

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

When we study the Feasts of Israel, we get a greater understanding of God's plan which includes "end times". Through the Feasts we can ascertain God's chronology for the world in His plan of redemption.

The Feasts are actually labeled Feasts of the Lord; however, He gave them to Israel to point them to their Messiah. The feasts either commemorate an historical event in Israel's past or a harvest time. God wanted the Jews to REMEMBER that event/harvest and how HE had provided for them.

God told the Jews to bring a sacrifice to lay before God during these feasts. Three times each year the Jewish males were required to – in essence – lay THEMSELVES before God. In Dt. 16:16 God told the Jews that ALL the Jewish males were to bring THEMSELVES to Jerusalem – before the Lord – at 3 feasts each year: Passover; Pentecost (Shavuot); Tabernacles.

Because each feast pointed to the Messiah, each feast had a "rest of the story" aspect – pointing to a fulfillment – and that fulfillment was always in the Messiah.

Israel was a nation in waiting? What were they waiting for? For WHOM were they waiting? THE MESSIAH.

In Lev. 23:2, 4 - God tells us that these feasts are His appointed times – they're fixed – they are not going to change – as God doesn't change. In Malachi 3:6 we read, "I am the Lord, I change not." What a comfort that is. Our God is unchangeable – His promises are unchangeable! His plan for our deliverance is unchangeable!

These appointed times that God gave to the children of Israel present His entire plan of salvation FOR THE WORLD – and that plan will never change! Aren't we thankful?

There are 4 Spring feasts. They have been fulfilled in Jesus' FIRST COMING: Passover; Unleavened Bread; First Fruits, Pentecost (Shavuot)

There are 3 Fall feasts. They will be fulfilled in the future at Jesus' SECOND COMING: Feast of Trumpets (known as Rosh Hashanah in the Jewish community); Yom Kippur; Feast of Tabernacles (known as Sukkot in the Jewish community).

What about summer time?

Jeremiah 8:20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"

Within the chapter concerning the Feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23, there is a most curious verse that we find directly following the Spring Feasts, directly before the Fall Feasts. "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.” Lev. 23:22.

This was a law that God gave the children of Israel to provide for the poor and the stranger (the Gentiles in the OT; see the book of Ruth).

How appropriate for Lev. 23:22 to follow the Feast of Pentecost which believers in Jesus celebrate as the birth of the Church! The Church, the body of Messiah, is God’s redemptive tool at this point in history. So what of Israel? Weren’t they chosen by God as His witnesses? Yes – read Isaiah 43:10.

God chose the nation of Israel to accomplish His purposes. God chose the nation of Israel as His witnesses for the world. He chose the nation of Israel to spread the truth about the one true God to the nations. While we read of faithful Jewish people (the “remnant”) throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, Israel, as a nation, did not obey God. Is God’s plan thwarted? NO!

Have the Jewish people provided for the Church?

- God gave the Jewish people His word – for the world. Repeatedly in the Hebrew Scriptures as God works in and through the Jewish people, God’s intent is proclaimed, “. . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.” (Joshua 4:24; I Samuel 17:46; I Kings 8:43; II Kings 19:19; Isaiah 52:10).
- Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4:22 that “. . . salvation is of the Jews.” How?
 - In Genesis 12:3, we read that God told Abram in cutting the covenant with him that He, God, would “. . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” The Messiah would come through the Jewish line and bless the world.
- Isaiah 49:6 tells us, “. . . It is indeed too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Leviticus 23:22 is speaking of the Church Age – a parenthesis in God’s calendar for Israel – a time for the Gentiles. God is using the Church, one new man (Eph. 2:15), comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, as His redemptive tool now.

Because God’s will, His plan, is never thwarted, He will pick up with the Jewish people as His redemptive tool following the Church Age, at the beginning of the Fall Feasts.

God’s plan of redemption is for the world – for both Jew and Gentile!