

## UNDERSTANDING THE “ONE STORY” OF SCRIPTURE

Week 8 – The Spring Feasts of Israel: Jesus First Coming

March 17, 2026

Lev. 23:1-2, 4 - *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. ‘These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.’* The Hebrew word for feasts is mow-ed which means APPOINTED times. “Appointed times” means to MEET by appointment. God DESIRES to meet with us! What a beautiful picture of God’s heart!

In Moses’ day, feasting around a table was not only eating. Feasting included communicating with one another and fellowshiping. God is a personal God Whose desire is to meet with man for relationship, for fellowship, and to teach man His plan for them. And, one of the ways He does so is through the feasts.

God calls the feasts **MY** feasts. MY feasts – they belong to God, they reflect Who God is! And within these seven feasts, God has laid before us His plan of redemption. AND, He has given us a timetable in this plan!

We need to know that God gave the Jewish people the seven feasts to point them to the Messiah...to Jesus! The seven feasts are divided according to the spring feasts and the fall feasts. The Jewish religious calendar begins in the spring – with Passover. The spring feasts are fulfilled in Jesus’ first coming. The fall feasts will be fulfilled in Jesus’ second coming. Each feast is prophetic – each feast looks forward to a future event – it’s fulfillment within God’s plan of redemption. The fulfillment of each feast must occur on the day of the feast.

Why should we consider the feasts that God gave to Israel? The feasts are in the Bible. II Tim. 3:16 – *ALL Scripture is inspired by God (GOD breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof (admonition), for correction, for instruction in righteousness!*

### **FEAST OF PASSOVER**

Lev. 23:5 - God told the Jewish people, *On the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) at twilight is the LORD’s Passover.*

NOTE: *Abib* is the Hebrew name for the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. *Nisan* is the Aramaic name for the first month. Jewish people began calling the first month *Nisan* after they returned from exile in Babylon. We’re going to use *Nisan*.

**HISTORY:** Passover commemorates the first Passover in Egypt when God physically delivered the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt after following His instructions in Ex. 12 to kill spotless/unblemished lambs and apply their blood. When the unblemished lambs were slaughtered and their blood smeared on the doorposts and lintels of their homes...and God passed over those homes with the blood applied...God ransomed/rescued/delivered people and spared the first born in each home with the lamb’s blood applied.

NOTE: The Hebrew word for Passover is *Pesach* which means “to spread the wings over” which means to protect. Matt. 23:37-39 – Jesus declared, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.... ....you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’*

### **FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF PASSOVER**

Jesus was crucified **ON** the day of Passover! Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth day of Nisan.

When Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to John<sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins, 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!* (John 1:29). John was essentially proclaiming, “Jesus, You are the Passover Lamb; JESUS, You are the fulfillment of Passover!

I Cor. 5:7 – *for indeed, Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

### **APPLICATION OF THE FEAST OF PASSOVER**

At the first Passover, those who had the blood of the lamb applied to their lintel and doorposts were delivered as the Lord passed through the land of Egypt...and the firstborn in each home with the blood around the door was spared. Passover is clearly a picture of redemption – buying out of bondage/enslavement. Passover was the beginning of a new life.

Eph. 1:7 – *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

### **FEAST OF 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.*

HISTORY: The children of Israel were told to rid their houses of leaven (Ex. 12:15). Leaven (yeast) causes the dough to expand/to rise/to puff up. Leaven in Scripture most often speaks to corruption, fermentation, pride. It is more generally a symbol for sin in the Scripture.

After the children of Israel killed the Passover lamb, applied the blood on the lintel and two doorposts of their home, found shelter inside their home, ate the Passover meal, were spared the death of their firstborn...they left Egypt the next day on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Ex. 12:29-36).

### **FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**

Jesus was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Matt. 27:57-60 - *Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.*<sup>58</sup> *This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him.*<sup>59</sup> *When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,*<sup>60</sup> *and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and departed.*

Jesus died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. Why/how was Jesus buried on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan?

Matt. 27:57 – *When evening had come....* When does the Jewish day begin? In the evening – at sundown! Jesus was indeed buried in Joseph’s tomb on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan.

John 19:41 - *Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.* Joseph’s tomb, in which Jesus was buried, had never been occupied by a decaying body!!!! And so, we find the fulfillment of Psa. 16:10 - when King David wrote, *For You will not leave my soul* (David’s soul) *in Sheol* (the grave; David was assured of his resurrection as Job was [Job 19:26-27]) *nor will You allow Your Holy One* (the Messiah Jesus) *to see corruption* (as there had been no decayed/corrupted body occupying that tomb beforehand). Unleavened bread means “sweet with no sourness” and speaks to our sinless, perfect Messiah.

