

JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

Jesus came to earth as a Jew. He lived and ministered in the historical and cultural setting of the Jewish nation - the nation which was awaiting their Messiah. Jesus observed the feasts as the One prefigured in all of the ceremonies. We will grasp God's plan of redemption as we study the seven feasts of the Lord and observe God's chronology concerning end times. As Jesus stepped forward at these feasts to make astonishing statements about Himself, about God's plan of redemption, His words will take on a new depth of meaning for us. To experience the flavor of the feasts, aside from a weekly lesson from the Scripture, we're going to enjoy learning Messianic songs and Israeli dances and hearing testimonies from Jewish believers in Jesus.

OUTLINE

1/13/15 – Week 1 – Overview of the Seven Feasts

1/20/15 – Week 2 – Sabbath; Jewish testimony

1/27/15 – Week 3 – Dance Workshop/Passover-Significance

2/3/15 – Week 4 – Lamb Selection Day/Jesus' Triumphal Entry

2/10/15 – Week 5 – Passover/Last Supper/Jesus' Crucifixion/Unleavened Bread

2/17/15 – Week 6 – Feast of First Fruits/Jesus' Resurrection; Jewish testimony

2/24/15 – Week 7 – Feast of Weeks/Shavuot/Pentecost/Book of Ruth

3/3/15 – Week 8 – Lev. 23:22 – Harvest time; how to share Jesus with Jewish people; Jewish testimony

TO BE CONTINUED. . . Fall 2015:

FALL FEASTS/END TIMES

JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

Week 1 – Overview of the Feasts

God, Who is above time and space, created time. He created the sequence of events to serve as the arena where the heavenly meets the temporal, where God meets man. And into this world of time and space stepped Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, the Creator, the Redeemer, the King. And His Kingdom will be on earth for 1,000 years when He returns at His Second Coming. Consider Matthew 6:10 – *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* God intended events on earth to reflect heavenly realities. It is God's desire that our lives be characterized by heavenly values (*set your sights on things above* [Col. 3:2]). The sanctity of time and the Lord's sovereignty over history were lessons that God taught the children of Israel. Through God's "appointed times", the children of Israel were to recognize that God is Lord of every moment and must rule over every second of their lives. Do we recognize that truth – in our lives? Are we submitting all our days, hours, & minutes to Him?

God gave the children of Israel seven feasts. These are His "appointed times." We find these feasts throughout Scripture, in both the OT and the NT. However, we find all seven holidays listed in chronological sequence only in one book – in the Torah – in Leviticus 23. The feasts of the Lord that He gave to Israel are Biblical. The "feasts of the Lord" are God's holidays. They have been orchestrated by Him. Each is part of a comprehensive whole. Collectively, they tell a story.

Lev. 23:4 - *These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.* "Appointed times" are fixed! They're not going to change. God does not change. Malachi 3:6 – *I am the Lord, I change not.*

God gave the children of Israel the feasts to lead them to the Messiah – to Jesus. Every feast given to the children of Israel points to Jesus. Every feast has its fulfillment in the Messiah. The feasts are Jesus feasts. Example: The first feast that God gave the Jewish people is Passover, when the unblemished lambs were slaughtered and their blood smeared on the doorposts and lintels of their homes. God passed over the homes with the blood applied. God ransomed/rescued/delivered the first born in each home with the lamb's blood applied. When John the Baptizer/Immerser was immersing all the Jewish people in the Jordan, as Jesus came down to the Jordan River to be baptized, John cried out *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* Jesus is the fulfillment of Passover – and of all the other feasts.

The feasts point to the first coming of the Messiah and His second coming? We can grasp the "big picture" of Scripture through understanding the feasts of the Lord! And, while each feast was observed in the history of the Jewish people (Passover – night before the Exodus; Unleavened Bread – ON the day of the Exodus when they left Egypt; First Fruits – barley harvest; Shavuot/Pentecost – wheat harvest; giving of the law; . . .), each feast looks forward to a future event which gives the feast its deeper meaning – its

fulfillment. The feasts are historical and they are prophetic. They speak to an historical event and they have a fulfillment – they look into the future.

CHART:

The feasts are divided up into spring feasts and fall feasts. The spring feasts have already been fulfilled; they speak to Jesus' first coming. The fall feasts have yet to be fulfilled; they speak to Jesus' second coming. These "appointed times" are God's plan of Redemption/God's plan of Salvation.

On your chart we note the feast; and, as you move across the page, there is a column indicating what that feast commemorated (an historical event or a harvest or both), a column that spells out the fulfillment of that particular feast (the rest of the story), and a column which tells of the application of that feast – as it applies to God's plan of Redemption – as it applies to us in some cases and to the world. When you understand the Feasts of Israel, you can better understand the Bible. You can grasp God's chronology. God has made His plan of redemption known to us in His word. He's even given us a timetable regarding the end of the age! These plans have been laid out in the Feasts that He gave to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

We are going to take a BROAD look at all the feasts today:

There are 7 Feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits, Pentecost/Shavuot, Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, Feast of Tabernacles. The first three point to the Messiah's first coming (spring feasts). The last three point to His second coming (fall feasts).

