

The Eighth Day (2019)

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Here we are on the 8th Day. It is a day that God has made holy, yet also a day about which hardly anything is written, it seems. But God is faithful, and His Word is filled with rich patterns. While there is little mentioned directly about this 8th Day, God has provided clues that we can piece together to understand some things we may not have seen before.

We will begin in Leviticus 23, with the instructions for this day:

Leviticus 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 an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

Leviticus 23:39-40 ‘Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. 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 the LORD your God for seven days.

The 8th Day comes at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, and there are distinctions between this day and the seven that come before it. For example, verse 40 mentions rejoicing for seven days, not 8. Now, that does not mean that today we should be sad, but the fact that the command to rejoice is specifically given only for seven days indicates a slight turning of the focus.

Similarly, in verse 42, the command to dwell in booths is only specified for seven days. In later years, if you were a resident of Jerusalem, and your

house was near the booth you made, it was permissible to return home on the 8th Day, and John seven even has an example of that. Of course, the pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for the Feast did not have anywhere else to go, and it was still a holy day, so they stayed in their temporary dwellings like we do today. But this wording gives another indication that the 8th Day, though adjacent, is distinct.

Please turn to Numbers 29, which contains the only other direct instructions:

Numbers 29:35-38 ‘On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work. You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

What is significant is how scaled back the offerings are for this day compared to the previous seven. During the Feast, 2 rams and 14 lambs were offered each day, but on the 8th day, only half as many were offered—only 1 ram and seven lambs. And during the Feast, multiple bulls were offered, ranging from 13 bulls down to seven bulls. But on the 8th Day, only a single bull was offered. Sacrificing was required, but the number was significantly less this day.

So, we can see that the main aspects of the Feast of Tabernacles were pulled back for the 8th Day. Yet even with these distinctions, it is still not clear what this 8th Day is about.

We will explore this from some other angles. First, we will look at the Hebrew word for eight. The word for eight comes from a root whose basic meaning is abundance or even overabundance. It can indicate being completely satisfied. It has a very positive meaning.

A second aspect of the number 8 is that it is $7 + 1$. That's obvious, I know, but I checked with an expert, and he assured me that 7 and 1 make 8. (The expert just happens to be 8 himself. His name is Isaac, if you want to verify this.) In the Bible, 8 has the meaning of the number seven, plus something additional. The number seven represents perfection. The number eight, then, is over and above that perfection, which coincides with the idea of superabundance found in the root word. In the context of days, the 8th day is also the 1st day of a new week. It is from this that eight carries the idea of a new beginning. Eight can indicate the first in a new series, as well as regeneration, renewal, and a new start with great abundance.

With these themes of the number 8 in mind, we will consider other sequences of seven days followed by an 8th day that portrays the abundant effects of those seven days. The first such occasion is the first place that the number 8 is used by itself, which makes it foundational:

Genesis 17:12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant with Abraham. The 8th day marks the start of a new life with a covenant with Abraham's God. It is a new beginning, one with abundance because of God's promises to Abraham. It is a type of regeneration.

Several of God's laws follow this same pattern of seven days and then an 8th day that is distinct. Exodus 22:30 teaches about the firstborn of oxen and sheep. It says the young animal should be with its mother seven days, and on the 8th day, it was given to God. It was set apart for a time, and then the animal was dedicated to God, so God would have His due.

In the law for leprosy in Leviticus 14, the leper was set apart for seven days of cleansing, and then on the 8th day, the priest made offerings and performed the rest of the ritual. There were seven days of perfect

preparation, and then, the 8th was a day of abundance as the former leper had a new lease on life. He could return to society with his flesh regenerated.

The law for the Nazirites in Numbers 6 also contains this pattern. If a Nazirite touched a dead body, he would go through a time of cleansing for seven days, shave his head again, and then on the 8th day, he would bring an offering to the priest to offer to God. The 8th day marked a new beginning of his vow. The man making the vow was clean, and he could dedicate himself to God again, just like 8-day old firstborn animals were dedicated to God.

The final example we will consider is in Leviticus 8, if you would turn there. Leviticus 8 and 9 are about the consecration of the priesthood, and the elaborate ritual the priests went through before they could serve. There is a lot to read here, so I will draw your attention to just a couple of things. Beginning in verse 31, the priests are commanded to eat part of the offerings at the door of the tabernacle. Now, notice verses 33-35:

Leviticus 8:33-35 And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting for seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you. As he has done this day, so the LORD has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. Therefore you shall stay at the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded.”

As we see, the consecration of the priesthood took seven days, and during that time, they had to stay, not in their own tabernacles, but in the Tabernacle. They were consecrated for seven days in God’s temporary dwelling, and they literally ate before the Lord.

