Bible Study - Restored Truth #9a - The Plan of God.
June 29, 2013

In Restored Truth Bible Study #5 God's purpose in creating mankind was established. God is reproducing Himself, so that human beings can eventually become full-fledged spirit members of His family.

John 3:5 Here are a couple of scriptures to reinforce the point of Bible Study #5. Jesus said: *Most assuredly I say to you, that unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God…*[One must repent and receive God's Spirit in order to be in God's Kingdom] (vs 6) *That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

1 Cor. 15:50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God…*[There are and there will be no human beings in the Kingdom of God] *nor does corruption inherit incorruption.* (vs 51) *Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep…*[Or we shall not remain dead] *but we shall all be changed* (vs 52) *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet will sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* (vs 53) *For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.*

In Restored Truth Bible Study #6 it was shown that God has an order in which He will bring people into His family.

1Cor. 15:22 Paul writes: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive…*[referring to all of humanity] *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruit…*[Christ was the first one to be resurrected from the dead] *afterword those who are Christ's at his coming*. This takes place at the same time as the last trumpet in verse 52.

Rev. 20:6 It is important to emphasize that there is an order in how God is going to bring people into His family. Not everyone is going to come in at the same time. *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection…*[If there is a first resurrection, then there has to be at least a second resurrection. Right? Right!] *over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him 1000 years…*[Look at the first half of vs 5] *but the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished…*[John writes about these people again in verse 12] *And I saw all the dead, small and great, standing before God; and the books were opened…*[the Bible] *and another book was open which is the book of life: and the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written*

in the Bible. That's what the Greek word *biblia* means. The majority of people who have walked the face of this earth will not be in the first resurrection. Only those God has called and remained faithful to the end of their physical lives and the very few who will be alive when the seventh trumpet, or last trumpet sounds will be in the first resurrection.

These verses show there is a process and order for how human beings will become members of the God family. It is also important to highlight that God is interested in everyone becoming part of His family.

1 Tim. 2:1 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men*. (vs 2) *For kings and all who are in authority; that we…*[Those in God's Church] *may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodness and reverence*. (vs 3) *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior* (vs 4) *who desires all men…*[Or all people] *to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* The word 'save' means just that, to save. It also means to deliver or protect. What do all human beings have to be saved from?

Rom. 3:23 Paul writes: *For all have sinned…* [All have broken God's law] *and fall short of the glory of God*.

Rom. 6:23 in the first part of this verse Paul talks about what people receive for their sins. *For the wages of sin is death…* [And that is eternal death. Notice the second half of the verse] *but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*. The solution for being under the penalty of eternal death, the penalty for breaking the law of God, is found through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 2:10 This verse goes along with 1 Timothy 2. *For it was fitting for him…*[God the Father] *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory…*[God wants many sons in His family] *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings…*[Referring to Jesus Christ] (vs 11) *For both he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified…*[Those in God's Church] *are all of one: for which reason he…*[Christ] *is not ashamed to call them…*[God's Church] *brethren*.

How can the process by which human beings become part of God's family, and the order in which that process occurs be better understood? Perhaps asking this question another way would help: What is God's plan of salvation? The answer to these questions can be found in understanding the purpose of God's Feasts in Leviticus 23.

Lev. 23:1 Moses writes: *And the Eternal spoke to Moses saying* (vs 2) *speak to the children of Israel and say to them…*[These are God's words to Moses] *the feasts of the Eternal which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.* (vs 4) *These are the feasts of the Eternal, holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.*

There are four elements to God's Feasts, also referred to as God's Holy Days within God's Church, that need to be pointed out. There is a fifth element to be added, which is found later on in the chapter.

- **First** element: These feasts belong to God. They are His Feasts, NOT man's feasts.
- **Second** element: These feasts are to be announced to God's people by God's ministry.
- **Third** element: God's Feasts are commanded assemblies. Optional attendance is not allowed.
- **Fourth** element: These feasts are observed at specific times.
- **Fifth** element: These are everlasting ordinances. Feasts that are to be kept forever.

What are God's Feasts? The first feast mentioned is the weekly Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath is to be kept 52 times a year, on the seventh day of the week. This day is Saturday, not Sunday. Sunday is the first day of the week.

The second feast mentioned is the Passover. It's to be kept on the 14th day of the first month. The timing of God's Feasts is based on an understanding of the Hebrew (Jewish) calendar. The Feast of Unleavened Bread has two commanded assemblies during the seven-day period it is to be observed. That is the 15th and the 21st days of the first month.