The religious year of the children of Israel began with the spring feasts.

PASSOVER

Lev. 23:5, God told the Jewish people, *On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover*. Historically, Passover commemorates the first Passover in Egypt when God delivered the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt after following His instructions in Ex. 12. There was only one Passover when the Lord passed through the land in judgment. Every observance since then has been a memorial commemorating that occasion. Following the exodus out of Egypt, we read in Ex. 13:3 - *And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place.*

The lambs were taken into homes. They were to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5). If they were spotless, they were to be killed. Their blood was to be smeared on the lintel and doorposts. Those who had the blood applied to their doorposts were delivered as the Lord passed through the land of Egypt, and the firstborn in each home with the blood on the doorposts was spared.

Passover was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus – ON the day of Passover. Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth day of Nisan. When Paul speaks of purging the old leaven from our lives, he states that Jesus is our Passover. Jesus is the FULFILLMENT of Passover (I Cor. 5:7) - *For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

Passover is clearly a picture of redemption – deliverance. Bondage was immediately changed into liberty. This was the beginning of a new life, new birth. Passover occurs in the first month of the Biblical calendar, Nisan. This is the beginning of their religious calendar. Passover marks a new beginning!

The application of Passover for believers in Jesus is redemption, salvation. Passover speaks to our personal/individual redemption-salvation. Passover looks forward to our justification – God declaring us righteous. At the moment we are saved – born again – God declares us righteous. When He looks at us – He sees Jesus’ righteousness covering us.

After salvation, what occurs next in the believer’s life? Maturity. God sets us apart. He sanctifies us. Sanctification is a life-long process. Scripture teaches that there are three aspects of salvation:

- Justification - at a moment in time we are saved; we are declared righteous. We are saved from the penalty of sin. (Gen. 15:6; II Cor. 5:21)
- Sanctification – we then grow in the Lord; He matures us. We are being saved from the power of sin as we walk with the Lord.
- Glorification – when we see Jesus we will be saved from the very presence of sin. (Rom. 8:29; 13:11; I Pet. 1:5; I John 3:2)

UNLEAVENED BREAD

Lev. 23:6-8 - And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. ⁸ But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred on the 15th day of Nisan, the day after Passover. Israel’s second feast is named after the bread which is required to be eaten during Passover. In Hebrew leaven is known as chametz which means “sour”. Leaven (usually yeast) is used to produce fermentation esp. in bread dough. As leaven sours the dough, tiny gas bubbles are produced which cause the dough to expand, to rise. Leaven speaks to corruption, fermentation, deterioration. Leaven is more generally a symbol for sin in the Scripture. It is the nature of sin to make us bitter/sour. Leaven causes dough to become puffed up. The sin of pride causes people to become puffed up.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a reminder of God's miraculous deliverance from Egypt. When Israel fled from Egypt, there was no time for their bread dough to rise. They fled in haste (Ex. 12:39). Therefore, in the history column we see that the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorated the exodus from Egypt. The children of Israel left Egypt the day after the angel of death passed over the homes where the blood was applied.

The fulfillment of all the feasts, "the rest of the story," happens on the day of the feast. Because all the feasts are JESUS' feasts, we find a fulfillment for the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Jesus' life. In the fulfillment column of your chart, we see the Feast of Unleavened Bread finding its fulfillment in Jesus' burial. Passover occurred historically on the 14th day of Nisan. Passover's fulfillment is the crucifixion, when the perfect Lamb of God shed His blood. Jesus was crucified on the 14th day of Nisan. God told the children of Israel to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th day of Nisan. Jesus was buried on the 15th day of Nisan. He was placed in the tomb on the 15th day of Nisan. Really? Think "Jewish time"! Biblically, the Hebrew day begins at sunset. A day goes from sunset to sunset. Passover in Jesus' day began the night before He was crucified. Jesus was laid in the tomb the next day. *Matt. 27:57ff - Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.*⁵⁸ *This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him.*⁵⁹ *When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,*⁶⁰ *and laid it in his new tomb.* Jesus' burial was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Unleavened bread means "sweet with no sourness" and speaks to our sinless, perfect Messiah.

Egypt has been a symbol of the world in Scripture.

- The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt.
- *Isa. 30:1 – "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin;² Who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!"*
 - Going down to Egypt in Scripture represents not seeking God and relying on the strength of man.
- *Isa. 31:1 - Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!*

After being redeemed/delivered from the bondage in Egypt, God took them out of Egypt – He separated them from Egypt and set them on the path to the Promised Land. After we are redeemed by the blood of the perfect Passover Lamb, God separates us from the world.

Further application - the burial of Jesus speaks of death. Believers are to die to self. Gal. 2:20 - *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks to our sanctification – our being separated from the world and separated to God as we walk with Him on our way to the ultimate Promised Land, eternal life with Him.

FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

Lev. 23:9-14- *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,* ¹⁰ *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. . . .*

In Jewish culture the first fruits was the earliest harvest in Israel, the barley harvest. During this feast the barley sheaves were waved as an offering before the Lord. Jewish thought was that if God was faithful to bless us with the early harvest – He would surely bless us with the later harvest.

The Feast of First Fruits fell during Passover week after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:11). If Passover, which coincides with Jesus’ crucifixion, was on the 14th day of Nisan – what would’ve happened following the Sabbath after the crucifixion? The Feast of First Fruits speaks to Jesus’ resurrection. The fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits is Jesus’ resurrection.

In this festival the grain that had come from the earth was lifted up for all to see. Jesus told His disciples in John 12:23-24 – “I tell you that unless a grain falls to the ground and dies, it stays just as a grain; but if it dies – it produces a great harvest.” I Cor. 15:20 says, “But now is Messiah risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” Who are the “them”? Because Jesus rose – we who are believers in Him are guaranteed eternal life. The Feast of First Fruits is clearly the resurrection of Jesus and is the promise of our resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection produces a great harvest – us – believers in Jesus. This feast speaks to the believer’s glorification aspect of salvation.

SHAVUOT/PENTECOST

Lev. 23:15-21 - *And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves. .*

Shavuot – *weeks* in Hebrew; Pentecost – *50* in Greek. This is the latter fruits of the spring harvest – the wheat harvest. The Feast of Pentecost/Shavuot historically occurred

7 weeks following the Feast of First Fruits, or on the 50th day following the Feast of First Fruits (Jesus' resurrection).

From an historical perspective, why did the children of Israel celebrate the Feast of Shavuot? Jewish tradition says that the Feast of Shavuot commemorates God giving the commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. On the historical Feast of Shavuot/Pentecost – when God gave Moses the commandments, while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai, we read in Ex. 32 that the children of Israel were out of control down below. They were worshipping a golden calf. When Moses came down to the people and witnessed this perversion, he said whoever is for the Lord come to me. The sons of Levi moved toward Moses. Moses then instructed them to kill their fellow Israelites. Ex. 32:28 tells us that “about 3,000” Jewish people died that day. On the Feast of Pentecost, 50 days following the resurrection of Jesus, “about 3,000” people were given eternal life (Acts 2:41). And, the Church was birthed. The Church is comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus. What an amazing contrast is taught within this one Feast.

HARVEST TIME

Lev. 23:22 - When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

We have a parenthesis. We have months between the spring feasts and the fall feasts – which are the summer months. It's harvest time! In God's plan of redemption, we are currently in harvest time! This is not a feast of the Lord. It is a period of time.

The children of Israel were told not to clear the corners of the land at harvest time. By not clearing the corners they would provide for the poor and the sojourners – the Gentiles. This coincides with Gen. 12:3 – God would bless all the families of the earth through the Jewish people. What is the next event on God's calendar? The Rapture of the Church. The Church is comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus. The Rapture is for the Church; the Rapture is for believers in Jesus be they Jewish or Gentile.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Lev. 23:23-25 - Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

The fifth feast on God's calendar for Israel is the Feast of Trumpets. We look ahead to future times – to end times for Israel. The last three feasts for Israel all take place on the Jewish calendar in the 7th month of Tishri. Seven speaks to completion.

The trumpets are blown in Israel's history to gather an assembly. God is gathering and will continue to gather the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

The Feast of Trumpets is known as Rosh Hashanah among Jewish people today. The shofar – the ram’s horn is blasted – to assemble the people – to call them to repentance. They are to come before the Lord in judgment. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are labeled as the Days of Awe in Rabbinical Judaism.

Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets is a time of introspection looking forward to a time of restoration at Yom Kippur. The Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled when the Tribulation begins – when the treaty is signed with the antichrist. The Feast of Trumpets speaks to the judgment/purging of the nation of Israel (Eze. 20:33-34; Eze. 22:17-22) and ultimate repentance (Hosea 5:15).

YOM KIPPUR/DAY OF ATONEMENT

Lev. 23:26-32 - ²⁶ *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:* ²⁷ *“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.”* ²⁸ *And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. . . .* Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement speaks to the restoration of Israel and is fulfilled in the Second Coming of Jesus. Israel, as a nation, will be restored at the end of the Tribulation (Zech. 12:10ff) and then Jesus will return.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Lev. 23:33-43 - *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,* ³⁴ *“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.’”* ³⁵ *On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it.* 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. . . .* The Feast of Tabernacles is the final feast, the 7th feast, in the 7th month. After Jesus physically returns and we read of His feet touching the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14), He will establish the Millennial Kingdom. The Feast of Tabernacles finds its fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom.

QUESTIONS

What is your understanding of the Feasts of the Lord that He gave to Israel?

What is the significance?

Any V8 moments?

Does understanding the Feasts of the Lord help you digest the “big picture” of the Bible?

From what you learned today, how can you love, trust, and worship God?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the chart with the Biblical references noted

Write down the questions that you have about the Feasts

Share what you’ve learned with someone