

Biblical Harvests

The purpose of this document is to define Biblical Harvests. Because they are referred to throughout the Bible, to understand the Bible these harvests and their celebrations must be understood. There were three harvest seasons, each with important celebration feasts: Festival of the Unleavened Bread in the early spring, the late spring or summer Feast of Trumpets, and Festival of Tabernacles in the fall. Even though the association between the actual harvest and the feast was a loose one, these harvest seasons also represent a future harvest. That loose association between the harvest season, the feasts, and the crops being harvested must be understood to understand the meaning of the Bible and that future harvest, God's main purpose, the harvest of all souls. To make those connections we must know a little about the crops, when they are harvested, and the feasts loosely associated with them.

Biblical Harvest Crops by their Seasons

There were many crops, but the most important are barley, wheat and grapes. Most important because they are most referenced, they are the three that are used in the metaphor for the future harvest of souls. They are most important, but the other crops are also used metaphorically, so for understanding they must also be defined by their seasonal celebration:

Table 3. Harvesting and ingathering,
based on modern agricultural practices in Israel

	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Wheat			x						
Barley		x							
Oats			x						
Peas		x	x						
Chickpeas				x					
Lentils		x	x						
Vetch		x	x						
Sesame					x				
Flax					x				
Millet					x	x			
Grapes				x	x	x	x		
Figs						x	x		
Pomegranates						x	x		
Olives							x	x	x

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The wheat harvest ends in late spring or early summer (June). Because several crops are harvested in more than one season, the correspondence of the crops and their celebrations is a loose one. Barley is hardy and easily harvested. Wheat with its chaff

¹ [“Harvest Seasons of Ancient Israel”](#), Michael Morrison, © 2012, Grace Communion International.

is more difficult to harvest, and grapes need to be crushed, but yield the most joy. Here are the crops with their seasons and Wikipedia definitions:

Early Spring Crops

[Barley](#)
[Peas](#)
[Lentils](#)

Vetch
Wheat

Late Spring and Summer Crops

[Wheat](#)
[Oats](#)
[Chickpeas](#) (Garbanzo Beans)
[Vetch](#)
[Sesame](#)

[Flax](#)
[Millet](#)
Pomegranates
Grapes

Fall Crops

[Grapes](#)
[Olives](#)

[Figs](#)
[Pomegranates](#)

The Celebrations

Those celebrations also make more sense when you think of them in relation to the crops, their season, and that future harvest of souls. For the rest of this “Celebrations” section the three titles will link to Wikipedia definitions and the text will be copied from (with several detail paragraphs omitted) “God's Harvest Feasts: His Assurance of Hope for Mankind” an article by [Jerold Aust](#).²

Spring Festival of Unleavened Bread* *(Passover, Wave-Sheaf Offering)

The first harvest season, the barley harvest, is the smallest, yet in a significant sense the greatest. Generally referred to as the Passover season, it includes the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the first spring harvest and is a lighter one, as the ripened barley is a relatively lighter-weighted grain than wheat.

Within the Passover/Unleavened Bread season is the wave-sheaf offering (Leviticus 23:10-14). This is where the significance of the lighter harvest comes into play: It represents only one man, the Son of man—Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of the wave-sheaf offering, as He was accepted by God after His resurrection on the very day

² [God's Harvest Feasts: His Assurance of Hope for Mankind](#), an article by [Jerold Aust](#), in [The Good News a magazine of understanding](#), 2012.

the wave-sheaf offering was waved before God for its acceptance before the barley harvest could begin.

Just as the first of the annual harvest seasons began with the wave-sheaf offering, the first harvest of humankind for immortality in God's Kingdom began with Jesus Christ. Without this important beginning, the following two harvest seasons could never come about. Humanity's salvation is absolutely dependent on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 12:23-25).

Summer Feast of Trumpets **(Pentecost, Weeks, First Fruits Offering)**

The second harvest festival (*Trumpets*) is *also* called the Feast of Pentecost, this being the Greek word for "fiftieth," as the festival was held 50 days from the wave-sheaf offering, counting the wave sheaf as day one (Leviticus 23:15-17).

In the Old Testament this festival is called the Feast of Harvest, Feast of Weeks or simply First Fruits (Exodus 23:16; Deuteronomy 16:10; Numbers 28:26). This feast represents the harvesting of the first fruits in God's plan for humanity—including the Old Testament saints and those who throughout history have been part of the New Testament Church Jesus founded.

The spiritual fulfillment of this Feast of First Fruits began when God sent His Spirit to the original members of His Church—which, significantly, happened on the very day of the Feast of First Fruits or Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This harvest of the human first fruits continues until the return of Christ Jesus, when they are resurrected to eternal life as immortal spirit beings (1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). This is why the members of God's true Church are repeatedly called "first fruits" in the Scriptures (see Romans 8:23; 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4).

So far we have seen that the biblical harvest festivals represent the resurrection of Jesus Christ to immortality, followed by God's calling of those whom He places within His Church, who will be resurrected to immortality at Christ's return.