The Feast of Pentecost is unique in its timing. It doesn't have a specific appointed time, such as the 15th day of the 1st month. The timing of Pentecost must be calculated by counting 50 days. This count begins on the first day (Sunday) after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 50 days later would be the first day of the week (Sunday). There are seven weekly Sabbaths in this 50-day period. The for Pentecost count begins on a Sunday and ends on a Sunday. This is how to calculate when the Feast of Pentecost should be observed.

The Feast of Trumpets is to be kept on the 1st day of the seventh month, followed by the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the seventh month. These Feasts are followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, a seven-day festival. There is a commanded assembly, on the 15th day of the seventh month. Immediately following the

conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles is the Last Great Day. This Feast is be kept on the 22nd day of the seventh month.

There are two aspects to God's Feasts, which need to be understood. The first is the meaning of each feast. The second is the role each Feast has in prophecy.

First, look at the meaning of God's Feasts. God instituted His Feasts with the ancient Israelites when He brought them out of Egyptian captivity. This began while they were still in captivity, just as He was getting ready to bring them out.

It is important to understand that God's Feasts in Old Testament times would become reality in New Testament times. This will be discussed later in this study.

Consider now the Passover. The Israelites are preparing to leave Egypt. They have not left yet. God institutes the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Ex.12:1 *The Eternal spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying* (vs 2) *This month shall be the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you…*[Clearly God is establishing information the Israelites had lost while being in Egyptian captivity for 400 years. They are told to take a lamb and verse five tells what type of lamb should be taken] (vs 5) *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats*. (vs 6) *You shall keep it until the 14th day of the same month: then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight*. (vs 7) *They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts, and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.* (vs 11) *And thus you shall eat it with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; so you shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover.*

On the evening of the Passover (14th day/1st month), God passed over the homes of Egypt. On those homes which had blood on the doorposts, the firstborn of Israel was spared from death. In those homes which had no blood on the doorposts, God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians.

The Passover of Exodus 12 pictures something much larger in meaning. These events pointed to Jesus Christ and His crucifixion. Isa. 53:7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth…*[Christ

voluntarily went through the process of being crucified] (vs 8) *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who will declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people he was stricken.* Christ was crucified to pay the penalty of sin for mankind.

In John 1:29 notice what it says about Christ and the purpose for why He came to this earth. *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold, the Lamb of God…*[The lamb in Exodus 12 was a symbolic lamb picturing Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God] *who takes away the sin of the world.*

Christ was a perfect human being. He was a perfect sacrifice. This why the Israelites were instructed to take an unblemished lamb. Israel's departure from Egypt pictured the people coming out of sin. The Passover is the first step in God's plan of salvation. A person can only become free of sin once the penalty of sin has been removed.

The second step is God's plan of salvation is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. What is its meaning? What does it picture? What does it teach about this step in God's plan?

It follows immediately after the Passover. That's important to understand.

Ex.12:15 *Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses: whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel…*[put to death. That is a very high price to pay for eating leavened bread isn't it? This shows the seriousness God has toward His Holy days] (vs 16) *On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you; no manner of work shall be done on them, but that which everyone must eat, that only may be prepared by you…*[There is to be NO work for profit or gain] (vs 17) *You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread for on this same day I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.*

Understand, Egypt symbolizes sin. The Israelites journey out of Egypt pictured them becoming unleavened, without sin. God uses the physical eating of unleavened bread to picture the spiritual condition He is looking for in human beings.

Ex. 13:4 *On this day you're going out in the month of Abib…*[This is the 15th day of the first month, on the first day of Unleavened Bread] (vs 5) *And it shall be when the Eternal brings you into the land of the*

Canaanites which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. (vs 6) *Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Eternal*. (vs 7) *Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters* [You clean it out - get rid of it] (vs 8) *And you shall tell your sons in that day, saying, this is done because of what the Eternal did for me when I came up from Egypt.*

Notice how Christ connects leaven with sin while instructing the disciples. Matt.16:6 *Then Jesus said to them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees…*[Is Christ talking about the leavened bread the Pharisees and Sadducees made?] (vs 12) *Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread; but of the doctrine…*[teachings] *of the Pharisees and the Sadducees*. Those teachings were false teachings which misrepresented God. In this example leaven is connected to false doctrine. Leaven is also connected to the breaking of God's law.

Paul explains exactly what the Days of Unleavened Bread are about.

1 Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good.* [The Corinthians were tolerating sin within God's Church] *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?…*[A little bit of sin affects everyone] (vs 7) *Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us…*[The Passover is what allows a person to become unleavened] (vs 8) *Therefore let us keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness…*[Notice how Paul connects leaven with malice and wickedness] *but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* Leavened bread back in the days of ancient Israel symbolized the character of human beings with sin. The meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread pictures the need to eliminate sin.

