

FEAST OF BOOTHS

The First Great Day

**Blow Trumpets
Songs of Praise
Opening Prayer**

Morning Service

This Feast is also known as the Feast of Ingathering, as it is kept at the end of the summer harvests in Israel.¹ The Feast celebrates the liberation and regathering of God's people and the restoration of the Earth, marking the beginning of the Millennium of Peace.

This Feast is first given to us in Leviticus 23:1-2 and Leviticus 23:37-44:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The Feasts of Jehovah, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My Feasts....

"These are the Feasts of Jehovah which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day; besides the Sabbaths of Jehovah, besides your gifts,

¹ This Feast is often called the Feast of Tabernacles, but that is a mistranslation of the Hebrew and Aramaic. A tabernacle is a more elegant and permanent structure than a simple booth. The Bible calls it the Feast of Booths ten times (once in the New Covenant at Joh 7:2) and the Feast of Ingathering twice in Exodus.

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besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to Jehovah.

“Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh new moon, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall celebrate the Feast of Jehovah for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath observance, and on the eighth day a Sabbath observance.

“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God for seven days. You shall celebrate a Feast to Jehovah for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh new moon.

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 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. I am Jehovah your God.”

So Moses declared to the children of Israel the Feasts of Jehovah.

The above verses clearly link the Feast of Booths to the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, making this Feast a celebration of that aspect of their Exodus from Egypt under Moses. The booths served to remind them of how they lived in booths as they fled from the Egyptians and then lived in them for the forty years they wandered in the desert. It was a temporary but necessary part of their journey to their permanent home.

The Feast of Booths was also kept in Jerusalem under Nehemiah, when they had been set free from their captivity, had returned to Israel and were rebuilding the Palace of God. Can you see a clear theme appearing here? (Nehemiah 8:14-18)

And they found written in the Instructions, which

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Jehovah had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh new moon, and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.”

Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the House of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Jayshua the son of Nun² until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

Also, day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Instructions of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the judgements.

But the Feast of Booths means more than these two returns to Israel. The Feast is also the celebration of the coming Everlasting Kingdom of God on Earth, focusing on the initial Thousand year reign of our Lord Jeshua the Anointed. We will look at the Bible teachings on this aspect, as it is far greater than the Exodus from Egypt.

There are several ‘Booths’ aspects to this initial thousand year reign, which is also known as the Millennium of Peace. As we will see on the Last Great Day, this Thousand Years will finish with the last release of Satan and the final war between his followers and

² Jayshua is a shortened form of Jehoshua that had become popular by this time. In Aramaic it is Jeshua.

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Jehovah. That will be followed by the White Throne Judgement and then everlasting Peace. In comparison to Everlasting Peace, a Millennium of Peace is a short and temporary amount of time, making it a Booth built from time instead of sticks.

Likewise, all those who survive the Great Tribulation and enter the Millennium in their physical bodies are still living in relatively short-lived and temporary bodies when compared with those who will have been transformed and are living in everlasting spirit-based bodies. So their ageing bodies will indeed just be booths in comparison.

Next, even those who have been transformed will be living in temporary dwellings, like Booths, when compared to their future permanent, even everlasting, dwellings which Jehovah God will provide for them when He brings the New Jerusalem down for everyone to live in after the final Judgement.

Now, let us see how these aspects come to be, and get a feeling for how wonderful life will be during the Millennium of Peace.

First, let us consider again the joy of all of God's People who are either raised from the dead or transformed when Jeshua our Messiah returns, and when they rejoice with Him: (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

But I want you to know, my brethren, that you should not be sorrowing for those who sleep like the rest of mankind who have no hope. For if we believe that Jeshua died and rose up, even so God will bring those who have fallen asleep in Jeshua with Him.

For this we say to you by the word of our Lord, that we who have life which remains until the coming of our Lord will not overtake those who are asleep. For our Lord, with a command and with the voice of the head representative and with the blast of the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven. And those who died and are in the Messiah will rise first. And then we who remain and who have life, we will be carried away with them, as

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one in the clouds, to meet with our Lord in the air. And in this way we will always be with our Lord.

Therefore, comfort one another with these words.³

And what a marvellous event and great comfort it will be! We will begin to understand how truly great this is as we work our way through the rest of God's Holy Days.

As we learned on the Day of Atonement, at long last the earth will be free from Satan's evil influence: (Revelation 20:1-3)

And I saw another representative from Heaven, who had with him the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan,⁴ and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the abyss, and shut and sealed the top of it, that he would not seduce all the nations again. After these years it is allowed to release him for a little time.

