reject God, and Isaiah foretells of a time when those who trust in the Messiah (Jesus), will live in peace and joy *after* this judgment takes place. In other words, the Messiah has come (2,000 years ago), and the age of grace, which had been foretold in the Old Testament, can now be clearly seen. And, now we await the judgment as stated by Jesus in **Matthew 24:9-13, 21, 29-31**. Jesus states *after* the judgment, the resurrection and millennium will begin—the final harvest.

So, what are we to make of what both Isaiah said, and Jesus confirmed? Is the Old Testament only a time of law and wrath? And, is the New Testament just a period of grace and love? We must not overlook the fact that God does not change, whether Old, or New Testament references are used. We worship One God...a God who loves, and desires reconciliation, who is even willing to sacrifice Himself to provide for our salvation (**Philp. 2:5-8; John 1:1-18**). Furthermore, this God we love is also a God of justice and truth. God will not abide with sin, and He will not abide with those who do not love Him, and He has warned us continually through His Word of His judgments upon even those He loves if they deny Him (such as Israel). God has given us the examples of both His judgment, and His grace, all throughout Scripture, so that we may choose. And, what does God want us to choose? (**Deut. 30:15, 19**)

This judgment to come is laid out for us in various places in Scripture, but perhaps the most concise description is given by John in **Revelation 6**. Then, as Jesus states in **Matthew 24:29-31**, "*after the tribulation of those days*"...it is then that we will see Jesus, our Savior, coming in the clouds just as promised (**Acts 1:9-11**). And, what was the image Jesus gave us of His return? (**Matt. 24:31—trumpets!**). And what begins the final harvest period (the appointments), that God told Moses to commemorate at this time of year?—*trumpets!*

**FEAST # 5 – TRUMPETS - Leviticus 23:24:** There are these last three feasts or appointments (out of a total of seven that God told Moses to celebrate for all time), which occur at this fall time of year (Sept. - Oct.). Feast # 5 is New Year's Day for Israel. They call it **Rosh Hashanah**. This Feast of Trumpets calls all Israel to gather for worship, and judgment, and Israel is to reflect for ten days upon its sins and their covenant with God as they prepare for the next feast (**Gen. 17:1-14**). There are ten days of affliction (sometimes called "the ten awesome days"), between this feast and the next. This feast could also have been prophetic of the birth of Christ (which

occurred as we discussed last week). On this day the priests would open the “Books of life” and your name would be prayed for—to seek forgiveness and salvation.

For Christians, this date could be prophetic of the trumpet call (the announcement), of Christ’s return, the last day, the end times (**Matt. 24:31; 1 Corin. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16**). The rabbis called this day “*The day of which no one knows the day or hour.*” (**Matt. 24:36**). This is because this is the only feast day which begins with a dark moon, and the dark moon lasts for about two and a half days. The rabbis pick *one* of these days to be the day of this feast. But, no one but God actually knows which of these two and a half days is “the day.” Thus, no one knows the day or hour of Jesus’ return.

**Feast # 6 – Leviticus 23:26-32 – The Atonement:** This feast (or appointment), is also called **Yom Kippur**. This feast, which occurs ten days after the Feast of Trumpets, is the only day in the entire year that the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, and meet God, and offer the sacrifice to cover the sins of the people up to that point. At the end of this day, the priests would close the “Books of life” as the offerings and prayers for forgiveness had been completed. This feast also uses a goat sent into the wilderness (the scapegoat), to carry away our sins to be forgotten in the desert. This feast could have been prophetic of Jesus being present in Jerusalem as a baby for this feast. On the eighth day of Jesus birth, He was circumcised (**Luke 2:21-39**), which would have occurred during the ten days of atonement between the last feast (#5), and this feast (#6), thus fulfilling the covenant between Abraham and God (**Gen. 17:1-14**). All Jewish men were to be present at this feast.

For Christians, this day could also be prophetic of the day in which the saved meet God for judgment (the end of the ten days...or end of the millennium to come...ten being symbolic of 1,000 – when the books of life are finally closed). We all know Jesus is going to return—our High Priest, as it says in the books of **Hebrews 10**, and **Acts 1**.

