

**** MAY 2014 **** MAY 2014 **** MAY 2014 **** MAY 2014 ****

KEEPING THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH

What are the Feasts

God gave the Feasts to Moses as part of the Torah [the teaching or instruction] and the Feasts are a vital aspect of the relationship of God with His people. Firstly they were to be annual meeting times of God with His people, commemorating specific events that had taken place in the formation of the nation of Israel. This took place through their deliverance from Egypt – the Passover; their meeting with God at Mt Sinai – the first Pentecost; and their inheritance in the Land, always remembering the wilderness years [temporary booths] – Tabernacles.

- The first **Feast of Passover** was a continuous Feast of nine days but included three specific parts: Day of Passover, Seven Days of Unleavened Bread and the Day of First Fruits.
- The second Feast, the **Feast of Weeks**, was a single day and is called Pentecost in the New Testament.
- The third Feast is called **Tabernacles** but also has three specific parts: the Memorial blowing of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur] and the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles. [See **Leviticus 23** for an outline of the Feasts in order.]

The Feasts are Seasonal

The Feasts are related to harvest seasons and of course seed time and harvest continues in the natural every year. So do the Feasts of Yahweh: they continue annually and are the constituted framework in which we meet with God, learning from Him each year how to come into the fulfilment of the Feasts, which is always in Messiah Jesus; but then to be fulfilled in the life and growth of His church. This fulfilment is to manifest in the life of each individual believer, but then it is manifest in the corporate church, the body of Messiah.

Early in 2014, as we prepared for our January apostolic training school, the Spirit put a word into my heart that we were to journey through the Feasts each year. We have been teaching on the Feasts of Israel for many years and seeking to understand their fulfilment in the new covenant people of God.

We have understood that the Feasts are as a prophetic calendar of all that God is doing and bringing to fulfilment through His word in His church, in Christ Jesus. However we had not understood how to celebrate the Feasts as they happen each year. We have looked back to Passover being fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus; we have celebrated the day of Pentecost by knowing that we are filled with the Holy Spirit; and we have searched out and understood something of the fulfilment of Trumpets – the prophetic word of God that is being declared in the earth, beginning in 1948, and preparing us for the coming of the Lord; we have understood that God has brought His church to the season of the Day of Atonement in fulfilment, realising that the church and each of us individually must understand that sin is finished and we are to walk in the Spirit unto perfection.

We have dreamed of the fulfilment of Tabernacles, being our full union with Christ and the Father. We have taught that the feast of Tabernacles is the greatest feast and it was the feast that could only be celebrated in the land of inheritance and it will be fulfilled in the last days when the church comes into that maturity of ‘many sons to glory’ (**Heb.2:10**).

An Annual Journey

The Lord showed us that we are to journey through the feasts each year. There were three appointed times when the people of God were to appear before God. Our destiny is Zion, **“They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion” Ps.84:7**. Zion speaks of the holy mountain of God; His glorious dwelling place in the midst of His people; the place of His throne and therefore the place of His kingdom.

As we journey towards Zion, which is in the context of journeying to the fulfilment of the feast of Tabernacles, we are to journey through the other feasts each year.

When we come to understand that the feasts of YAHWEH provide the framework in which we continually are growing up in Him – the upward call in Christ Jesus (**Phil.3:14**) – we realise that we can meet with God in a particular way at each feast and that we can prepare for that meeting. If we do this then God will reward us and deepen our understanding of His awesome prophetic plan for the church to come into that time of the fulfilment of all things in Messiah Jesus.

Where are we now?

This is the time of the former harvest that was taken in between Passover and Pentecost. It is seven weeks of fully digesting the impact of Passover:

- the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is the basics of the Gospel (**1 Cor.15:3-4**).
- the days of Unleavened Bread; getting all sin and unrighteousness and demonic activity out of our lives. This needs to be a clear goal for each of us in this season.
- the Day of First-fruits was fulfilled by Jesus rising from the dead. He is the first of many who will rise from the dead. His resurrection is the guarantee of a harvest of souls (**Jn.12:24**).

This is a season of getting the leaven, the sin and the bondage, out of our lives and many of the brethren are experiencing inner healing and deliverance, getting free of decades-old problems. It is also a time of harvest and this harvest can be understood to be the harvest of souls that many have spoken of. We have emphasised the harvest of maturity which is associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, and that harvest is at the end of the age, when the sons of God have come to maturity [Read the interpretation that Jesus gave of the parable of the wheat and the tares **Matt.13:37-43**]

The former harvest, Passover to Pentecost is a time for evangelism, to speak of the Lord Jesus – His death and resurrection. Those who believe are to be baptised – baptised into His resurrection. Jesus was the first of many to rise from the dead.