The era of incompetent and corrupt human governments will be finished: (Psalm 2:1-12)

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot uselessly? The kings of the earth present themselves, and the rulers lay foundations together, against Jehovah and against His Messiah, saying, "Let us break their bonds apart and cast their cords away from us."

He who dwells in the heavens shall laugh; Jehovah shall mock them. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and trouble them in His fierce wrath: "Yet I have anointed My King on My holy mountain of Zion."

"I will declare the decree: Jehovah has said to Me,

³ Mat 24:29-31, Rev 14:12-16

⁴ Gen 3:1-13

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‘You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.⁵ Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and to the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall shatter them like a potter’s vessel.’”

Now, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled even a little. Blessed are all who seek refuge in Him.

Jeshua, God’s Son, replaces them with His world government: (Revelation 11:15)

Then the seventh representative sounded, and there were great voices in heaven that said, “The kingdom of the world has become our God’s and His Messiah’s, and He shall reign for ages of ages!”

Zechariah shows that this Feast is to be kept throughout the Thousand Years of Peace: (Zechariah 14:16-19)

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.⁶ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, on them there will be no heavy rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which Jehovah strikes the nations who do not come up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to

⁵ Mat 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luk 3:22, Acts 13:33, 2 Pet 1:17, Heb 1:5, Heb 5:5

⁶ Mat 24:21-22

celebrate the Feast of Booths.

We know Zechariah is talking about the Millennium, for that is the only time after the Tribulation that there will be physical humans still on earth who could decide they do not want to obey God. After the earth and heavens are renewed, there will only be transformed people who love Jehovah and have fully committed their lives to obeying Him.

Keeping the Feast of Booths is also mentioned in Ezekiel 45:18 to 25, which includes keeping the Passover during the Millennium as well.

This is a Feast day on which we are to give an offering to Jehovah, as commanded in Deuteronomy 16:13-17, so we will take a collection. It will be donated to a Christian child support organisation.

Jehovah will give His servants positions in His government (and His congregation) that reflect the faithfulness and trustworthiness that they displayed in their earthly lives. Consider this carefully: (Revelation 20:4-6)

And I saw seats, and they sat on them, and judgement was given to them and the souls of those who were cut off⁷ for the testimony of Jeshua and for the word of God, and because these had not worshipped the beast nor its image, nor received the mark between their eyes or on their hands.⁸ They lived and reigned with Messiah for one thousand years.

⁷ As in the Peshitta, meaning that all who were killed for their faithfulness to God are included. The Greek instead (and incorrectly) has “*beheaded*”, restricting this group to only those who die from one unusual method of death.

⁸ Literally ‘*on between their eyes*’, suggesting the mark might be visible as well as internal.

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And this is the first resurrection.⁹ Blessed and holy are they who have their part in the first resurrection, and the second death has no authority over them, for they will be priests of God and of Messiah, and they will reign with Him for one thousand years.¹⁰

Just in case anyone is wondering where we will reign, this passage makes it crystal clear: (Revelation 5:8-10)

Now when He had received the scroll, the four Beasts and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, and every one of them had a stringed instrument, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, who sing a new hymn of praise, and they said: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to loose its seals; for You were slain, and You have redeemed us to God by Your blood from every tribe and nation and people,¹¹ and You have made them a Kingdom and priests and kings to our God; and they shall reign over the earth.”¹²

And even though we, if we remain faithful, will be God’s priests and rule on earth under Him during the Millennium, we will still be eagerly awaiting our new home in New Jerusalem.

Break for Eucharist

Now we will Break for Eucharist (Thanksgiving) of Bread and Wine as Jeshua established at the Last Supper. Let us be thankful for what Jehovah God and His Son Jeshua have done for us! (Matthew

⁹ This is the first general resurrection of the saints, after the small resurrection in Jerusalem when Jeshua was raised from the dead (Mat 27:52-53). This First Resurrection occurs at the Harvest in Rev 14:14-16. Many Greek manuscripts begin this verse with “*But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.*”

¹⁰ 2Ti 4:8, Rev 5:10, Rev 11:11

¹¹ Heb 9:12

¹² Exo 12:1-13:10, 2Ti 4:8, Rev 20:6

26:26-29)

And as they were eating, Jeshua took bread, and blessed and broke it, and He gave it to His disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” And He took a cup, and He gave thanks, and He gave it to them, and He said, “Take, drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed in exchange for the many for their release from sins.¹³ And I say to you, I will not drink of this product of the vine from this hour until that day when I shall drink it with you anew in the Kingdom of My Father.”

