

GOD'S INTRIGUING CYCLE OF SEVENS

Heavenly plans for his redemption of all things are revealed through shadows and sevens! And a new beginning shows up in the repetition of eight!

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven (Ecccl. 3:1 NASU). **God's** appointed times are revealed in Leviticus 23. They **identify** God, **His** chosen among man (Ex. 31:13); and are **shadows** of **heavenly things to come** (Heb. 8:5; Col. 2:17).

Creation

The First Cycle Of Seven

A Week Of Days! (Gen. 2:2-3; Lev. 23:1-3).

God blessed and made holy the seventh day. Six days shall man labor then comes the Sabbath of the **Lord** (not of man or of the Jews), a weekly Holy Convocation (commanded assembly) to be observed throughout eternity. It was given to man as a blessing, and an opportunity to spend a day with our creator. A sign of identification (Ex. 31:12-18), and as a test of obedience (Ex. 16:4).

The weekly Sabbath is a shadow of the completed works of God the rest promised in Hebrews chapter four, and will occur in the Millennium and beyond (seven is God's number of completion). Isaiah 66:23 promises that every

person then living will be required to keep it; why not start now and receive the blessings of obedience?

Passover

The single most important event in the history of man.

The First Annual Commanded Assembly (Lev. 23:4-5). Two sevens into the new (sacred calendar) year, the Passover Lamb is slain (Nisan 14). A **shadow** of mankind's death penalty being paid by God's innocent Lamb (His Son), setting man free from the slavery of sin (Egypt, i.e. this world). The Passover is a **shadow** of the substance, which is Christ our Passover (I Cor. 5:7).

The Passover looks *forward* to Christ's first coming as the sacrificial Lamb of God. Christ instituted the New Testament Passover on the eve of the 14th, with instructions to continue observing it till He comes (Matt. 26:26-30; Lk. 22:10-22 Jn. 13:4-10; I Cor. 11:23-25). Jesus was then crucified on the daylight portion of the 14th. Remember that God's days begin and end at sunset (Gen. 1:5).

The Passover is a commanded observance, the first annual appointed time, on which all the others hang. It is the starting point of God's plan of salvation. However, it is not a Sabbath or Holy Convocation, but an important and meaningful ritual to be participated in by all Israelites. It is important to stress that the day following the Passover (the 15th.) is an annual Sabbath, it and the Passover could fall on most any day of the week.

Feast Of Unleavened Bread

God's Word Our Bread! (Lev. 23:6-8).

The third seven starts the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it continues for seven days. Starting on the 15th day of Nisan, the **first day** after Passover. It is a sign in your hand (required action) and a memorial between your eyes (understanding) (Ex. 13:9). This Feast illustrates the likeness of sin to leaven, and only by feasting on the unleavened bread of God's word can we overcome the sin in our lives.

The literal leaven is a **shadow** of the spiritual leaven we are to beware of, i.e. the leaven of: **Herod**, deception, slyness and *worldliness* (Mk. 6:14-28; 8:15) -- the **Sadducees**, rejection of the spiritual and supernatural, *modernism* (Mt. 16:6-12) -- the **Pharisees**, *hypocrisy* (Lk. 12:1) -- **Corinth**, pride, wickedness, malice, *sensuality* (I Cor. 4:18-19, 5:1-13) -- **Galatians**, *legalism and a return to paganism* (Gal. 5:9).

We are to feast on the unleavened bread of God's word, for seven days (seven days dedicated to prayer and Bible study); because we understand that Jesus Christ is the bread of life (John 1:1-2; 6:35; 51-58). Avoiding all forms of physical leaven is a reminder of the insidiousness of sin and shows us that try as we may, leaven will likely sneak back into our lives unnoticed; and that is exactly what sin will do if we are not vigilant. Seven, again a number of completion here represents a lifetime of our struggle against sin and our victory over it.

The first and last days are the **first** and **second** annual Holy Convocations (annual Sabbaths). This feast was literally kept by the Corinthian church, and is one of the many proofs that the early church gave recognition to the holy days (I Cor. 5:6-8).

Wave Sheaf Offering

Christ, The First Fruit, (Lev. 23:10-14).

