

Jewish Feasts: Leviticus 23

These Old Testament feasts of Israel were only legitimate before the Church Age, before the Canon of scripture was completed in 96 A.D.

- 1) **The Passover** represented Jesus Christ's death -- the cross. 1 Corinthians 5:7. Christ died on the last Passover (one day in length).
- 2) **Unleavened Bread** spoke of fellowship with the Lord. One week in duration.
- 3) **Firstfruits** represented Jesus Christ's resurrection and resurrection of all believers. (1st Sunday in Unleavened Bread Feast is when it was held): It was a gift offering -- Leviticus 2:12. Jesus Christ rose on Firstfruits.
- 4) **Pentecost** taught the beginning of the Church Holy Spirit indwells all believers. 50 days after Firstfruits. It begins the 5th cycle of discipline and dispersion of Israel. Sunday was when it was held.
- 5) **Trumpets** reminded the Jews of the Second Advent of Christ after the seven year Tribulation. At that point Israel will be regathered in full acceptance of their Messiah and it will be the end of the 5th cycle of discipline (Leviticus 26).
- 6) **Atonement** taught about the salvation of Israel, result of the baptism of fire. This is Yom Kippur. It speaks of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3) being fulfilled after the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. It contained the unconditional covenants: Davidic covenant, Palestinian covenant, and the New covenant.
- 7) **Tabernacles** taught about the Millennial reign of Christ (feast lasted 7 days) and included the Feast of Dedication and Feast of Lights, December 25, 164 BC

The Doctrine of the Feasts

1. The feasts are derived from the word Hebrew term CHAG and means to dance, to be joyous.

The feasts were designed to produce happiness and to relate that happiness to Bible doctrine. They were designed to express the blessing which comes from the study of the Word of God.

2. The feasts were also related to the agricultural economy of Israel. The Passover was held during the time of the latter rains or the barley harvest. The firstfruits was held at the time of the wheat harvest. Pentecost was held at the time of the early figs ripening. The Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles were held during the early rains or the time of sowing. So the feasts were definitely related to the schedule of sowing and reaping in the agricultural economy of Israel.

3. First Advent feasts.

- Passover which represents the cross
- Unleavened Bread which represents fellowship with God
- Firstfruits referring to the resurrection of Christ
- Pentecost which represents the fifth cycle of discipline or the time of Israel's dispersion.

4. There is a big gap between the first four feasts and the last three. We have four feasts which take us from the Passover to Pentecost in June. Then we have a big gap and we start again in October. This

gap represents the period of the Church Age, the time of Israel's dispersion under the fifth cycle of discipline.

5. Second Advent feasts relate to the Second Advent and the Millennial reign of Christ.

- Trumpets illustrated the second advent of Christ and emphasized the fifth cycle of discipline. Israel was regathered under the principle of the trumpets, the trumpets that blew the assembly, the regathering of Israel at the second advent.
- Atonement in which we have an emphasis on the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants at the second advent. The regenerate believers of Israel are restored to the land and the covenants are fulfilled.
- Tabernacles emphasizes the Millennial reign of Christ.

6. The Feast of Dedication was not ordained but is found in John 10:22 and refers to Hanukkah which is the independent celebration of the Jews. It was first celebrated on the 25th December, 164 BC, when the temple was cleansed as a result of winning independence in the Maccabbean wars. All of the feasts in Leviticus, then, had a special concept.

7. The **Passover** occurred on 14 April, 1441 BC. (Exodus 12:1-14; Leviticus 23:5). It portrays the work of Jesus Christ on the cross with special emphasis on redemption.

It also portrays freedom from slavery, the beginning of a nation. All nations begin at the point they attain their freedom. Therefore it recognizes the principle of freedom in life.

The **Passover** is a reminder that no one enjoys freedom unless he is in God's plan of grace. One must have capacity for freedom and this comes from Bible doctrine in the soul.