Let us meditate upon these things and our readiness for taking the Bread and the Wine.

[Quiet time for personal reflection and prayer.]

[Taking Bread and then Wine according to Luke 22:19-20—using unleavened bread and red wine.]

Luke 22:19 And He took bread, and He gave thanks and He broke it and He gave it to them. And He said “This is My body which will be given for your sakes; you shall do this to commemorate Me.”

[Rise up and offer the unleavened bread to Jehovah and give thanks for it, using Jeshua’s words above. Then break the unleavened bread into pieces and pass them around. Wait for everyone to receive their bread and eat it.]

Luke 22:20 Then He also took the cup after they had dined. He said “This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which shall be shed for your sakes.

¹³ 1Co 10:16

[Rise up and offer the wine to Jehovah and give thanks for it, using Jeshua's words above. Then pour the wine into glasses and pass them around. Wait for everyone to receive their wine and drink it. Then thank Jeshua for offering us His body and blood for our healing, our salvation and our life, both for now and for everlasting life.]

Break for Lunch

Afternoon Service

The Feast of Booths is also a celebration of the vast number of people who, faced with unquestionable proof of Messiah's existence and authority when He returns, decide to turn to Him. This aspect is brought out by this Holy Day being a celebration held after the Israelites had completed their main summer harvest, as we have read in Leviticus 23:39.

The name 'booths' also brings out more understanding about the Thousand Years. A booth is a temporary dwelling that is more substantial than a tent, but less substantial than a tabernacle. As we read in Leviticus 23:40 & 44, God tells us to live in a booth during this Feast. It reminds the Jews (and us) of the Exodus, the giving of the Instructions on Mount Sinai and then the forty years they wandered in the desert living in booths while they learnt to obey God. In a similar way, the Thousand Years of Peace will be a temporary version of the Kingdom of God in which the people who live in it will be learning to love and obey Jehovah.

It also teaches us that those who are part of the first resurrection on Messiah's return will live with Him in temporary dwellings until the New Jerusalem is brought down after the Thousand Years end.

Finally, the fact that this Feast is a week long also reminds us that living in the Millennium will be an ongoing process of growing and developing for everyone.

The Thousand Years will be a time of joy for all who are blessed with the opportunity to live in it: (Jeremiah 31:1-14 and Isaiah 25:1-9)

“At the same time,” says Jehovah, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.”

Thus says Jehovah: “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; Israel, when I went to give him rest.”

Jehovah has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and eat them as common¹⁴ food.

“For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to Jehovah our God.’” For thus says Jehovah: “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Jehovah, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!’

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labours with child, together; a great throng shall return there. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and

¹⁴ Hebrew is literally “defiled”

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Ephraim is My firstborn.”

Hear the word of Jehovah, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’ For Jehovah has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he.

“Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of Jehovah; for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd. Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the souls of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness.” says Jehovah. Jeremiah 31:1-14

O Jehovah, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your Name, for You have done wonderful things. Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more. It will never be rebuilt. Therefore the strong people will glorify You; the city of the terrible nations will fear You. For You have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

You will reduce the noise of aliens, as heat in a dry place; as heat in the shadow of a cloud, the song of the terrible ones will be diminished.

And in this mountain Jehovah of Hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines

on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever, and Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from all faces;¹⁵ the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for Jehovah has spoken. And it will be said in that day: “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”¹⁶ Isaiah 25:1-9

Sickness will be very rare and easily cured with the leaves from the trees beside the River of Life: (Ezekiel 47:7-12)

When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: “This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the desert plain, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living soul that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.

“Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every new moon, because their water flows

¹⁵ Rev 7:17

¹⁶ 2Ti 1:10

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from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”¹⁷

But unlike the trees beside the still-future river in New Jerusalem, these trees will not provide everlasting life. But even so, all children will live to be a hundred years of age. This is one of the many aspects of the Feast of Booths that we will examine on either the Sabbath during Booths, or if there is not one this year, on the seventh day of Booths.

These wonderful events make the Feast of Booths a time of great rejoicing, which is foreshadowed in Matthew 21:1 to 11:

Now as He drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, by the side of the Mount of Olives, Jeshua sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and at once you will find a donkey that is tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if a man speaks to you, say this to him, ‘They are needed for our Lord.’ and at once he will send them here.”

