

Leviticus 23:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Leviticus 23:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts.

Leviticus 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

In this chapter Moses addresses each of the seven main feasts on the Jewish calendar. One should never lose sight of the fact that these feasts were established to honor the Lord according to His command—“these are my feasts.” Each is connected to observing the Sabbath, an outward sign of one’s submission to God’s authority and recognition of His provision and protection. Isaiah shares with us God’s heart concerning the Sabbath.

Isaiah 58:13–14 “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

It is interesting to note that these feasts are directly related to both the first and second comings of Jesus as Messiah and King. They constitute an overview of God’s prophetic calendar.

Leviticus 23:4 ¶ These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

Leviticus 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S passover.

Verse 4 declares that these feasts occur in seasons—Spring and Fall. This seems to me to make reference to their prophetic significance. Spring is associated with rebirth and new beginnings. Fall is a picture of putting off the old and making ready the new. Jesus came the first time to make a way for our spiritual rebirth; He will come again the second time to do away with the government of the “prince of this world” and to establish a new government with Himself as King.

The first feast Moses identifies is that of Passover; it is to be observed on the 14th day of the 1st month of the religious or spiritual calendar year, Abib or Nisan. It was established in specific connection to the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

*Exodus 12:1–11 “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: **it shall be the first month of the year to you....** Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.... And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening....it is the LORD’S passover.”*

When Jesus came to earth, He came specifically to die as our Passover Lamb to atone for our sin and make a way for us to be delivered from the judgment of eternal condemnation.

1 Corinthians 5:7–8 “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Jesus was crucified as our Passover Lamb on the day that the Passover lambs were slain. According to Josephus, the priests began slaying the paschal lambs at the temple at 3:00pm—the same time that Jesus, our Passover lamb, died on the cross.

John 19:13-16 “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!....Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.”

Mark 15:33–37 “And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour [3:00pm] Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?...And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.”

Leviticus 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. Leviticus 23:7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Leviticus 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

On the day after Passover the Feast of Unleavened Bread began and was celebrated for seven days; the first day of the feast was designated as a Sabbath. Leaven is used as a type of sin throughout scripture; it pictures how sin, especially pride, puffs one up to think more of self than he/she ought. Leaven also quickly permeates the whole and aptly pictures how sin left unchecked will corrupt one's character. For these seven days no one was to eat anything containing leaven; in fact, the home was to be thoroughly cleaned to remove any traces of leaven. This symbolized God's expectation that His people follow Him in complete submission and obedience.

It is only through the sacrifice of Jesus that we can be cleansed from sin, made righteous and empowered to live according to His will.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath

made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Leviticus 23:9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Leviticus 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Leviticus 23:12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:13 And the meat offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth part of an hin.

Leviticus 23:14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

"sheaf" = a heap, i.e. a sheaf; also an omer, as a dry measure

On the day after the regular Sabbath after Passover, a sheaf of the firstfruits of one's harvest was to be presented to the priest as a wave offering to the Lord. Nothing from your harvest was to be eaten until this offering was made. This offering was indicative of one's faith in God to bless the whole harvest season, a picture of thankfulness in advance.

Jesus rose from the grave as the firstfruits of God's great harvest of souls and was presented to the Father in anticipation of the completion of the harvest.

1Corinthians 15:20-24 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Note: Jesus rose from the grave on the day after the Sabbath, Sunday, the first day of the week, the day the firstfruits were to be offered.

Leviticus 23:15 ¶ And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Leviticus 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:18 And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be *for* a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:19 Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

Leviticus 23:20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *for* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

Leviticus 23:21 And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein*: *it shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Seven Sabbaths and one day (50 days) from the day of Firstfruits was designated as the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost and marked the end of the grain harvest. The Jews celebrate this day as that in which God gave them the law, the Ten Commandments.

It's interesting to note that this offering included two wave loaves that were to be baked with leaven. It is also to be recognized as a special Sabbath.

Scripture records that the church was birthed on Pentecost.

Acts 2:1–4 “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Maybe the two loaves pointed to two distinct groups of sinners redeemed by the grace of God—Israel and the Gentiles. The fact that it is also a Sabbath could picture the “rest” we have in our salvation since Christ fulfilled the law and saves us by His grace.

Hebrews 4:9–10 “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Leviticus 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: *I am* the LORD your God.

In light of the offerings connected to the harvest, Moses once again reminds the people that they are not to thoroughly reap the harvest. They are to leave gleanings to provide for the poor and those that are strangers in the land. The

Lord places great importance on providing for the poor and needy, and the following verses from Isaiah clearly picture God's heart.

Isaiah 58:6–11 “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

Leviticus 23:23 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Leviticus 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Leviticus 23:25 Ye shall do no servile work *therein*: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

With these verses our attention is turned to the fall feasts. The first day of the seventh month represents the beginning of Israel's civil calendar, the Jewish New Year that marks the passage of time. Jewish tradition holds that this day marks the day of creation. This day is also designated as a Sabbath.