The Wave Sheaf occurs the **first day** after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the number eight appears to be the number used to represent a new beginning throughout the Bible). The purpose is to offer the **first fruit** of the new harvest to God the Father. It is the **shadow** of the actual ascension and acceptance of Jesus Christ on our behalf by the Father (John 20:17), thus becoming the **first** of the **first fruits** among many yet to come (I Cor. 15:20-23; James 1:18).

This ritual was a requirement before the spring harvest could begin. It was a **shadow** of the first harvest of souls to eternal spiritual life and Christ must be first as He is the first of many first-fruits to follow (I Cor. 15:23; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). There can be no resurrections to eternal life until after Jesus' acceptance by the Father, otherwise He wouldn't be the First Fruit of the earth's harvest. The rest of the first fruits are those of the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) Just as the first day of creation was not a Holy Convocation, neither is this day, however, it is a new beginning for mankind.

Pentecost

A Week Of Weeks

The Coming Of The Comforter! (Lev. 23:10-11)

Counting from the Wave Sheaf, after seven Sabbaths are complete, the **first day** (eighth day) after the forty-ninth Sabbath, the 50th day, is Pentecost. This is the day Israel received the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20). Just as it was the start of a new beginning for Israel, it is the start of the New Testament church, the coming of the Holy Spirit - a new beginning for all who believe.

The Holy Spirit, (Comforter, John 14:16), the Spirit of Truth, is now available to all the called of God (John 6:44). As Christians, the Holy Spirit now dwells in us and we are a Holy Temple unto God (I Cor. 3:16-17). Understand, Christians are not above the law! The law has not been done away, it has been magnified (Isa. 42:21) and placed in the **minds** and **hearts** of His children (Jer. 31:31-33 & Heb. 8:8-10). God's New Covenant Church, planted as a mustard seed, will grow into all the earth (Mk. 4:31).

The substance of Pentecost is addressed in Joel 2 and Acts 2. It is a time of rejoicing and giving a tribute to God (Deut. 16:10). Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17 is answered in Pentecost and explained in Colossians 1:26-27. Pentecost is further proof that the New Testament church was still observing God's Holy Days even after the cross. Pentecost is the **third** annual Holy Convocation.

A Week Of Months!

God's appointed times all occur within the first **seven** months of the year and are repeated annually. These are the **shadows** of the great and wonderful plan of God's salvation for mankind and the establishment of His kingdom here on earth.

The first month contains the **Passover**, the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** and the **Sheaf of First Fruits**. These are a **shadow** of, or type of the Crucifixion, the shedding of the leavening of sin, the Resurrection, and the acceptance by the Father of Christ as the **first fruit** of the great harvest of the earth.

In the third month is **Pentecost**, when Israel received the Ten Commandments and agreed to God's offer to become His people. It is a **shadow** of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the formation of the church; and baptism into the body of Christ. These **shadows** have all come to fruition in substance precisely on their appointed days, thus completing the spring (barley and wheat) harvest of souls. The spring harvest represent those who are being called and judged now and will be in the first resurrection. They will not be subject to the second death and will reign with Christ for a 1000 years (Rev. 20:4-6), they will also judge angels (I Cor. 6:3). Theirs is called a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). Unlike those of the second resurrection the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection to eternal life, that is why the second death has no power over them.

More Shadows

Four more shadows yet to come to fruition all take place in the seventh month, which is the fall (fruit) harvest. The fruit harvest represents a greater and final harvest of which the eighth day is a shadow.

Feast Of Trumpets

The Coming Of The King! (Lev. 23:24-25).

The **fourth** annual Holy Convocation is a memorial of blowing of the trumpets; a call to prepare for the coming day of Atonement, a day of cleansing. The Day of Trumpets is a **shadow** of the second coming of Christ, and the gathering of the Saints (Matt. 24:30-31). The resurrection is described in I Corinthians 15:20-52 and Revelation 20:1-8; and is the last trumpet to sound. The Lord descends with a shout; the trumpet of God blasts and the saints are resurrected (I Thes. 4:16-17), a very noisy occurrence.

This is definitely not a secret rapture, reference the day of the Lord, Zechariah 14:1-15. The **seventh** angel sounds; God's kingdom comes (Rev. 11:15). The Heavens open (vs. 19:11-21) and there is Great tribulation on earth (Zeph. 1:14-18). Note that the resurrection occurs after the tribulation of those days (Matt. 24:31; Luke. 17:25-28).