The third step in God's plan of salvation is the Feast of Pentecost. Instruction about this Feast begins with discussion of the wave sheaf, which is very important. The offering of the wave sheaf is connected with the counting of Pentecost. It establishes when the count is actually to begin. It also has a New Testament fulfillment, which goes beyond previous understanding in God's Church.

Lev. 23:10 *Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, when you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest…*[The Israelites were to bring the very first firstfruits to the priest, not all of the firstfruits] (vs 11) *And he shall wave the sheaf*

before the Eternal to be accepted on your behalf: on the day <u>*after*</u> *the Sabbath the priest shall wave it*. This is the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, which would be the first day of the week or Sunday.

Who and what does the wave sheaf represent is God's plan of salvation?

1 Cor. 15:20 This verse identifies Jesus Christ as the very first firstfruit. *But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep…*

Jesus Christ is the very first human being to be resurrected from the dead to eternal life. He is the firstborn, the very first, to be born into God's family.

Col. 1:18 *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

Many in God's Church believe Jesus Christ represents the wave sheaf. This what Mr. Armstrong taught in his booklet, "Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?", but Mr. Armstrong overlooked the role and identity of the high priest in the wave sheaf ceremony. Who does the high priest represent in the Old Testament sacrificial system?

Heb. 8:1 *Now this is the main point of things we are saying: We have a such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens* [God the Father]*, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*

Heb. 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

He 3:1 *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

The High Priest of the sacrifice system pictures Jesus Christ. In the wave sheaf ceremony, it is the High Priest that represents Jesus Christ, not the wave sheaf. The Church has overlooked the role of the High Priest in

the offering of the wave sheaf. The meaning of the High Priest has not been fully considered in this ceremony. Christ cannot be both, the High Priest who offers and the wave sheaf being offered.

With Christ as High Priest in this ceremony, who then does the wave sheaf represent?

I Cor. 15:23 *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

Remember, Christ is the firstborn of the God family and High Priest of those in God's Church. Who are those who are Christ's at His second Coming?

I Cor. 15:51-52 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep* [remain dead]*, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Who are the "we" that will be raised from the dead at the last trumpet?

I Thes. 4:16-17 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

The "we" are the "dead in Christ" who will be resurrected when Christ returns. Who are in the "dead in Christ"?

Matt 24:29-31 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven . . . And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

The "we" of I Cor. 15, the "dead in Christ" of I Thessalonians 4 and "the elect" of Matt. 24:31. This group of people will be resurrected/changed when Christ returns at the sound of the seventh trumpet. But who are "the elect?"

Notice who Peter identifies as "the elect" of God. I Pet. 1:1-2 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

Peter's epistle is written to the membership of the Church of God. "The elect" represents those individuals who make up the Church of God.

Paul also calls the brethren of Colosse "the elect." Col. 3:12 *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering,*

In 2 John 1:1-2a John identifies God's Church as the "elect lady." *The Elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:*

A deeper examination of the wave sheaf ceremony provides a more detailed picture of God's plan than initially understood. In this ceremony, Jesus Christ represents the High Priest, while the wave sheaf represents those of the first resurrection, which totals in number 144,000 (Rev. 14:1, 4).

The wave sheaf ceremony pictures Jesus Christ presenting to God the Father the very first firstfruits. The very first members of God's family to follow after Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:23). These individuals are the very first of God's spring harvest and not the totality of this smaller harvest.

Notice the two wave loaves are identified as the firstfruits to the Eternal. Lev. 23:15 *You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath…*[The day the wave sheaf was offered] *from that day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed.* (vs 16) *Count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Eternal*. (vs 17) *You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two tenths of an ephah*; *they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven.*

*W*ho do these firstfruits, pictured by two loaves of bread represent?

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread leaven pictured sin, something to be gotten rid of, but here in connection with the Feast of Pentecost, these two wave loaves, baked with leaven are presented to God. Why would leaven not be acceptable to God during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but acceptable to Him during the Feast of Pentecost?

The answer is found in understanding who these two wave loaves represent.

The key to identifying these two wave loaves requires understanding those represented by these loaves have sin. This cannot apply to Jesus Christ who is a perfect High Priest (Heb. 4:15). It cannot apply to those of the first resurrection because they too are perfect and without sin.

Rev. 14:1 *Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion…* [Jesus Christ, our High Priest] *and with him 144,000 having his Father's name…*[The very first firstfruits, wave sheaf] (vs 4) *These are ones who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.* (vs 5) *And in their mouth was found no deceit: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

It is incorrect to identify the two wave loaves with those who are part of the first resurrection. These individuals are to be "raised incorruptible" at the sound of the seventh trumpet. They are the Bride of Christ and without sin.