The harvest is to be complete by the day of Pentecost; it is a 50 day period [50th is the meaning of the word Pentecost. This is called the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament]. During this

time the cereal harvest was harvested and it could take the full seven weeks, all being done by hand. If it is harvest time then we need to be workers in the harvest, bearing witness to the salvation that is available only in Jesus Christ. Therefore it is a time of evangelism.

The seven Weeks: the seven Patriarchs

We have been given an insight that in the Jewish practice, these seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost, being a time of preparation, are a time to focus on seven patriarchs and they are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David. In teaching on the key aspects of the lives of these seven, and how they contributed to the prophetic picture of Christ and His church coming to fulfilment and maturity in the earth, we are more prepared and ready to meet the Lord.

During this season at Shiloh we are featuring some teaching and input on each of these patriarchs week by week.

- 1. Abraham** is well known for many reasons, but perhaps the greatest is that he is the father of all who believe, the father of the faith and the father of many nations in Christ.
- 2. Isaac** is the son of promise, pointing to the Christ Child, the Son of God being born in the earth – God manifest in the flesh.
- 3. Jacob** is the father of the 12 sons, a man who experienced transformation [**Gen.32**]; a patriarch who prophesied over his many sons; the father of the nation of God's people, pointing to the holy nation that Jesus would raise up on the foundations of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- 4. Joseph** was the deliverer of both Hebrews and Gentiles; he was brought forth by God not only as a saviour for the Hebrew people, but also a deliverer of all the nations of that time. He is a type of Messiah.
- 5. Moses** is the great prophet, who not only brought us the Torah [the teaching, the instruction] of God but also prophesied of the one to come. Moses was such a great prophet because he met with God face to face.
- 6. Aaron** is the priest who models for us the priestly ministry, not only to the people but especially to God, showing us the way into the Holy of Holies.
- 7. David** represents the manifestation of the kingdom of God in the earth, the rule and reign of Jesus Christ.

There are many other things about these patriarchs that we can learn from and that will enrich our journey as we prepare for Pentecost. The first Pentecost was actually the giving of the law on Mt Sinai. This was the time of covenant making between God and His people through Moses. The children of Israel looked back on that time as their covenant of marriage to God. The fulfilment of Pentecost was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by Jesus on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after His death and resurrection and ten days after His ascension (**Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-21 & v33**). Paul speaks of the church as the wife of Christ in **Ephesians 5:22-32**. A marriage relationship is based on covenant.

Keeping the Passover at Shiloh

At Shiloh God lead us to keep the Passover in a particular way. We prepared a special service on Good Friday, the 18th April at 3pm. We did this as a live presentation of Jesus and the eleven faithful apostles at the Last Supper. One of the brethren remembered the coming out of Egypt; another gave a brief introduction to the Feast of Passover and then those acting as Jesus and the apostles presented a wonderful dialogue over the institution of the Lord's Supper. This service was interspersed with specific songs that spoke of the precious blood of Christ and one of the apostles shared a profound word about the significance of the blood.

The following day [known as Easter Saturday in our country] we were part of a public hour of worship led by pastor Rhoda and a group of nine worshipers and musicians from Shiloh. There was an organised 72 hours of continuous worship in our city that weekend. The hour that Rhoda led was very awesome and we were impacted by the presence of God.

On the Sunday **we celebrated the resurrection**. We had some live drama of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus meeting with Jesus, but not knowing Him. We were lifted up in great joy as we rejoiced in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, the very foundation and pillar of our faith.

We were revived by God by meeting with Him at Passover in the way that He showed us. Since then we have continued to keep the Feasts by working through this seven week period. However as of Friday 30th the season is changing and we will enter in to the ten days of waiting for the Holy Spirit (**Lu.24:49; Acts 1:3; Acts 1:13 – 2:4**).

Waiting for Pentecost

Here at Shiloh we are planning some special opportunities to be together to seek the Lord in the ten days leading up to Pentecost [from Friday 30th May]. We will celebrate Pentecost on Sunday 8th June [the day of Pentecost according to the Jewish calendar is on June 4th]. The Lord Jesus has shown us that if we gather to meet with Him, He will meet with us and He will do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or pray (**Eph.3:20**).

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