If we were to stop at this point, we would remain ignorant of the significance of God's final harvest festival: the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16). The very name gloriously defines the purpose of this great feast and offers the greatest hope to an otherwise hopeless humanity. How tragic it is that so few people understand and keep these feasts, and so remain ignorant of God's great plan and purpose for us!: the fall harvest season's festivals.

Fall Feast of Tabernacles **(Festival of the Ingathering)**

God's Word likens Him to a farmer who patiently tends His crop, waiting for the right time to harvest. Notice James 5:7: "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of

the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain" (emphasis added throughout). In His case, the "precious fruit of the earth" means human beings who will receive His wonderful gift of eternal life as members of His spirit family.

As wonderful as God's master plan of salvation as depicted through these three harvest seasons is, there is an end to His harvesting of humanity. That last season is fittingly summarized as the Feast of Ingathering.

The events signified by this final festival season are the great hope of humanity, including the multiple billions of people who died in vain, without hope, without a future. The numbers resurrected during this time of salvation will be staggering.

This harvest season actually includes four different festivals, all of them with distinct meaning. They are the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

The Feast of Trumpets is the first of the four festivals in this season (Leviticus 23:24). In the Bible, trumpets were used to sound an alarm of imminent war. And indeed, as the events depicted by these days unfold, the world will be gripped by devastating warfare (Matthew 24:6, 21-22; Revelation 6:4; 9:1-21).

But the sounding of trumpets depicts something else too: Jesus Christ's return to earth at the last trumpet to save, not destroy, humankind (Revelation 11:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Again, Jesus is returning to save, not destroy, humanity. The Feast of Trumpets marks the first step God takes to ensure this great hope for humankind.

Daniel shows that God will not allow human governments to rule indefinitely. Christ will return to set up a world-ruling kingdom far greater than any human governments. "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

The second festival within this season is the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-32). It signifies another astounding event—the removal of Satan and the demons from their unseen, unrecognized rule over humanity (Revelation 20:1-3). As with evil human governments, so with evil spiritual influence: God removes all evil so the earth can receive God's peace.

Now we come to the third festival of this season, the Feast of Tabernacles. Next in the sequence of prophesied biblical events is the rule over the earth of Jesus Christ and the resurrected saints, given immortality at Christ's return (verses 4, 6). Just as the Feast of Tabernacles was a time of joy and plenty in ancient Israel, so will the time it pictures—the millennial rule of Jesus Christ—be a time of joy and plenty for all of humanity.

Consider some of the astounding changes Christ will institute on earth as foretold in the Scriptures. Human beings will rebuild the places devastated by war and neglect (Isaiah 58:12). Effort that once went into creating weapons and munitions will now be channeled into peaceful, productive uses and humanity will no longer learn war (Micah 4:3).

People will enjoy private property and feel secure, unthreatened by governments or others who would steal from them (Micah 4:4). As people learn the advantages of living according to God's laws and way of life, peace and the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9). With Satan gone, even wild animals will have a peaceful temperament (Isaiah 11:6-8).

The deserts will blossom like a garden of roses (Isaiah 35:1-2). The hills will appear to melt as fruit trees and vineyards ripen and bend to the ground with fruit. The plowman will overcome the reaper, the treader of grapes him who sows seed (Amos 9:13).

For 1,000 years, Christ will turn the earth into a worldwide Garden of Eden. As Ezekiel 36:35 says: "This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited" (compare Isaiah 51:3).

Christ's glorious Kingdom will be unprecedented in the annals of human history. This 1,000-year period will not end His righteous, peaceful rule, but will be preparatory to the events signified by the following biblical festival we call the Last Great Day.

Next in the order of biblically prophesied events, we see that Revelation 20:11-13 speaks of the White Throne Judgment, the time of salvation for all those as yet unconverted from the time of Adam and Eve until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The White Throne Judgment is depicted by a separate Holy Day that immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:36, 39). This separate festival represents another distinct period that offers great hope for humanity, when all those many billions who never had their opportunity for salvation will finally receive it.

Know this: The future of humankind, as portrayed by the fall festival season, including the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day, has already been guaranteed. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the facts that ensure this.

The three major harvest seasons reveal to us God's master plan for saving all humanity through all ages. Although humanity faces increasing troubles on the horizon, God has not left us, or the billions who will follow us, without protection and great hope.

The fall Holy Day season guarantees the greatest hope for all mankind, a Feast of Ingathering when God sets His hand to save the remainder of humanity, numbering in the billions.

The Three Future Biblical Soul Harvests

First Harvest - Passover

Like unleavened bread
Jesus' death and resurrection
The first resurrection
Like the first harvest, the barley harvest
Easily harvested

Second Harvest - Trumpets

Harvest of the saints
When the trumpet sounds
The second resurrection
Like the Wheat Harvest
More difficult to harvest

Third Harvest - Ingathering

At the end of the next age
The final judgment and refining fire harvest
The third resurrection
Like the Grape Harvest
Most difficult to harvest
But the job gets done

Summary: Biblical Harvests

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