Although this is the **first day** of the **seventh** month of the *sacred* calendar, it is also the **first** day of the **first** month of the *civil* calendar; therefore it is both an end and a

beginning. God's endings are also His new beginnings, like being born again.

Day Of Atonement

A Cleansing Of The Temple! (Lev. 23:27-32).

The **fifth** annual Holy Convocation is a **shadow** of our complete redemption and cleansing of the Heavenly Temple, a solemn day of humility and atonement. It is a day of strict fasting and reflecting on our spiritual condition. Absolutely no work was to be done this day on pain of death.

On this day only, the High Priest, after a very meticulous cleansing process, acted as a mediator and atoned for the sins of Israel by entering through the Veil (a shadow of Christ) into the Holy of Holies. He then performed the prescribed rituals in hopes of being acceptable to God. The Priest was a **shadow** of Christ, who is our Intercessor and Mediator.

It was Christ's atoning blood on the cross that qualified Him to enter the heavenly Holy of Holies once and for all as our High Priest. The assurance of the acceptance by the Father is evidenced by the Wave Sheaf offering. Study Hebrews, especially chapters seven through ten, for a clear understanding of how Jesus, our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, has replaced the Levitical Priesthood and its rituals. However, the Melchisedec priesthood definitely does not nullify God's eternal laws as enumerated in the ten

commandments and summarized in the two greatest commandments, loving God and loving your neighbor.

The two goats ceremony

The Day of Atonement was the day Israel performed the two Goats ceremony. Both appeared to be without blemish, but God knows the heart. It was a **shadow** of the coming judgment between Christ and Satan and is proclaimed in Leviticus 16. One is to be sacrificed (Christ); the other is to be expelled as chosen by God. A great battle will be fought on our behalf on the coming day of Atonement. Our accuser and deceiver, Satan the scapegoat (azazel), will be bound for a thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3).

Feast Of Tabernacles

The Fulfillment Of The Sabbath! (Lev. 23:34-44).

After two sevens into the seventh month (the 15th day, notice it begins on an eighth day) starts the Feast Of Ingathering (Exodus 23:17), a **shadow** of the Millennium, the seventh of the seven thousand years of the history of man. One thousand years of Christ's peaceful rule on earth begins. The first day is the **sixth** annual Holy convocation and the entire week is a time of joy, study and celebration (Neh. 8:9-18).

In the millennium all survivors of the tribulation will observe the Feast of Tabernacles and worship the King of Kings and Lord of hosts at Jerusalem (Zec. 14:16). The

illumination of God's temple, the Shekinah Glory is restored as happened on the Feast of Tabernacles at the dedication of King Solomon's Temple (I Kings 8:11; II Chron. 7). Remember, the temple of God dwells in us (I Cor. 3:16-17). May His glory ever shine through us!

Last Great Day

(Lev. 23:36; John 7:37)

This, the eighth day, is the **seventh** annual Holy convocation of the year. The millennium is now over and the rest of the dead now live again (Rev. 20:4-6). For the first time the Fountain of the Water of Life is given freely to all who thirst (Rev. 21:6). Jesus proclaimed this very thing on the last day, that great day (8th day) of the Feast (John 7:37-38). Were you aware that only those chosen of the Father are called in this age (John 6:44,65), but all will be called in the resurrection of the last great day.

The Rest Of The Dead (Rev. 20:5)

The "rest of the dead" include the dry bones of Ezekiel 37, notice the specific description of a physical resurrection. Also, Sodom and Gomorrah, the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south (Mat. 12:40-41), Tyer and Sidon (Luke 10:14) etc. All are raised physically and live out their normal lives and die (Isa. 65:20).

Judgment has two parts, judging and sentencing; the eighth day is a day of judging (not sentencing) for those never called by the Father throughout history (John 6:44).

Babies that never reached maturity, also, all who have never ever heard the only name by which man may be saved (Acts 4:12). They now have their first opportunity to truly know Jesus. This is not a second chance, it is the only chance they have ever had, and they are given a time to understand God's truths without the influence of Satan. This is their time for judging (not sentencing).