Rev. 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.* (vs 8) *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

The sin in the two wave loaves does not picture sin repented of. It represents sin that must be repented.

Who then is with sin after Jesus Christ returns to the earth to establish God's Kingdom?

Ezek. 36:22 *Therefore say to the house of Israel,* (vs 24) *For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all the countries, and bring you into your own land.* (vs 25) *Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.* (vs 26) *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a*

heart of flesh. (vs 27) *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statues, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

Rev. 7:9 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,* (vs 10) *and crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!* (vs 13) *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"* (vs 14) *And I said to him, "Sir you know." So he said to me, "These are ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."* (vs 17) *for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

The two wave loaves **do not** represent those of the first resurrection but represent the modern descendants of Israel and Gentile nations who survive the great tribulation and live into the Wonderful World Tomorrow. These loaves also represent those born during the Wonderful World Tomorrow who will also have to repent of their sins too.

The two wave loaves make up most of God's spring harvest. Combined with the wave sheaf, the two wave loaves picture the totality of the spring harvest of individuals into God's family. Those converted during the Wonderful World Tomorrow are not part of God's great fall harvest as Mr. Armstrong thought.

In review, Leviticus 23:9-22 pictures Jesus Christ has High Priest offering to God the Father an offering of the very firstfruits, the wave sheaf, of the spring harvest. The wave sheaf represents those of the first resurrection, which totals in number 144,000.

Also, pictured is Jesus Christ as High Priest, offering the remainder of the spring harvest, the two wave loaves, as an offering to God the Father. The two wave loaves represent those converted during the 1,000-year millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Armstrong had only a partial understanding of the third step in God's plan of salvation. The Feast of Pentecost has a much broader meaning and purpose than was initially understood. Pentecost does represent the spring harvest as Mr. Armstrong taught, but it includes a much larger number of people that extends far beyond Church of God.

The fourth step in God's plan of salvation is the Feast of Trumpets. Not a lot is said about this Feast.

Lev. 23:24 *Speak to the children of Israel saying, in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.* The key thing is to understand the meaning and purpose for a 'memorial'. What is a memorial? It is something to be remembered. The Feast of Trumpets is connected to remembering events connected with the sounding of trumpets.

What is the most significant event the Bible connects to a trumpet?

Ps. 47:5 *God has gone up with a shout, the Eternal with the sound of a trumpet.*

What is being referred to here?

Rev. 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord…*[God the Father] *and of his Christ…*[Jesus Christ] *and he…*[God the Father] *shall reign forever and ever*. (vs 16) *The twenty-four elders, who sat before God on their thrones, fell on their faces, and worshiped God* (vs 17) *saying, we give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the one who is, and who was, and who is to come; because you have taken your great power and reigned…*[The return of Jesus Christ is a wonderful thing. But notice the world's reaction to it] (vs 18) *The nations were angry, and your wrath has come.*

The people aren't going to be happy when God the Father sends Jesus Christ to take over the kingdoms of this world at the sound of the seventh trumpet. This seventh trumpet corresponds with the last trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15 and the first resurrection.

When does the seventh trumpet sound?

Matt. 24:29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken*. (vs 30) *Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven: and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn; and they will see*

the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (vs 31) *And he will send his angels with the sound of a great trumpet*.

The seventh trumpet sounds **immediately after** three and a half years of great tribulation end.

But notice the fourth step in God's plan of salvation is not the Feast of Trumpet, singular, but the Feast of Trumpets, plural. Understanding the real meaning of this Feast requires understanding that more than one trumpet is involved in it fulfillment.

While the Feast of Trumpets is connected to the return of Jesus Christ, it is also connected to other events involving the sounding of trumpets. A further explanation of these events will be provided later in this Bible study.

The fifth step in God's plan of salvation is the Day of Atonement. What is the meaning of this fifth step in God's plan? Moses was instructed to select two goats and give them to Aaron for a very important ceremony.

Lev. 16:7 *He…*[Aaron] *shall take the two goats and present them before the Eternal at the door of the tabernacle of meeting*. (vs 8) *Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats; one lot for the Eternal, and the other lot for the scapegoat…*[Azazel goat] (vs 9) *And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Eternal's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering…*[This goat was to be perfect and without blemish. It was to be sacrificed] (vs 10) *But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the Azazel goat, shall be presented alive before the Eternal, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat* [Azazel] *into the wilderness…*

This second goat was to be kept alive and sent out into the wilderness.