Now, let’s go on to chapter 9. In verse 1, the ritual moves to the 8th day, and various offerings are commanded. The reason for the sacrifices is found at the end of verse 4, where it says, “...for the Lord your God will appear to you.” Seven days of consecration, and on the 8th day, God would appear. And that’s what happened, if you look at verses 23-24. The glory of the Lord appeared, fire came out and consumed what was on the altar (because it was

accepted), and all the people shouted and fell on their faces. The Hebrew indicates it was a shout of joy and praise, rather than terror, and the people fell on their faces in worship. The appearance of God—seeing God—certainly qualifies as superabundance.

Yet this 8th day also contained a judgment, for it appears to have been also on the 8th day of this ritual that Nadab and Abihu, the newly consecrated priests, offered profane fire and were executed by God (in chapter 10). It is a day of abundance, but there is also a measure of sobriety because of the paramount lesson God gave that 8th day. He must be regarded as holy by those who come near Him, and He must be glorified before all the people.

There is one other aspect, and it is found in verses 22-23, where Aaron blesses the people twice. Hold on to that, and we will come back to the congregational blessing by the priest.

Now, let's start drawing this together. In matters regarding holiness and the worship of God, we frequently find seven days of one activity, and then an 8th day for the real object, which always involves something new, and usually abundance. In the rituals for leprosy and for a Nazirite accidentally breaking his vow, the focus during the seven days was on cleansing. The Feast of Tabernacles does not focus on cleansing nearly to the same degree, but there was a daily sin offering, so there was still an aspect of cleansing. Even in rejoicing and abundance, we cannot let the reality of sin and its payment get far from our minds.

The priests stayed in the Tabernacle for seven days, and ate before the Lord within God's temporary dwelling, even as we also eat before the Lord for seven days, and rejoice, and grow in our reverence and awe of Him, in our temporary dwellings. It appears the seven days of Tabernacles, followed by the 8th Day, are an echo of the seven days of consecration in the Tabernacle, followed by God's appearance and acceptance of what was offered to Him.

It is worth remembering that even though the consecration of the priests only directly involved the sons of Aaron, that family represented the whole

nation. God told the Israelites that the whole nation was to be a kingdom of priests. Similarly, we are a royal priesthood. We, too, have been consecrated for holy service and circumcised spiritually.

Thinking back to what makes this 8th day distinct from the previous seven, there is not a direct command to rejoice. However, if the seven days of the Feast are spiritually successful, the rejoicing on the 8th day comes naturally, even as the Israelites shouted for joy and fell down in worship when God responded on their 8th day. Also, only half as many animals were sacrificed because what God is really after is people. His people are His portion. On the 8th Day, God receives His due from what the seven days have produced in His people.

Also on this day, we are released from our temporary dwellings and our commanded separation from our normal environments. Today is still a holy day, though, which limits our activities. But now we can return to our homes, spiritually renewed. Like firstborn animals, we had seven days of being set apart, and now on the 8th day we are dedicated to God, completely owned by Him, and enabled to serve with renewed strength.

We can see this same pattern in seven days consisting of 1000 years each, followed by an 8th day that marks a new beginning. One of the first things that happens as that 8th millennium dawns is that fire comes from heaven and devours Gog and Magog, who attack God's holy ones, rather than regarding God. Gog and Magog are judged, like Nadab and Abihu, showing that holiness must be maintained for there to be true abundance. Satan and his demons are also judged, for they disregarded God's holiness, and gave glory to themselves rather than God. That 8th millennium is also the time of resurrection, which is a new beginning if there ever was one. It is the day of seeing the glory of God, as the Father tabernacles with mankind, in heavens and earth that have been renewed. After seven millennia of preparation, in the 8th millennium, everything is dedicated to God. God will receive all in all, as is His due, and there will be abundance beyond what we can imagine.

There is another correlation I believe you will find interesting. Please turn to Luke 2. On the 2nd day, Clyde Finklea mentioned E.W. Bullinger and his

conclusion that Christ was born on the 1st Day of the Feast. That holy day was likely when Jesus began tabernacling with mankind. Joseph and Mary and the infant Christ were staying in a manger. A manger is a booth for animals, just like the original ones Jacob built that give us the name for the Feast. Well, if old Ethelbert is correct, it means that the 8th day of Christ's life, and thus the day of His circumcision, was also the 8th Day of the Feast. Consider how fitting it would be for this day to be the day when Jesus was entered into the covenant He made with Abraham, this time as flesh and blood. He made the covenant first as God, then as Man. This was a new beginning for the Son, and it gave even more abundant life to that covenant.

Now, the final aspect for today is the blessing on the people we noted in Leviticus 9. The blessing that God commanded is recorded at the end of Numbers 6. You can turn there, but you probably already know it, because the festival choir sings it to us. All these years, on our 8th Day, we have received that blessing Aaron gave to the congregation on their 8th day. It says, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." Right after that, God says, "So they [the priests] shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

The Berean this morning just happened to be about God's name, but it was not chosen by us. God's people are His portion—His due—and He takes care of what He owns, consecrating them, accepting them, and regenerating them. The 8th Day is a day of blessing, a day of God giving abundant grace and peace, a day of dedication to God for service, and His putting His name on His people.