Then, Satan is released (Rev. 20:7), and is able to deceive enough people to raise a large army, but is defeated in the final battle (vs. 8-10). Then comes the final resurrection, where the sheep (the saved of the rest of the dead) and the goats are separated (Matt. 25:32-34, Rev. 20:11-15). Notice that the book of life is opened (so that new names can be added) and another book (the Holy Scriptures). This is the sentencing time of the judgment and those who refused to repent (the goats) are sentenced to the second death (vs. 11-15) and those who believed (the sheep) are given eternal (spiritual) life.

Then we read, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (*They don't live on for ever suffering in hell*). "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the

soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal 4:1-3).

Eternity Begins!

Then John tells us of his vision "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:1-7). All over-comers will be born again to eternal spiritual life as described by Jesus in John 3:3-15 and I Corinthians 15:

For a detailed study of the eighth day see the free booklet "Understanding The Resurrections" by Rich Traver at www.goldensheaves.org.

This is a brief overview of the seven annual Holy convocations (commanded assemblies or High Days) to be observed during the first seven months of every year. With a few exceptions these days could fall on most any day of the week throughout the year. Hopefully, the reader will use this as a springboard to a more in depth study of God's appointed times and His plan for the redemption of all things.

The year Jesus Christ was crucified the Passover fell on Wednesday with the corresponding High day (first day of Unleavened Bread) following the next day (Thursday) (John 19:31); thus fulfilling the three days and three nights, the only sign Jesus gave to those who seek signs (Mat. 12:39-40). Jesus could not have been crucified on Friday neither could He have been resurrected on Sunday morning and still fulfill the sign of Jonah (see study guide "THE DAY JESUS, THE CHRIST OF GOD, DIED").

The Sabbath Of The Land

A Week Of Years! (Lev. 25:1-7)

An annual repetition of the seven day week.

A command to act out the restoration of all things. The **seventh year** is a Sabbath Rest for the land; no planting, pruning, plowing or harvesting is to be done. All are to eat only what comes up voluntarily. The blessing of a **triple harvest** in the sixth year will be given to those who obey this Sabbath command (vs. 20-22). Again, it is a **shadow** of the *rest* remaining for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-11). A

periodic resting of the land just like the periodic resting of your body has been proven to increase productivity.

The Jubilee

A Pentecost of years

A Week Of The Week Of Years! (Lev. 25:8)

After seven of the seven-year Sabbaths, forty-nine years, then starts the fiftieth year, the **first year** after the forty-ninth, is the year of jubilee (Notice it is the eighth year). Again, a new beginning, a Sabbath year for all living things, no planting or harvesting, and all things go back to their original owners, a **shadow** of the total redemption of all things, giving all a new beginning.

An Interesting Insight on Genesis 6:3!

Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (Gen. 6:3; II Pet. 3:8). We find that 120 times 50 Jubilees equals 6000 years, the end of man's days (rule), then comes the Millennium and the restoration of all things. No longer will God strive with man, but will rule His kingdom with a rod of iron.

The Ultimate Victory

The shadows of the completed plan of God are seven thousand years. Six thousand years of man's misrule over the earth and then one thousand years of Christ's proper rule. The beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire; Satan is bound during Christ's Sabbatical millennium

but is released at the end of the 1000 years. Up to his old tricks, he again deceives enough people to form and lead a huge army against the Holy City. He is defeated and cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). All the earth is at peace and His bondservants reign forever and ever (Rev. 20, 21 and 22).

God's mysterious use of the cycle of seven appears to be God's chosen number for completion and perfection, and the eighth day as a new beginning. It illustrates His overall plan for mankind via His feasts and holy convocations.

Is there coming a time when all mankind will be required to keep His Appointed Times and Sabbaths (Isa. 66:23; Zech. 14:16)?

As Christians, should we honor God's commanded assemblies?

Think about it:

Are God's commanded assemblies a statute forever in all our generations (Lev. 23:41)?

As Christians, are we the sons of Abraham and therefore a part of his generations (Gal. 3:7)?

As Christians, are we Abraham's descendants and heirs to the promise (Gal. 3:27-29)?

As Christians, are we children of the promise the same as Isaac (Gal. 4:28)?

As Christians, are we guaranteed the promise to all descendants of Abraham whether they are by *faith* or by the *law* (Rom. 4:16)?

As Christians, are there neither Jew nor Greek---but all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28)?

As Christians, are we admonished to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24)? Every word of God is truth.

As Christians, are we to live by every word of the lord (Deut. 8:3)?

