

Appointed Times

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Chapter 13

The Eighth Day

There is a final Appointed Time beyond the seventh day of Succot simply called the eighth day. It is referred to as Shemini Atzeret, and is often confused with Succot. Many erroneously believe that since it is called “the eighth day” then it must part of Succot. Essentially they treat it as the eighth day of Succot. The problem is that Succot is clearly a seven day Feast. There is no eighth day to the Feast of Succot. The confusion exists primarily because of the very vague references that we find in the Scriptures.

Here is what we read in Vayiqra: *“on the eighth day shall be a set apart gathering unto you; and you shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH: it is a atzeret; and you shall do no servile work therein.”* Vayiqra 23:36. We read that the eighth day is a Shabbaton. *“Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a Feast unto YHWH seven days: on the first day shall be a Shabbaton, and on the eighth day shall be a Shabbaton.”* Vayiqra 23:39.

There are specific sacrifices on this day, separate and apart from Succot. ³⁵ *On the eighth day you shall have a atzeret: you shall do no servile work therein: ³⁶ But you shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto YHWH: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: ³⁷ Their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: ³⁸ And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his grain offering, and his drink offering.”* Bemidbar 29:35-38.

So what is the mystery concerning the eighth day? To begin, while many English translations call it a “solemn assembly” the Scriptures clearly describe it as a “atzeret.” Remember that the seventh day of Unleavened Bread is a atzeret. Now the eighth day - the day after Succot is a atzeret. These are the only two atzerets that occur in the Appointed Times of YHWH.

To gain some further insight it might be helpful to look at some references to “the eighth day” in the Scriptures. First of all we must immediately think of something that occurs on the eighth day of every male child's life - circumcision.

This day has great significance with the Covenant. It is a day when the mark of the Covenant is received. (Vayiqra 12:3). So after the new birth of a male child into the Covenant, a seven day count begins, followed by the eighth day when blood is shed, a mark is given and a name is sealed. This is a vital day in the life of one born into the Covenant.

It is also the day that the firstborn are given to YHWH. ²⁹ *Thou shalt not delay to offer*

the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me. ³⁰ *Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.”* Shemot 22:29-30. (see also Vayiqra 22:27).

Here we see a powerful connection, once again, with the firstborn. So on this day, the eighth day, a firstborn male child would not only be circumcised, he would be symbolically given to YHWH through the Levites and would be redeemed. “*And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.”* Shemot 13:13.

The eighth day was a day of redemption for the firstborn males of the Covenant. This, of course, makes us think of Passover, when the firstborn males were saved from death, and Yisrael was redeemed by YHWH. “*Wherefore say unto the children of Yisrael, I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.”* Shemot 6:6.

Another great secret that is revealed by the Creation Calendar is that the Passover, when the firstborn of Yisrael were redeemed, occurred on “the eighth day” – the day after the weekly Sabbath. The Passover occurred on Yom Rishon, on the first day of the week in 1437 BCE.

Shemini Atzeret is a mysterious day, although the patterns of the past help us to see its importance in the future. The past redemption of Yisrael was accomplished “*with an outstretched Arm and with great judgments.*” The Arm of YHWH is clearly a Messianic reference that can be seen throughout the Scriptures.¹⁵⁴ So we should expect to see this day of redemption in the future involving the Messiah and great judgment, not just in the Land of Egypt, but upon the entire planet.¹⁵⁵

Amazingly, it was on “the eighth day” that the Tabernacle was “open for business” after seven days of preparation at the door. (Vayiqra 9:1). The Tabernacle was an essential part of the Covenant. Dwelling with YHWH was the goal, although He would be living in separate quarters since the golden calf incident.

While the Tabernacle was set up on Day 1 of Month 1, “the eighth day” was not Day 8 of Month 1. This is part of the mystery associated with “the eighth day.” The eighth day was the conclusion of a perfect weekly cycle. It was the beginning of a new cycle that started after the Sabbath. It was the first day, Yom Rishon on Day 10 of Month 1 in 1436 BCE.

On this “eighth day” the House was ready and opened up so that the firstborn of Yisrael (represented by the Levites) could enter in. This has prophetic implications for the day when Yisrael will enter the House on the first day of the Millennial Kingdom. (Yeshayahu 30:26, Revelation 19:1-10). It is also the pattern for when New Jerusalem descends from heaven at the end of seven millennial days. (Revelation 3:12, 21:2).

If you examine the Scriptures and tradition you will see numerous things that began for Yisrael when the Tabernacle service began on the eighth day. This was the first day that Aharon stood as High Priest and blessed the children of Yisrael. It was also the day that the Levitical priesthood began their service. This was the first day of the daily offering - the morning and evening lambs. This was the day that fire came from YHWH and lit the Altar before the Tabernacle. It was the first day of eating of the sacrifices that were presented before at the Tabernacle, and it was the day when a new commandment concerning altars was prescribed.