### **FEAST # 7 – Lev. 23:34-43 – The Final Harvest-Sukkot / Tabernacles / Booths**

This feast (or appointment), is commonly called “*The Ingathering*” or Sukkot by the Jewish people (Hebrew-Sukkot = ingathering, English = Booths, Latin = Tabernacles). This is the final of the seven feasts, commanded by God to Moses. It is held five days after the Feast of Atonement (#6), when man meets God to be judged. It is interesting that Jesus wasn’t to be found during these 5 days (**John 7:8-11**). For the Jewish people this feast of Ingathering, or Tabernacles, celebrates the end of their 40 years of being in the wilderness, and arriving at the Promised Land, and the harvest which awaited them. You’ll recall that in **Numbers 13:25**, that God had given Israel 40 days to scout out their Promised Land, but Israel would not *trust* in God to provide, so God condemned Israel to one year in the wilderness for each day they were allowed to see the land (**Numb. 14:33-34**). Solomon dedicated the Temple of God during this feast of Ingathering, or Tabernacles because it represents Israel’s arrival to the Promised Land (**1 Kings 8:1-32**).

Ingathering, or Tabernacles, is a seven-day feast, with a special Sabbath Holy Day on the eighth day. While in the wilderness, the Jewish people lived in temporary dwellings (tabernacles, shelters). And, the Jewish people, even today, will build tabernacles, or tree houses, and small temporary shelters, in their backyards, to remember this day. Then, on the last day, the eighth day, they leave their temporary dwelling, and go into their permanent home—The Promised Land. The Hebrew Rabbis say that on Feast #6 (Atonement), the judgment period of mankind is ended, and the books of life have been closed, and 5 days later, this Feast #7 is when the actual rewards takes place for those whose names are in the books of life. This appointment celebrates God’s forgiveness, and people praise God for reconciling with them and their eventual arrival into God’s Promised Land.

The number 7 is very significant with this celebration as the number 7 for the Jewish people is the number of perfection—the plan of God perfected with this last appointment—# 7. Sacrifices for this seventh appointment are in multiples of seven...70 bulls, 14 rams, 98 lambs, and 336 ephahs of flour. The 70 bulls are representative of *all* nations—the 70 nations from Noah (**Genesis 10**).

The Transfiguration with Jesus (**Matt. 17:1-4**), occurred during this feast, indicating that a transfiguration could be linked with it. Also, it was during this feast that Jesus declared He was the source of living water (**John 7:2, 37-38, 4:13-14, 25-26**). There is involved in this feast a daily procession from the temple to the pool of Siloam. This drawing of water from the pool was to commemorate the gift of water from God, at Mt. Horeb, while Israel was in the desert (**Ex. 17:1-7**). In **Isaiah 12:1-3**, God tells us that “In that day” (which is a common Hebrew reference to the last day -- the day the Messiah—the Christ, comes to end the suffering of this world), that “with joy we will draw water from the wells of salvation.” And, get this, the word “salvation” in the Hebrew, is the word *yeshua*—Jesus. It would seem that this feast period represents a perfect period of dwelling with Jesus, the living water—the promised land.

As night sets on day one of this appointment of Ingathering, four candlesticks which have been erected at the Temple (each 75 feet tall), with large bowls on top filled with tens of gallons of oil, are lit, and burn during the night hours (think Olympic Torch). These lite up the Temple area and the surrounding area of Jerusalem like daylight (no more night—**Zech. 14:6-8; Rev. 21:23-25**). It is during this feast that Jesus declared Himself to be the Light of the world, as well as the source of Living Water (**John 7:37-39, 8:12**). See also **John 4:7-26**. During this feast of Ingathering, Jesus claimed to be the Light, and the Water of salvation (**John 7:37-38, 9:1-7**). Each day during this week, the priests bring the water from the pool of Shalom to the Temple, and circle the altar once, and pour the water on the alter. On the seventh (last), day, the priests circle the altar seven times, and pour the water out as the *trumpets* blow and they *shout* (**Josh. 6:1-5**—a reminder of how God delivered the Promised Land to Israel).