The **Passover** is the first of the feasts and means freedom and the beginning of a nation. Israel was to represent the gospel of Christ to the world through the Passover feast.

8. **Feast of Unleavened Bread** occurred immediately following - 15-21 April, a week-long feast. It portrays living grace or everything that God has to do to keep a believer alive in the devil's world.

- Living grace means that God keeps us alive, we do not earn it or deserve it or work for it. The feast of unleavened bread is described in Leviticus 23:6-18 and in 1 Corinthians 5:8.
- Jesus Christ is called the Bread of Life and that is not always a salvation title but a title of sustaining us in this life. We are here and we are what we are by the grace of God.
- Living grace means that we are here and alive because of who and what God is and because of His grace.
- The Bread of Life means something else. Bread means food, food sustains life. When Christ is called the Bread of Life it means he is the sustainer of our life on this earth, and we are alive by courtesy of our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Unleavened bread is also a picture of the hypostatic union (God-man), Jesus Christ as the God-Man and the one who is qualified to be and became the only saviour.

9. The next feast is called the Firstfruits.

- The firstfruits always occurred the first Sunday after the Passover and therefore it was in the feast of unleavened bread. Leviticus 23:9-14 portrays it.
- It is described in its significance in 1 Corinthians 15:20,23. It represents the resurrection. It also, then, becomes a picture of surpassing grace rewards in eternity.
- The Sunday of the feast of the firstfruits was a reminder of a principle, that only in time can you acquire rewards for eternity and dying grace. Rewards can only be obtained through consistent, never-give-up, stubborn, hard-headed, I'll-never-change-my-mind, throughout your Christian life.
- So the firstfruits was a sign of the resurrection, a picture of the possibility of attaining rewards.

10. The fourth feast was the feast of Pentecost, a one-day feast which occurred fifty days after the Passover.

- It always occurred in the first week of June. Leviticus 23:15-21 and represents a number of things.
- It represents the beginning of the fifth cycle of discipline or the time of Israel's dispersion. It represents also the beginning of the Church Age and the calling out of the royal family of God.
- It also represents the fact that no adversity in life is too great for the believer in maturity. There is no disaster, no adversity, no trial, no heartache, no problem in life too great for doctrine in your soul. That is the only place where doctrine copes with problems.
- So in the days of blessing, the easy days, you accumulate doctrine for the disaster days. When you do this the disaster days become easy days and golden days just like all of the other days. So this is the concept of Pentecost and these four feasts are related to the first advent of Christ.

11. Next we have the big gap (Summer – Fall months), an elapse of time where there are no feasts. The big gap is the elapse of time between Pentecost and the feast of the Trumpets. That is a six-month elapse of time.

- Again, it represents the calling out of the royal family, the time of the Church Age. Remember that the Age of Israel was interrupted by the cross, resurrection, ascension and session of Christ. The Church Age is simply an insertion.
- Then the Age of Israel is continued with the Tribulation. In other words, the doctrine of intercalation, the principle of the big gap or the elapse of six months without a feast.

- a) Intercalation means insertion. The Jewish dispensation was interrupted by the strategical victory of Christ, His death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session.
- b) A new dispensation was inserted called the Church Age.
- c) Intercalation is the intensified stage of the angelic conflict.
- d) The Church Age as intercalated is a mystery, not known to the Old Testament writers — Romans 16:25,26; Ephesians 3:1-6; Colossians 1:25,26.
- e) Doctrines pertaining to the Church Age are not found in the Old Testament. Where the Church Age information would have occurred in the Old Testament there is a parenthesis.
- f) Doctrine that applies to the Church Age is intercalated by the New Testament

- epistles.
- g) The Old Testament reveals doctrine up through the session of Christ, then skips the Church Age and reveals the Tribulation, second advent and Millennium.