As Christians will we be gathered along with all Israel when God gathers his own (Isa. 56:6-8).

Therefore:

As Christians, conceived of God, are we not spiritual Israel? We will be resurrected along with all His saints at the first resurrection, being the first fruits of His harvest of the earth?

What promises are given those who honor His Sabbaths (Lev. 26:2-13)? Salvation and eternal life are promised to those who believe and have faith in the works of Christ, not the works of man, but true belief and obedience are inseparable (Heb. 5:8-9; James 2:17; John 3:36; Rom. 6:16).

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). But certain knowledge is concealed until the end time (Dan. 12:9-10). We are His servants and certainly time is running out.

Some would dismiss the Old Testament as irrelevant to our times, however, a very astute and knowledgeable Bible authority put it quite well when he said:

**“THE NEW IS IN THE OLD CONCEALED, THE
OLD IS IN THE NEW REVEALED!”**

Thus we have the two witness' required to establish a thing (I Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28; II Cor. 13:1).

Paul said: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16). The Old Testament was all there was when Paul said this to Timothy. Solomon, in his God given wisdom said: “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter” (Pro. 25:2). Let’s all be kings and search the scriptures for His wondrous mysteries.

*** DON’T MISS THE POINT ***

The intrinsic component of the Lord’s appointed times is Jesus Christ yet one can give honor to these Feasts Of The Lord and never experience salvation. Many of the Jews kept the holy days but did not understand their meaning.

Salvation comes by belief in and personal acceptance of the fact that Jesus Christ took upon himself the death sentence that has been adjudicated to all mankind since the Garden of Eden (John 3:16, Rom. 5:8).

Salvation is a personal thing between you and Jesus Christ, and no power, be it man or spirit, can come between you and Him. For it is written, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never lose it or perish throughout the ages. [To all eternity they shall never by any means be

destroyed.] And no one is able to snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater and mightier than all [else]; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand” (John 10:28-29 AMP).

Whether or not your name is written in any particular denominational church register is of little consequence, but whether or not your name is written in God’s book of life is of all importance (Rev. 21:27).

"The reverent fear and worship of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom and skill [the preceding and the first essential, the prerequisite and the alphabet]; a good understanding, wisdom, and meaning have all those who do [the will of the Lord]." Their praise of Him endures forever (Ps. 111:10 AMP).

Paul encourages us to ignore those who would censure us for respecting God’s appointed times:

“Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — things which are a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col. 2:16-17 NASB). Paul is telling the Colossians to not let any one judge them for keeping these things. Can you believe it, some try to twist this verse to mean they shouldn't keep them?

Shadows, what are they?

They are not a mirage, for a mirage is a delusion, and has, no reality.

They are not a dream, for that is only in one’s mind, and has no substance.

They are not a fantasy, for a fantasy is only wishful thinking, and has no arrival.

For something to cast a shadow it has to be real; it has to have substance and it has to be nearby. When the LORD speaks of a shadow He speaks of something that has substance that is real, and is forthcoming.

Watch the shadows

Was Israel aware of the shadows that were given to them as God's appointed times? Did they understand the coming reality of the Passover, the Wave Sheaf Offering, or Pentecost?

Did the Apostles know that the real Passover was, right then, in the process of coming to pass, as they were partaking of the last supper?

Did Mary know the real Wave Sheaf Offering was standing before her, ready to ascend to the Father, that morning at the tomb?

When the Apostles were gathered to observe Pentecost, did they know that this time it was not going to be just a shadow? Obviously not! As far as they knew, they were simply doing what they had always done, observing God's annual Holy Days. They were all caught completely by surprise.

We are told to prove all things. We have the historical proof that all of God's Spring Appointed times were fulfilled at the precise time appointed. One day soon we will be planning to come to another of God's shadows, only

to find when we get there that the reality that has been casting the shadows has come. Will we be surprised?

“Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11). Should we not wait patiently in the shadows until the substance comes? Brethren, let’s hold high the banner of His Feasts and not be caught unawares. Consider David’s prayer, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me” (Ps.119:18-19).

"We occasionally stumble over the truth but most of us pick ourselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened." **Winston Churchill**

Del Leger, (970) 249-6857, dlleger@montrose.net. Christian Church Of God, Grand Junction, Co. Pentecost message, ©2003. www.ccofgod.org

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