



“The Feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23)

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vv.1-2 Our God is a God who wants us to feast. There are seven feasts he commanded Israel to keep.
v.3 The feasts were throughout the year, while the Sabbath was weekly. Seven is the biblical number for perfection or completion. God put seven all over the map for Israel. God rested after creation on the seventh day; The seventh month of the year was especially holy, because all three fall feasts were celebrated in that month; Israel was to let the land rest every seventh year (Lev.25:4); The Babylonian captivity was 70 years long, one year for every year the Israelites failed to let the land rest (Lev.26:34-35; II Chron.36:21; Jer.25:11). Every seven sevens of years was the Year of Jubilee when all debts were forgiven and all slaves set free; Seventy sevens were decreed for the Jewish people in Daniel 9:24-27; The book of Revelation uses the number seven over 50 times. The book revolves around seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls.

Seven is the biblical number for perfection/completion.

The Sabbath was a regular reminder of redemption from slavery in Egypt. God wanted them to rest in the completed work of redemption.

Deut. 5:15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

It is interesting that the Lord mentions the Sabbath right after opening in verses 1-2 with the feasts. Both have to do with faith and trust, which we will see in the prophetic meanings behind each feast.

Feasts = “appointed times”

The seven feasts depict the entire redemptive career of the Messiah. See Col.2:16-17.

vv.4-8 Passover; See Exodus 12:1-3, 6-7; When they would apply the blood, they would naturally make the sign of the cross (demonstrate).

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

I Cor.5:7...for Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.

Unleavened Bread; Passover & Unleavened Bread are inseparably linked; See Ex.12:15, 17-20.

Matt.16:6...Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark 8:15 Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.

I Cor.5:7... for Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

I John 3:3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

vv.9-14 Firstfruits; An offering of the first ripened stalks of grain in anticipation of a great harvest to come.

Practically = Prov.3:9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.

Prophetically = I Cor.15:20, 22-23 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive...Christ, the firstfruits, then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Offered the day after the Sabbath (Sunday), which is the day Jesus rose from the dead.

vv.15-22 Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (fiftieth); This is a harvest festival, also called the Feast of Ingathering; Two loaves were baked with leaven; See Matt.13:31-33; Heb.10:14; See Acts 2:1-4, 41; Acts 10, 15.

Eph.2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace...

In Herod's Temple, there was a wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple, and on this wall were inscriptions in Latin and Greek forbidding Gentiles to enter. Josephus spoke of these inscriptions, and excavations in 1871 and 1934 discovered two of these inscriptions. They read: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death." These inscriptions are now on display in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul and the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.

Acts 21: 29 (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)³⁰ The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹ While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

The first four feasts have been fulfilled:

- Passover = The Cross
- Unleavened Bread = Sanctification
- Firstfruits = Resurrection
- Pentecost = The Church

Prophetically, we are presently living between the fourth & fifth feasts.

The first four feasts were in the spring of the year. The last three are in the fall of the year, with a lengthy gap of time between them. This is what we now know as “The Church Age.”

vv.23-25 Feast of Trumpets, also called Rosh Hashanah (“Head of the New Year”). This feast is associated with what is called “The Day of the Lord” (Joel 1:15; 3:14-16; Amos 5:18-20; Zech.14:1-4; Mal.4:5-6). Two major themes are associated with the day of the Lord. One is the deliverance of the righteous, the second the judgment of the wicked. The first trumpet is the rapture of the church (Rev.4), then the seven trumpets of Revelation.

vv.26-32 Day of Atonement; See notes from Lev.16; While the Day of Atonement speaks typically of the one for all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, it speaks prophetically of a future day when Israel will be saved; See Rom.11:25-26; 11:15; Zech.12:10-14; 13:8-9; The only feast that was to be solemn.

vv.33-44 Feasts of Tabernacles, also called The Feast of Booths, as well as The Feast of Ingathering; It took place when all the harvest had been gathered. It was the most joyous feast the Jews observed. Each morning great multitudes would gather at the temple. They would bring a citrus fruit in one hand as a reminder of the Promised Land to which God had brought them to, and of the bountiful blessings as a result. In the other hand they could carry a “lulab,” which was a combination of three trees – a palm, a willow, and a myrtle, emblematic of the journey through the wilderness.

The priest would hold out a golden pitcher, and the crowds would follow him to the Pool of Siloam (“Sent One”). They would chant some Psalms and wave their lulabs in rhythm. When they reached the Pool, the priest would dip the pitcher in, and the people would recite Isa.12: 3 - With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. The water was to typify the water from the rock (Ex.17:1-17; I Cor.10). They would then march back to the temple, enter through the Water Gate to the blast of the priests’ trumpets. As they came to the inner court of the Temple, lights from a huge candelabra reminded them of the pillar of fire by night which served as a guide through the desert (Num.14:14). When the priest reached the altar, he would circle it once, then ascend with other priests accompanying him to the platform, and pour the “waters of salvation” out. On the seventh and final day of the feast, the same ritual would be followed, but when the priest reached the altar this time, he would circle the altar seven times in succession, like they did at the walls of Jericho. When he came around the sixth time, he would be joined by another priest carrying wine (representing joy). The crowd would chant Psalm 118: 25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. They would ascend the ramp to the altar, and one final time, this time with a pause, he would pour the “waters of salvation” on the altar.

See John 7:37-38; See Isa.7:14; 9:7; 11:6-9; Zech.14:16-17; Rev.21:3.