



LIFEWork for the week of Palm Sunday, starting April 10, 2022

PRAY/SHARE

A blessed Palm Sunday week to you. This study dives deeper into the feasts established by Yahweh. We are not mandated to keep them, but it is a blessing to be aware of them and see how God set up these “rehearsals” that pastor discussed in this week’s message. This was adapted from a teaching from the website, Bible.org.

The Feasts of Israel – Overview – Adapted from a Bible.org Study

Through the feasts, God forecasts the work of Messiah, the Church, and the world.

God made reference to His special holy days on the fourth day of creation in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis.

God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons [Hebrew: moed] and days and years, (Genesis 1:14 NET)

The Hebrew word translated into English as “seasons” is *moed*. This word means a fixed, appointed time, season, or place when God would meet with His people. It specifically refers to God’s appointed biblical holy days. They are His holy festivals, convocations, or feast days when the people would have a holy encounter with the Living God. (4)

Moed is the same word used to refer to the Lord’s Feasts in the Book of Leviticus. God established these special celebrations when He delivered the Hebrews from Egypt. (4)

The Lord spoke to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites and tell them, 'These are the Lord's appointed times which you must proclaim as holy assemblies—my appointed times [Hb: moed]:... " 'These are the Lord's appointed times [Hb: moed], holy assemblies, which you must proclaim at their appointed time [Hb: moed]. Leviticus 23:1,2,4

When we hear the word *feast* we think of an elaborate meal or banquet. We tend to associate the word with food. Our God Yahweh (His covenant name) stated that these are His feasts. They are special holy convocations or assemblies established by Yahweh when the Jewish people would come together to meet with Him in a special way. (4)

These feasts are special convocations or religious gatherings that often contained a ceremonial meal but were not exclusively about food.

The Hebrew word for a “holy convocation” or “sacred assembly” is *mikrah*. This word means a “dress rehearsal.” The Jews would act out through the festivals a “dress rehearsal” to reveal the Messiah and learn God’s overall redemptive and prophetic plan. For 1,500 years, the Jews performed the drama of redemption as a picture pointing them to Yeshua Hamashiach (Jesus the Messiah). (4)

God appointed three feast seasons or Pilgrimage Festivals (Hebrew – Shalosh Regalim) with seven individual feasts and scheduled them on the Hebrew calendar (1) in such a way that the Jewish males (mandatory) and their families (optional) would have to travel to Jerusalem three times a year to keep them. (4) (5)

"Three times in the year you must make a pilgrim feast to me. You are to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you, at the appointed time of the month of Abib, for at that time you came out of Egypt. No one may appear before me empty-handed. "You are also to observe the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors that you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year when you have gathered in your harvest out of the field. At three times in the year all your males will appear before the Lord God. (Exodus 23:14–17 NET)

These three feast seasons or Pilgrimage Festivals were known as Passover (Pesach, Nisan 14-21) (which subsumed the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, thus totaling eight days), Pentecost (Shavuot, in early to middle Sivan for one day), and Tabernacles (Succot, Tishri 15-22). They portrayed and represented three major encounters with God in

the lives of His covenant people. These encounters with God were to provide His divine peace, power, and rest in their lives. Taken together, they represent seven steps in the believer's walk with God. (4)

Sound the ram's horn on the day of the new moon, and on the day of the full moon when our festival begins. For observing the festival is a requirement for Israel; it is an ordinance given by the God of Jacob. (Psalm 81:3,4 NET)

The Feasts of the Lord provided visual aids for the Jewish people. Each of the seven feasts pointed them to their Messiah, and each uniquely portrayed a particular aspect of His life and ministry. Taken as a whole, they form a complete picture of the person and work of the Messiah and the steps one must take to walk in the peace, power, and rest of God. (4)

Christians have a revelation in their hearts from God's Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus not only celebrated these festivals Himself, but every major redemptive event in His life also happened on a feast day! (4)

I. The Feast of PASSOVER (1) (Leviticus 23:5)

God's calendar is lunisolar (1) based on the moon phases and the earth's orbit around the sun. Each month starts with a new moon, reaching a full moon in the middle of the 29.5-day cycle. Thus Passover always falls on a full moon on the 14th of the month – the first full moon of spring (usually April).

Passover is the feast of salvation from sin. For the Hebrews, it was deliverance from bondage (Exodus 12), and for the Christian, deliverance from sin. Jesus was sacrificed on Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7. John 19:14). The Jews marked their houses with the blood of the lamb, and the Christian marks his house (his body, 2 Corinthians 5:1. 1 Corinthians 6:19;3:16) with the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:22, Ephesians 1:7. Revelation 1:5. Romans 5:9. Ephesians 2:13. 1 John 1:7. 1 Peter 1:18,19. Acts 20:28. Revelation 12:11). We do not keep the feast in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt since that was a shadow of the greater redemption to come. We take communion, a part of the original Passover feast, in remembrance of the Lord (Matthew 26:27. John 1:29).