It is interesting to note that this day is marked by the blowing of trumpets in light of the fact that New Testament scripture reveals that the rapture will be preceded by the blowing of a trumpet.

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

It's also interesting to note in light of the words of Jesus (speaking of His return)...

Matthew 24:36 “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

...that this is the only feast that depends upon a sighting of the new moon and is given a two-day window of possibility; thus, you cannot predict the day or hour. I must admit that my anticipation picks up a little bit more each year at this time in light of the possibility.

The blowing of the trumpets serves as a reminder that the Day of Atonement is approaching. The intervening days provide a time of self-evaluation and an opportunity to repent of one's sins in light of the coming judgment of God. I believe that the rapture will happen in close proximity to the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel known as the tribulation. The rapture, like the blowing of the trumpets, will signal an opportunity for self-evaluation and to repent of one's sins in light of coming judgment. God will even send two miracle-working prophets and send out 144,000 Jewish witnesses to declare the truth of God's word and the message of salvation for at least the first half of that 7-year period.

Leviticus 23:26 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 23:27 Also on the tenth *day* of this seventh month *there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*

Leviticus 23:28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it *is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.*

Leviticus 23:29 For whatsoever soul *it be* that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.

Leviticus 23:30 And whatsoever soul *it be* that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

Leviticus 23:31 Ye shall do no manner of work: *it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.*

Leviticus 23:32 It *shall be* unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

This section addresses the Day of Atonement also designated as a Sabbath day. As noted above, time has been allowed to assess one's spiritual condition and get right with God. If done sincerely, I do not believe that anyone would find himself without reproach and the need for repentance. It is a time for humbling oneself before Almighty God.

It is on this day, only once each year, the High Priest puts on his special garments to enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of every person in Israel. As part of this ritual two goats were presented at the temple, and lots were cast to determine which goat would be sacrificed for the sins of the people. The other goat was designated the scapegoat and would be taken away and released in the wilderness picturing the removal of their sin for that year.

When Jesus was sacrificed for our sins, He served as the final sacrifice for sin that fulfilled that pictured by both goats under the law. He ushered in the New Covenant that provides salvation by grace through faith. I think that it is likely on the Day of Atonement that Jesus will return to institute the New Covenant with the believing remnant of the people of Israel as foretold by the prophets

Jeremiah and Ezekiel. From that time forward “all Israel will be saved” as foretold by Paul.

Jeremiah 31:31–34 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel....I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Ezekiel 36:26–28 “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

Romans 11:26–27 “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

This day also marked that final fruit harvest of the year. So too I believe it will mark the final “ingathering” of the people of Israel to dwell in their nation with Jesus as their King as foretold by the prophets.

Isaiah 43:1, 5&6 “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.... Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;”

Jeremiah 23:3–6 “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Ezekiel 11:17 “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”

Leviticus 23:33 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Leviticus 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:35 On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Leviticus 23:36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work *therein*.

The fifteenth day of the month, five days after the Day of Atonement, marked the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles—a feast that was to continue for seven days. This feast is also known as the Feast of Booths and the Feast of Ingathering. The first day of the feast is designated a Sabbath, and the eighth day that followed the last day of the feast was also designated a Sabbath.

Leviticus 23:37 These *are* the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:

Leviticus 23:38 Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

These two verses appear in parenthesis in the Complete Jewish Bible, as a summary statement concerning all the feasts identified in this chapter. Point is made that the observance of the Sabbaths and the offerings and sacrifices associated with these feasts are to be in addition to the normal Sabbath observances and other gifts, vows and freewill offerings made during the year.

In other words, the Lord wants us to show our love for Him freely and spontaneously, but it must always be done in His way and according to His will. His way is the only way to salvation, and He has declared through His Son that He is the only way—by faith without works.

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Leviticus 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath.

Leviticus 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

Leviticus 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

Leviticus 23:42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

Leviticus 23:43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

During this feast the people were to build booths made out of tree branches and live in them for the duration of the feast. This was to serve as a reminder of how their ancestors lived in tents, temporary dwellings, during their wilderness wanderings on the way to the Promised Land. During that time they followed the leadership of God through His presence in the cloud, and He met their every need.

I agree with those who say that this feast is a picture of the joy that redeemed Israel—and all others on earth that accept Jesus as their King—will experience during the Millennium. They will enjoy the presence of the King as He rules over them as the Good Shepherd in anticipation of eternity and the new heavens and earth.

The prophet Zechariah tells us that this feast will be celebrated by all nations throughout the Millennium. That is because this time people from all nations of the world will be a part of that multitude anticipating the eternal Promised Land.

Zechariah 14:16 “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

Leviticus 23:44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.