Then, after these seven days there will be an eighth day. The eighth day in the Jewish tradition is known as the day of “new beginnings,” or in this case, it possibly represents the new heaven and earth (**Rev. 21-22**). In **Ezekiel 45:21-25** and **Zechariah 14:16-19**, God tells us that in the millennium, all nations will celebrate this feast of tabernacles, or ingathering (a memorial of being delivered to salvation, from wandering lost in the world).

The fact is, that Jesus actually fulfilled the first *four* feasts (or appointments), exactly, on the very day that God gave them to Moses (3,500 years ago), to be celebrated by all generations. There is also the strong possibility that Jesus may have actually fulfilled these *last* three feasts, when He came the *first* time (Jesus birth announced on day of Trumpets—Feast #5--Jesus circumcision and presence at the Temple during the Atonement—Feast #6--and this feast #7, when Jesus declared He is the Light and Water—**John 7:37-39, 4:13-14, 25-26**).

Let us recall that Jesus came to “tabernacle” (dwell) with us (**John 1:1, 14** – the word *dwell* actually means tabernacle), when God took the form of flesh, and came into this world (**Philip. 2:5-8; John 1:1-18**). Jesus, as a baby, most likely would have been in Jerusalem for this High Holy Day (see below what the name Jesus means). All Israel was to be present in Jerusalem for this day. Also, in **Revelation 21:3**, Jesus tells us that He will “tabernacle,” or dwell, with us again in the age to come.

Further, there is the possibility, that He will also fulfill these last three feasts when He returns, to judge the world, to raise up the saved, and to usher in the millennium (the 1,000 years of His reign on earth). **Colossians 2:16-17** states that these festivals and holy days are *a shadow of things to come*. This means that God does expect us to be watchful, to be prepared, and to treat our sharing of the Word with others as urgent.

Some might say that if Jesus already fulfilled these last three feasts when He came the first time (His birth at feast # 5...and as an adult at this appointment of ingathering, declaring Himself to be the Light and Water--feast # 7, etc.), what would be the reason for fulfilling them again in a future judgment? It should be noted that these last three feasts, which begin with feast number five (New Year’s - trumpets), are celebrated as both *the beginning and the end*. Feast number five is recognized as the beginning (the New Year), but it is also recognized as the end -- the final harvest period. So, perhaps, Jesus will fulfill it as both the beginning (His birth), and the end (His return), for the final harvest. Jesus called Himself the beginning and the end (**Rev. 1:8**).

At the end of this week of celebrating (on the 7<sup>th</sup> day), trumpets are blown (*the very last trumpets of these seven feasts*--just before the 8<sup>th</sup> day begins—**Zech. 14:6-9; Matt. 24:30-31; 1 Corin. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-18**).



So, what year will Jesus return? See **2068** at Target Truth Ministries.com. Seems like it might be soon, doesn't it? Well, in **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**, it states that the end will not come until the apostasy comes first. In other words, before Christ returns, many people will depart from faith in Jesus—churches will experience downsizing. As we look around our community, we see churches that were once filled—sometimes needing two services a day. But today the churches are struggling to keep the roof repaired. In Europe (once the very center of Christianity), the churches are so empty that many of them are now being converted to bed and breakfast inns, and Islamic Mosques. Even so, God would have those of us left to persevere. We are to stand firm for Christ. The harvest is not quite complete. There are still a few left to harvest.

Whether you think of the end times (or the end of the world), as coming during your lifetime, or whether you will die one day from an accident, heart disease, or old age...your days are numbered. Each of us is in our personal "end of days." God wants no one to be separated from the kingdom of God, and He has already paid the price of sin for all who will trust in Him. God freely offers us eternal life in His kingdom, if we will trust in Jesus (**John 14:6**). Trust is the key. Jesus will deny "good people" who don't put their trust in Him—those who don't place Jesus at the center and core--the priority of their lives (**Matt. 7:21-23, 25:1-13**—note that half of the so-called believers were not really ready...and they perished).

God loves you. And, thank God he loves me, too—a sinner saved by grace. God forgives any who will *trust* in Him, even me. God wants no one to perish. The question is, how much do we truly love God? For those of us who do *not love* God, and do *not trust* in Him, a divorce awaits—separation, isolation, living alone--forever.

It is my prayer that we will all "tabernacle" with Jesus—and none will be separated out at the ingathering.

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