For this happened to fulfil that which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly and riding on a donkey; upon a colt, the foal of a female donkey.’”¹⁸

So the disciples went and did just as Jeshua had commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt and they laid their garments on the colt, and Jeshua rode on him. And a crowd of crowds spread their clothes on the road; but others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the crowds who went before Him and those who followed behind Him cried

¹⁷ This miraculous river flows during the Millennium. It is similar to the river that will be in New Jerusalem (Rev 22:2-14), but differs in that its trees will not provide everlasting life.

¹⁸ From Zec 9:9

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out, and they were saying: “Hosanna! The Son of David!¹⁹ ‘Blessed is He who comes in the Name of Jehovah!’²⁰ Hosanna in the highest!”

And when He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was troubled, and they were saying, “Who is this?”

But the crowds said, “This is Jeshua, the prophet who is from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Yes, our King Jeshua is returning, and blessed will be He, and all those who are His when He returns. John gives us a glimpse of what God has prepared for us: (Revelation 7:13-17 and 21:7-8)

Then one of the elders spoke, and he said to me, “Who are these wearing white garments, and where have they come from?”

And I said to him, “My lord, you know.”

So he said to me, “These are those who came through great tribulation, and they have purified their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.²¹ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in the Palace. And He who sits on the throne will dwell with them. They will not hunger nor will they thirst; and the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to life beside fountains of water. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”²²

“And he who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I shall be his God and he will be My son. But the

¹⁹ Hosannah is an Aramaic word meaning ‘Save Now’.

²⁰ As in Psa 118:26 and Shem-Tob’s Hebrew Matthew. Lord Jah in the Peshitta.

²¹ Exodus 36:19, Lev 16:13-16, Mat 24:21

²² Isaiah 25:8

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cowards, and unbelievers, and the evil, and the defiled, and murderers, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and idol worshippers, and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire burning with brimstone, which is the second death.”

And so we each have a choice: we can choose to repent, walk with God and live forever with the Lamb who loves us, or choose to live this life in sin and be burnt to death in the Lake of Fire, with no possibility of ever living again. And if we choose life, we have this promise as well: (Revelation 21:9-11)

Then one of the seven representatives who had the seven vessels filled with the last seven plagues came and talked with me, saying, “Come, I shall show you the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And he carried me in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending from heaven, from the presence of God. And it had the glory of God. And its light was like precious stones, like jasper, as clear as crystal.

The full description of God’s New City of Peace, our future home, will be read on the Last Great Day, which represents the Day it comes to earth.

Let us conclude this First Great Day of the Feast of Booths with these precious words: (Revelation 22:6-14 and 20-21)

Then he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true.” And Lord Jah, God of the spirit of the holy prophets,²³ sent His representative to show His servants the things which will happen soon.

“Behold, I am coming soon! Blessings to the one

²³As in the Peshitta, also see 2Ki 21:10, 2Ch 24:19, Jer 25:4, Amo 2:11

who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

I am John, who saw and heard these things. And when I saw and I heard, I fell down to worship before the feet of the representative who showed these things to me. Then he said to me, “Seer! No! I am your fellow servant, and one of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” And He said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. He who does evil will do evil again; and he who is foul will be foul again; and the righteous will do righteousness again; and the holy will be sanctified again.”²⁴

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, and I shall give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alap and I am the Tau, the First and the Last, the Origin and the Fulfilment.”

Blessed are those doing His commandments; they will have access to the trees of life, and they shall enter the city through the gates....

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming.” Come quickly, Lord Jah Jeshua!²⁵

The grace of our Anointed Lord Jeshua be with all of His saints. Amen.

Let us always rejoice that Jeshua, God’s Son, came to save us. May the entire Feast of Booths be a celebration for you, looking forward to when Jeshua returns for you and reclaims the whole earth.

The next service will be on the Sabbath during the Feast of Booths, when we look at some of the things that will be happening during the Millennium of Peace.

²⁴ Unlike the Greek, the Aramaic still allows the possibility that sinners could repent even at this last moment.

²⁵ As in the Peshitta.

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Then comes the final annual Holy Day, aptly called the Last Great Day, which looks forward to the time when Satan's final rebellion is crushed, everything is renewed, the New Jerusalem comes to earth and Jehovah God comes to live with us for eternity.

Closing Prayer

Prepared by the Central Highlands Congregation of God

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Scripture quotes are from the CHCoG translation, based on the Aramaic Peshitta New Covenant.