All of these events occurred “on the eighth day” on the first day of the week on Yom Rishon. It was also the day YHWH told Yisrael that He would accept them when the Second temple was dedicated on Day 8 of Month 1 in 456 BCE. (Ezekiel 43:27).¹⁵⁶

So this eighth day was a day of new beginnings for the Covenant people in their relationship with YHWH. This fact is profoundly demonstrated by other Scriptures concerning the eighth day. It is the day that male children are given the sign of the Covenant in their flesh. The eighth day is the day that the diseased person, the leper, is cleansed. This symbolized a cleansing from sin. (see Vayiqra 14). The cleansing occurs at the door of the Tabernacle, the House of YHWH, on the eighth day. (Vayiqra 14). It is the day when men and women are declared clean from an unclean state. (Vayiqra 15). In all of these cases we can see washing with water, followed by blood and the cleansing is accomplished at the door to the Tabernacle.

The message was clear. The Children of Yisrael had to be clean to enter into the Courts of the House of YHWH - the Tabernacle. They needed to be washed clean, and blood needed to be shed to accomplish the cleansing. Once they were cleansed, they could visit His House and commune with Him. Of course, this was why the man and woman were expelled from the Garden. The man and woman became defiled, and therefore could no longer commune directly with a set apart Elohim. That is why YHWH used messengers to communicate with His Creation. This was the problem that needed to be resolved. Through the Torah, YHWH was teaching Yisrael this very important lesson, and revealing the patterns that would be fulfilled to get them back into the House.

So it should be clear that this eighth day has profound significance as we learn to approach and fellowship with YHWH. In fact, 8 is the Gematria value of the Hebrew word “ahab” (bha), which means: “love.” The aleph (a) is equivalent to the number 1, the hey (h) is equivalent to the number 5, and the bet (b) is equivalent to the number 2. So the “breath or spirit” of the “first or head” leads to “the house.” This is the essence of love - the love of YHWH. So we can see that the number eight is all about relationship.

Incredibly, the first time that we read the word “ahab” (bha) in the Scriptures is when Yaacob was planning to deceive his father. Ribkah sends Yaacob for two kid goats to make a meal that the father Yitshaq “loves.” While Yaacob often takes the fall for this deception, the plan was formulated by the wife and mother Ribkah.

This was a meal for one person. There was no need for two kid goats, and therefore the text seems to be drawing our attention to a mystery that is not immediately evident. It should remind us of the two goats of Yom Kippur and the Atonement that He provides us through His Son - the ultimate act of love. This is even more powerful when we recognize the context of the text. It was when Yaacob received the blessing of the firstborn - the Covenant promises.

The Hebrew letter “chet” (j) also has the numerical equivalent of 8. You might notice that in the Ancient Script it looks like a fence, and indeed that is the meaning of the symbol. This is because the eighth day is a day of separation. It marks the end of the seventh day, and the beginning of a new week. In fact, we see how time has been segmented into seven day cycles, so this day is actually beyond our time. It is essentially “time beyond time.”

It is a new time, a new beginning, when the fence, or gate, is opened for those in the Covenant. The fence is a barrier, a separation between those in the House and those outside. There were always walls and fences around the House of YHWH, and there is a description of another wall around the Renewed Jerusalem being 144 cubits thick and made of jasper. (Revelation 21).

The twelve gates around the City have the names of the Twelve Tribes of Yisrael. (Revelation 21:12). In other words, you must be in the Covenant to enter in, and *“there will be no way to enter into it anything profane, or one who causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's scroll of life.”* (Revelation 21:27).

As has already been mentioned, the number 8 is closely associated with new beginnings since it essentially starts a “new” or “renewed” cycle after the completion of seven. So we can see that this eighth day is intimately associated with the Covenant, and it is a time of renewal for those in the Covenant cycle. It has profound implications for the future.

How interesting that it immediately follows the seven days of Succot, and is an eighth day Shabbaton. Even though we are not specifically commanded to be at the House of YHWH, since it is not a Pilgrimage Feast, we will be there if we are obeying the commandment concerning Succot. That is why it is known as an “atzeret.”

Since we are commanded to be at the House for seven days we will definitely be in His presence at the beginning of the eighth day, so we should stay another day and find rest with Him. As Mosheh and Aharon were commanded to stay in front of the door of the Tabernacle for seven days prior to the service on the eighth day, we can see that we are supposed to dwell in succas, which are temporary dwellings. The succa is to remind us that Yisrael dwelled in temporary structures prior to moving into the Covenant Land.

So this very special Covenant day also involves dwelling with YHWH. It is when the House is opened to those in the Covenant. It is when we leave our temporary dwellings, transcend time and abide with Him. As we shall see, these Appointed Times of the seventh month – the Sabbath month - are intimately associated with a future work of the Messiah, as are all the Moadim.