### **APPLICATION OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**

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.* As believers, we participate with the Lord in His crucifixion and in His victory over sin and death. We identify with His death. As we mature in Christ, He sanctifies us.

On the day of Unleavened Bread, the children of Israel left Egypt with a “mixed multitude” - Gentiles from nations who had been conquered by Egypt and had been enslaved in Egypt (Ex. 12:38). The “mixed multitude” were delivered with the children of Israel. In Gen. 18:18 we are told that God chose Israel as His instrument of blessing for the world!!

### **The first two spring feasts speak to Jesus’ crucifixion and burial!**

#### **FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS**

Lev. 23:9-11 - *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,* <sup>10</sup> *‘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. <sup>11</sup> He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.* No specific date is given. You might read in commentaries, articles, etc., that the Feast of First Fruits was on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nisan. To be accurate, we must follow Scripture which clearly states that the Feast of First Fruits fell *on the day after the Sabbath* – which is what day? SUNDAY!

HISTORY: In Jewish culture, the earliest harvest in Israel was the barley harvest. It is significant for us to understand the Jewish mindset regarding the harvests. The Jews believed “If God has blessed us with this harvest, surely He will bless us with the later harvest” – which was the wheat harvest. This mindset truly speaks of trust in God...of dependence upon Him.

#### **The Feast of First Fruits was a dedication of the entire harvest to God through bringing the first gleanings – to Him.**

On the day after Sabbath, when it was still dark, a three-man delegation from the Sanhedrin would go to the Ashes Valley, across from the Kidron Valley. In the Ashes Valley there was a small open field of barley. The three-man delegation would wait, while it was still dark, for the first pinpoint of light to come up on the back of the Mount of Olives (in the east). When they saw the first pinpoint of sunlight, they would ceremonially harvest the first stalks of grain. These were the first fruits. The first fruits offered to God consecrated the entire harvest. (*The Feasts of the Lord* – Kevin Howard/Marvin Rosenthal)

#### **FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS**

JESUS’ RESURRECTION! Jesus’ resurrection occurred on the Jewish Feast of First Fruits! All four gospels tell us that Jesus’ resurrection was at the very “crack of dawn” – while it was still dark (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

I Cor. 15:20 - *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep* (believer who physically died)

#### **APPLICATION OF THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS**

John 12:24 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.* Jesus’ resurrection guarantees the REST of the harvest – US! Jesus’ resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers.

## **THE FEAST OF SHAVUOT/WEEKS**

Shavuot – *weeks* in Hebrew; Pentecost – *fifty* in Greek

Lev. 23:15-17 – *And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath (from First Fruits)...seven Sabbaths shall be completed (49 days). <sup>16</sup>Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a **new grain offering to the Lord.** <sup>17</sup>You shall bring from your dwellings **two wave loaves**.... They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven.*

Pentecost, the birth of the Church, after Jesus' resurrection, when the Holy Spirit descended and indwelt those who put their faith in Jesus, was celebrated on the Jewish Feast of Shavuot!

**HISTORY:** Jewish tradition teaches that the Feast of Shavuot commemorates God giving the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In Ex. 32 while Moses was communicating with the Lord and receiving God's law (Ex. 32:25), the people were worshipping a golden calf. Ex. 32:26 – Moses told the people, *Whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me.* The sons of Levi moved toward Moses. Ex. 32:27 – *And he said to them, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Let every man put his sword on his side and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'* Ex. 32:28 – *So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.*

## **FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF SHAVUOT/WEEKS**

Acts 2:41 tells us at Pentecost when the Jewish people celebrated Shavuot in Jerusalem, "**about 3,000**" people were given eternal life when the Holy Spirit descended. The Church was birthed! Jewish and Gentile believers were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ!

## **APPLICATION OF THE FEAST OF SHAVUOT/WEEKS**

In Leviticus 23:16, God instructed the children of Israel to offer a NEW GRAIN offering to the Lord on the Feast of Weeks – in the form of two loaves baked with leaven. Leaven is a symbol of sin in the Scripture. On the day of PENTECOST when the Church was born, what would TWO loaves with leaven presented to the Lord represent? The Church is comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus – sinners saved by grace. The two loaves may very well represent Jew and Gentile coming before the Lord – one new man!!. Eph. 2:15 - *having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.*

## **QUESTIONS**

Was this new?

What was most clear to you in understanding God's plan of redemption through the feasts?

What impacted you?

How did this help you in understanding the feasts of the Lord?

## **SUGGESTED HOMEWORK**

Reread Week 8 with the Bible references

Study the notes with the CHART

Pray about sharing this with someone

Register for the Passover Seder and invite a friend