II. The feast of UNLEAVENED BREAD (Leviticus 23:6)

The second feast begins on the next night after Passover (15th of Nisan). God told the Jews to eat only the pure unleavened bread during the week following Passover. Leaven in the Bible typically symbolized sin and evil (1 Corinthians 5:7,8). Unleavened bread, eaten over a period of time, symbolized a holy walk with the Lord. In the New Testament, the unleavened bread is the body of our Lord (John 6:33). The piece of bread, Jewish matzo, used by the Jews during this week of Unleavened Bread was striped (just like Jesus' body, Isaiah 53). The Passover ceremony of breaking and burying and then resurrecting a piece of this bread presents the Gospel in the midst of the modern Jewish Passover celebration.

God performed this exact ceremony with the burial of Jesus on the exact day of the feast. Men have speculated how Jesus died so quickly on the cross. Crucifixion often took days, but Jesus died in 6 hours. Our Lord died in time to be buried at sundown that day. He was placed on the cross at 9:00 a.m. and taken down at 3:00 p.m. There was time enough to wrap the body and bury it at sundown. Jesus said that no one could take His life from Him – "I lay it down and I take it up again." (John 10:17,18)

III. The feast of FIRSTFRUITS (Leviticus 23:10,11)

Held on the Sunday following Unleavened Bread. God wanted a special feast during which the Jews would acknowledge the fertility of the fine land He gave them. They were to bring the early crops of their spring planting (first fruits) to the priest at the Temple to be waved before the Lord on their behalf. This was to be done "the morrow after the Sabbath" or Sunday. Since the feast of Unleavened Bread was seven days long, one of those days would be a Sunday.

We have come to call this feast Easter, but the celebration was to be over God's replanting of the earth in the spring. We miss an important truth by not using the term "First Fruits" because "first" implies a second, third, etc... We celebrate the resurrection of the Lord as First Fruit (1 Corinthians 15:20,23) and the resurrection of the rest of us as we each follow Him in our own time to Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

Jesus celebrated the Sunday of the week of His crucifixion by rising from the dead. It was not some other day He chose but the very day of First Fruits. First Fruits was the last of the feasts that the Lord was seen personally fulfilling on earth. But His ministry to the Church was to go on, of course, in the feasts to follow, each on their appropriate days.

IV. The feast of WEEKS or PENTECOST (Leviticus 23:17)

God gave precise directions for counting the proper number of days until the Feast of Harvest, which we refer to as Pentecost. It was to take place exactly 50 days after First Fruits (usually late May or early June). It actually marked the summer harvest. Here two "wave loaves" of equal weight were baked with new leaven and called "firstfruits," thereby

representing redeemed or resurrected men. God was predicting that the Church would be comprised of two parts, Jew and Gentile.

Jesus rejoined His disciples after His resurrection and taught them for forty days. Then He told them to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come. And He did, exactly on the day of the feast (Acts 1:3). It was a great "harvest" of souls as 3000 people joined in that day (Acts 2:1. Exodus 32:28). Of course, that is only a token of the harvest that will occur at the Jesus' return.

Four coincidences are hard to explain away, especially when each one is so completely appropriate to its purpose. Because we have not yet seen the fulfillment to feast number five, we remain under the orders of Pentecost, continuing the summer crop cultivation as we work in the field until the great harvest is marked by the next feast.

V. The feast of TRUMPETS (Leviticus 23:24)

In the seventh month (usually in September), which was also the Jewish New Year, they had a memorial of the blowing of trumpets on the first day of the month. This jump in time from the last feast represents the Church Age since the trumpet represents the second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

The trumpet blowing was a signal for the field workers to stop harvesting and leave immediately for worship at the Temple. Imagine a Jew and Arab working side by side in the field. The Jew would leave, and the Arab would stay. "Where there are two working in a field, one will be taken and the other left." (Matthew 24:40)

VI. The feast of ATONEMENT (Leviticus 23:27)

On the Day of Atonement, the Jew either lived or died. The High Priest of Israel entered the Holy of Holies to make a sacrifice on behalf of himself and Israel. If the Jew did not strictly follow the law of Leviticus 23:28-30 and Leviticus 23:32, he could be cut off from his people. For that 24 hour period, he was to do no work but rather was to use the time for confessing his sins of the entire year. We might even balk at the idea of merely staying awake for 24 hours, but if our salvation hung in the balance, we would try to make it.

This feast will not be fulfilled by the church because the church owes no atonement. The church is not innocent, of course, but Jesus has paid the price for our sins.

The Day of Atonement will be fulfilled for the Jews when the Lord returns at His second coming (1) (Zechariah 12:10. Romans 11:1-6;25-36). (2)

VII. The feast of TABERNACLES (Leviticus 23:34)

This is God's celebration of the fact that He provided shelter for the Israelites in the wilderness. Each year on Tabernacles, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, devout Jews build little shelters outside their houses and worship in them.

