

THE PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH OF THE SEVEN FEASTS OF ISRAEL:

1) Passover (Leviticus 23:5) – Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) whose blood would be shed for our sins. Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover at the same hour that the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening (John 19:14).

2) Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) – Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.

3) First Fruits (Leviticus 23:10) – Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Jesus was resurrected on this very day, which is one of the reasons that Paul refers to him in 1 Corinthians 15:20 as the "first fruits from the dead."

4) Weeks or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16) – Occurred fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits – after Jesus' resurrection. Pentecost pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile who would come to faith in Jesus during the Church Age (Acts 2). The Church was birthed on this day when God poured out His Holy Spirit and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's great sermon and his first proclamation of the gospel.

5) Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24) – The first of the fall feasts. It is a time of introspection and repentance pointing to the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7) – the Tribulation.

6) Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27) – Many believe this prophetically points to the day of the Second Coming of Jesus when He will physically return to earth. God will pour out His Spirit on the Jewish people who are left at the end of the Tribulation and Israel will be restored as a nation. Israel will at that time "look upon Him whom they have pierced," repent of their sins, and receive Him as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10ff and Romans 11:1-6, 25-36) – and Jesus will return and establish His earthly kingdom for 1,000 years (Rev. 20).

7) Tabernacles or Booths (Leviticus 23:34) – Many believe that this feast day points to the Lord's promise that He will once again "tabernacle" with His people when He returns to reign over all the world (Micah 4:1-7).

Should Christians celebrate these Levitical feast days of Israel today? Whether or not a Christian celebrates the Jewish feast days would be a matter of conscience for the individual Christian. Colossians 2:16-17 tells us, "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." Christians are not bound to observe the Jewish feasts the way an Old Testament Jew was, but we should not criticize another believer who does or does not observe these special days and feasts (Romans 14:5).

While it is not required for Christians to celebrate the Jewish feast days, it is indeed beneficial to study them. And, certainly, it could be beneficial to celebrate these days if it leads one to a greater understanding and appreciation for Christ's death and resurrection and the future promise of His coming. As Christians, if we choose to celebrate these special days, we should put Christ in the center of the celebration, as the One who came to fulfill the prophetic significance of each of them.