12. The three Second Advent feasts.

- The first of these is the feast of the Trumpets — Leviticus 23:23-25. This represents the termination of the fifth cycle of discipline to Israel and the regathering of Israel and the establishment of them as a nation.
- The fact that Israel will be regathered at the end of the Tribulation and at the second advent is taught in Isaiah 5:26-30; 10:19-23; 11:11-16; 14:1-3; 60:4-6; Joel 2:16ff; Zechariah 10:6-12.
- The next feast is the feast of atonement — Leviticus 23:26-32; Hebrews 9:24-28; Romans 3:23-26. It represents the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants: the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New covenants to Israel. These are given to the born-again Jews of the past dispensation. The eternally saved of Israel will have the land and the covenants forever under Jesus Christ, and this is a reminder of eternal rewards.

13. The next feast is the Tabernacles. This is blessing on earth; the atonement is blessing in eternity. The Tabernacles: Leviticus 23:33-43; Zechariah 14:9, 16. It is a picture of the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- It is a reminder of what Jesus Christ will produce on the earth — the perfect environment because Satan is bound and demons are removed from the earth, as per Revelation 20; the spirituality which will exist in the concept of Isaiah 65:24 or Joel 2:28,29; or Israel restored as a nation, the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants, the objectivity in administration of justice, the perfect environment, creation is loosened from the power of sin, the animal life loses its ferocity.

14. The feast of Hanukkah, 25 December through 1 January. This is where we got the idea of celebrating Christmas. Christ was not born on 25 December, 25 December was when the temple was cleansed from all of the pig's blood of Antiochus Epiphanes and the human blood of all the people he sacrificed. Hanukkah is the independent celebration of Israel. It was first celebrated on 25 December 164 BC when the temple was cleansed from the corruption of Antiochus Epiphanes. It meant freedom through military victory. Military victory always is the basis for providing human freedom.

15. The relationship to the agricultural economy of the ancient world. All of these feasts also had an economic connotation.

- a) The Passover was held during the time of the latter rains or the barley harvest and was a reminder of the importance of free enterprise.
- b) The feast of the firstfruits was held during the wheat harvest and it was a reminder that God has provided through free enterprise, the only basis for sustaining a nation.
- c) Pentecost was the time when the early figs were ripened, a reminder to the Jews always that under free enterprise there is opportunity for new business, and that it must be done by following diligent laws of economy in establishment.
- d) During the six months between Pentecost and the Trumpets there was the great olive, fig, and date harvest, depicting the principle that even the delicacies of life all come from free enterprise.
- e) The Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles were observed during the early rains and the time of sowing, a reminder that as a nation sows against divine institutions they are destroyed, as they sow by using the divine institutions they survive and become great. All great nations have been founded on the basis of the laws of divine establishment. These three feasts were related to the sowing time of the

agricultural economy of Israel.

f) We have the Sabbath month as a feast. This is called Tishri. This was the seventh month, equivalent to the last half of September and the first half of October. The Sabbath month was a special month in all Jewish history.

- The Jews had a thirty-day month, a twelve-month year. So to compensate for this they had to have a leap year in which they added a month. On leap year they had 13 months in the year.
- The seventh month or Tishri had seven feasts. The first day of the month they had the feast of the Trumpets and the feast of the New Moon. On the third day of the month they had a special commemoration for the murder of Gedaliah.
- On the seventh day of the month they had the fast for the golden calf incident. The tenth day of the month was the feast of Atonement. Then on 15-21 of the seventh month the feast of the Tabernacles. On the 22nd day the solemn assembly and prayer for rain, and on the 23rd day they celebrated the dedication of the first temple.

It was Moses who under the teaching of God set up the original seven feasts in Israel. Leviticus 23 is the chapter and that chapter was written by Moses himself.

All of the original grace commemoratives were set up by Moses. In other words, the whole structure of holidays was set up by Moses at the beginning of the Jewish nation. Other holidays came along, but the structure of holidays is grace, doctrine resident in the soul. The holidays are only meaningful to those who have doctrine resident in the soul.