God's great Tabernacle will exist in the new Kingdom as God provides permanent shelter for us.

Conclusion

Exploring and, for some, participating in the feasts of God provides a wonderful picture of God's plan of redemption and of our Lord and Savior Yeshua (Jesus)! However, we are not to add observing the feasts, or anything else, as a requirement for salvation.

But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless basic forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? You are observing religious days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain. (Galatians 4:9-11 NET)

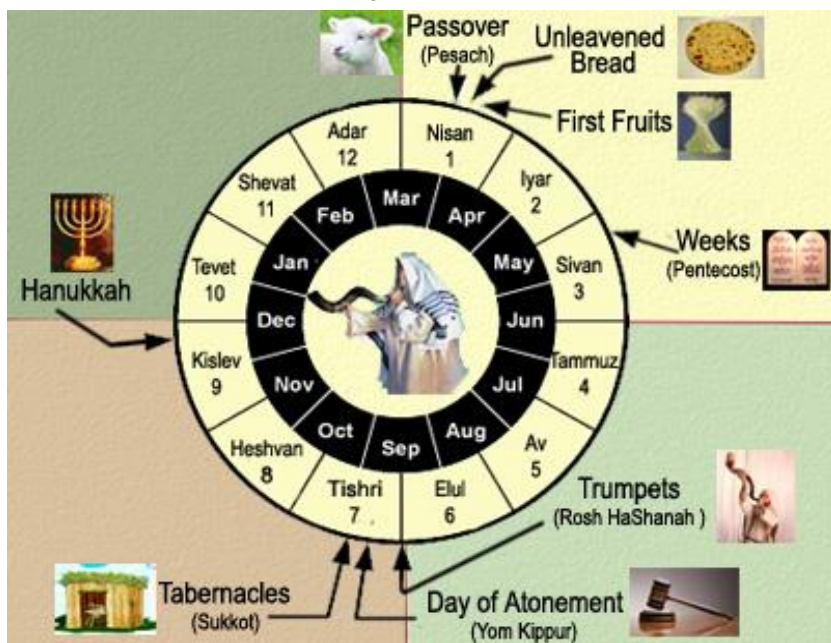
Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days—these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ! (Colossians 2:16-17 NET)

The Holy Spirit is making clear that the way into the holy place had not yet appeared as long as the old tabernacle was standing. This was a symbol for the time then present, when gifts and sacrifices were offered that could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper. They served only for matters of food and drink and various washings; they are external regulations imposed until the new order came. (Hebrews 9:8-10 NET)

For the law possesses a shadow of the good things to come but not the reality itself, and is therefore completely unable, by the same sacrifices offered continually, year after year, to perfect those who come to worship. For otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers would have been purified once for all and so have no further consciousness of sin? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year. For the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins. So when he came into the world, he said, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you

prepared for me. "Whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you took no delight in. "Then I said, 'Here I am: I have come—it is written of me in the scroll of the book—to do your will, O God.' " When he says above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you did not desire nor did you take delight in them" (which are offered according to the law), then he says, "Here I am: I have come to do your will." He does away with the first to establish the second. (Hebrews 10:1–9 NET)

Do not be carried away by all sorts of strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not ritual meals, which have never benefited those who participated in them. (Hebrews 13:9 NET)



(3) Adapted from "THE SEVEN FEASTS OF ISRAEL" By Zola Levitt.

(4) Booker, R. (2016). *Celebrating Jesus in the biblical feasts expanded edition: discovering their significance to you as a Christian*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image.

(5) Eisenberg, J., & Scolnic, E., Jewish Publication Society. (2001). In *The JPS dictionary of Jewish words* (p. 126). Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society.



Lasting Impact

Judges 2:1-10

Palm Sunday - April 10, 2022 – Pastor D. R. Hilken

How quickly we forget

The “Shema”

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

The “Shema” expected **REHEARSAL**

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

SINCERE rehearsal leads to **AUTOMATIC**

Sincere/thoughtful – worship/liturgy/life – vs rote

Epic speeches always included **REVIEW**

Abraham~Egypt~Extraction~Red Sea

SINAI~Manna/Water/Quail~Wilderness~Bronze Snake

Jordan Crossing~Jericho/enemies

God’s rehearsal schedule **BEFORE** Jesus

Circumcision ~ Passover ~ Unleavened Bread

First Fruits ~ Weeks (Pentecost) ~ Trumpets ~ Booths

God’s rehearsal schedule **SINCE** Jesus

All + Fulfillment + Jesus + Holy Spirit

+ New Testament Church + Your life + Looking Ahead

“Never Forget!” Holy Week

Palm Sunday = Exodus 12:3-6

Maundy Thursday + Good Friday (full moon) = Passover

EASTER = First Fruits