

# The Feasts of Israel

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## Introduction

- Leviticus 23: The Feasts of Israel.
- God's calendar for Israel and schedule for Messiah
- Reference used: *Rose book of Bible charts, maps, and time lines*. Torrance, Calif: Rose Pub, 2005. Print.

## The Sabbath

- See Leviticus 23:3; Colossians 2:16-17; Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11.
- The Sabbath, along with other feasts and other observances, is but a "shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Col. 2:16)
- The Sabbath is optionally observed by many Christians, some on Saturday (the original Sabbath) and some on Sunday (the Lord's Day in the NT). But it is not commanded in the New Testament and should be observed or not according to the conscience of each believer. (Romans 14:1-15:7; Acts 15:28-29)
- The Sabbath is fulfilled by Jesus Christ as our final Sabbath rest. (Hebrews 3:7-4:11) He gives eternal rest in himself beginning now, and completely fulfilled in the New Heavens and the New Earth. (Matthew 11:28-29; Rev. 14:13; 21:1-4)

## The Passover

- See Leviticus 23:4-5, Exodus 12:1-4; Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; John 1:29;
- See "Beginnings" #16: "The Blood of the Lamb"
- The original Passover is accounted in Exodus 11-12. During it, a

lamb was sacrificed and its blood applied to the doorposts of the people of Israel. When the plague taking every firstborn moved through the nation, those households with the blood on the doorposts were 'passed over', its occupants essentially saved by the blood of the lamb.

- Jesus is himself the lamb of God whose blood pays the price for the sins of those who believe. (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; Genesis 22:8; Revelation 5:6.)

## **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**

- See Leviticus 23:6-8; Exodus 12:15-20.
- The Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits are now generally incorporated into the feast of the Passover.
- Leavening (yeast) is generally a picture of sin in the Bible (Matthew 16:6, 12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1.)
- Jesus is represented by this bread without yeast as he is the bread from heaven (John 6:25-59) who himself never sinned (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26). Jesus was "pierced for our transgressions," and by his "stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5, "stripes" in KJV)

## **The Feast of Firstfruits**

- See Leviticus 23:9-14.
- This was a grain offering of the first ripe grain (barley) to the Lord. On Passover, the first harvested barley would be left in a sheaf in the field. Then it would be offered on the third day of Unleavened Bread. Jesus of course was sacrificed on the Passover and rose on the day of the offering.
- Is it any wonder that Jesus spoke of himself as a grain of wheat that must die, but bear much fruit? (John 12:20-26). Or that Paul referred to Jesus as the "firstfruits from the dead"? (1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5)

## **The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)**

- See Leviticus 23:15-22.
- Celebrated 50 days after Passover, this is an offering of thanks for the summer harvest, and for the giving of the the Law, the Ten Commandments.
- It was at this feast that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, and more than 3,000 were converted. This was effectively the start of the Church.

They were Jews from all over the world attending the Lord's required feast! (Acts 2; Joel 2:28-32; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:14-15)

## **The Feast of Trumpets**

- See Leviticus 23:23-25.
- This feast is followed by a ten-day period, and then the Day of Atonement. Sometimes referred to as the Day of Judgment, the blast of the Shofar calls worshipers to repentance. (Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:10) This also became associated with the Book of Life, so worshipers would repent and do good works to increase their chances of being written into it. A traditional greeting says, "May you be inscribed for a good year."
- Jesus has the authority to judge (John 5:24-27) and will return to do so. (2 Timothy 4:1) Those who believe in Jesus Christ (John 10:27-30) are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 20:11-15, 21:27), but those who are not in the book are cast into the Lake of Fire.

## **The Day of Atonement**

- See Leviticus 23:26-32, 16:8-34
- Once a year, the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of a sacrifice on the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant. This was to make atonement for the sins of the people. After the ten days of repentance kicked off by the Feast of Trumpets, the Shofar is blown again to announce this day.

- The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ was the once-for-all sacrifice for sins, and that believers are justified by the grace of God through his redemption. (Hebrews 9:11-28; Romans 3:21-25) The prophets teach that on this day, Israel will be forgiven and permanently restored. (Isaiah 66:7-14; Romans 11:26; Zechariah 12:10)

## **The Feast of Booths**

- See Leviticus 23:33-43; Nehemiah 8:14-17.
- A week-long celebration remembering the time of wilderness wandering, so it incorporates dwelling in booths - temporary structures such as one would make in the wilderness. It is also considered thanksgiving for the harvest and forgiveness.
- The celebration included marching torches around the temple, a sign that Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 49:6) At this occasion, Jesus referred to himself as the light of the world. (John 8:12) Also, water from the Pool of Siloam was presented in the temple, reminding us of the living water, Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 11:9; John 7:37-38)
- This feast should call to mind the final harvest of believers from all nations. (Zechariah 14:16-19)

## **Other feasts worthy of note:**

- Rejoicing in the Law - Leviticus 23:36.
- Feast of Dedication (Hanakkah) - Maccabees; John 10:22-23.
- Feast of Lots (Purim) - Esther 9:18-32.

## **Conclusions**

**Repent and trust in Jesus Christ:** Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the feasts of Israel. The four spring feasts have been fulfilled at his first coming and Pentecost. The three fall feasts are partially fulfilled, and will be completely fulfilled at his second coming.

**Be encouraged:** God is fulfilling his plans and purposes for humanity through Jesus Christ according to His great plan from before the foundation of the world.