Turning back to the goat to be sacrificed. (vs 15) *Then he…*[Aaron] *shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat…*

The blood of this goat was to make atonement for the sins of the people. However, the Azazel goat was to serve a different purpose. (vs 21) *Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it*

all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man.

The goat to be sacrificed paid the penalty of the people's sins. Those sins were then transferred to the head of the live goat.

What is the meaning behind these two goats? The sacrificed goat represented the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The live goat represents placing the responsibility for sin on the author of sin, Satan the Devil. The fulfillment of the Day of Atonement can be found in the Book of Revelation.

Rev. 20:7 *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison* (vs 8) *And will go out to deceive the nations…*[Again] *which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: whose number is as the sand of the sea*. (vs 9) *They went up on the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints, in the beloved city…*[Jerusalem] *and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them*. (vs 10) *The devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are* [were cast] *and they…*[This should read he, not they, because the beast and the false prophet at this point have been dead for a 1000 years] *he will be tormented day and night forever and ever*. Satan cannot die, which is why his punishment will last forever and ever. Finally, God will hold Satan fully accountable for all the sin he has perpetrated on mankind.

The sixth step in God's plan of salvation is the Feast of Tabernacles.

Lev. 23:39 *Also on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Eternal for seven days*. (vs 40) *And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, and bows of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God for seven days.* (vs 41) *You shall keep it as a feast to the Eternal for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: you shall celebrate it in the seventh month*. (vs 42) *You shall dwell in booths for seven days…*[temporary dwellings] *All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths*. (vs 43) *That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt…*[This is the purpose of the Feast at Tabernacles.] *I am the Eternal your God*. More information is provided about the Feast of Tabernacles in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Deut. 16:13 *You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor from your winepress* (vs 14) *And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your male servant, your female servant, and the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows who are within your gates.* (vs 15) *Seven days shall you keep a sacred feast to the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal chooses: because the Eternal your God will bless you in all your produce, and in all the work of your hands, so that you shall surely rejoice*. The Feast of Tabernacles is to be joyous occasion for all who observe it.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the completion of God's great fall harvest. It is a joyous time because of all those in the second resurrection are now part of God's family.

Rev. 20:11 *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* (vs 12) *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books* [the Bible] *were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books* [the Bible].

These individuals lived their previous lives in Satan's world cut off from God. They never understood the true meaning of the Bible and therefore never understood the true meaning of life. When they are resurrected back to physical life with new physical bodies, God will educate them in His Truth and provide them with their first opportunity for salvation.

Ezek. 37:11 *Then He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!* [vs 12] *Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.* [vs 13] *Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.* [vs 14] *I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, says the Lord.*

When these people are resurrected, they will for the first time have an opportunity to understand God's Truth. They will be judged for the sins in their previous life and given the opportunity to repent. They will then receive God's Holy Spirit, which will help them develop God's character and qualify to become part of God's family.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures a time when this process has been completed. This will truly be a time to rejoice and be happy.

The eighth and final step in God's plan of salvation is call the Last Great Day. This Feast follows immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles. Lev. 23:36 *For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer and offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.*

The name for this Feast comes John's description of Christ's observance of it. John 7:37 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, if anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink*.

What is the meaning of this final Feast?

It is not, as Mr. Armstrong thought, a period of time when those of the second resurrection will be converted and become part of God's family. This is a one-day Feast, in which sin will finally be destroyed. Keep in mind Satan will have been out away forever by the time this Feast is actually fulfilled.

Several things must happen on this Feast day. First, is the third resurrection. A resurrection for those who rejected their opportunity for salvation. These people refused to repent of their sins and have incurred upon themselves the penalty of eternal death.

Rev. 20:13 *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades* [the grave] *delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.* [vs 14] *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* [vs 15] *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

John confirms that unrepentant sin is the purpose for the lake of fire. Rev. 21:8 *But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all lairs shall have part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Once these individuals have been put to eternal death, sin will be destroyed resulting in no more death.

When there is no sin, there is no more death. I Cor. 15:26 *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

In 2 Pet. 3:10 Peter shows another aspect of the Last Great Day will be the destruction of this physical earth and universe. (vs 10) *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Once God's plan is fulfilled; He will replace this current heaven and earth with a new heaven and new earth. Rev. 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

God's Feasts picture the process and timing by which all human beings will have the opportunity for salvation. Unfortunately, not all human beings will choose to become part of God's family. God does not force people to choose His way of life. He gives them the opportunity to make a choice. The choice is either life or death.

The second half of this Bible study, in 'The Plan of God 9b', will focus on how God's Holy days fit into the context of end-time prophecy and beyond.