

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

The Feasts of the Lord, as found in Leviticus, chapter 23, were given to us by God so that His people could understand the Coming of the Messiah (Jesus) and the role that the Messiah would play in redeeming and restoring both man and the earth, back to God—following the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden.

The Feasts are divided into two significant seasons: Spring and Fall.

The Spring Feasts teach about the First Coming of Jesus, the Messiah; whereas, the Fall Feasts teach about the Second Coming of Jesus.

Interestingly, enough, the rains fall in Israel, typically in the Spring and the Fall. In Hosea 6:3 we read, "... His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth."

The "latter and former" rain in this passage is commonly interpreted and understood to be the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The "former and the latter" rain is also a reference to the First and Second Coming of the Messiah.

The Hebrew word for "the former rain", as found in Joel 2:23 is *moreh*, which means *Teacher*. Jesus, the Teacher, was sent by God to the earth to faithfully teach us righteousness, even as God was faithful in sending the rain.

We read in Isaiah 55:10-11, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:" (vs. 10)

"So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (vs. 11)

The Harvest is the fruit (Believers in Christ) that the Rain (Jesus and the Holy Ghost) produces.

The Apostle Paul, in Colossians 2:17, refers to the Feasts as "... a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ".

OVERVIEW OF THE SPRING FEASTS

The first four Feasts or Festivals, in the spring are: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and the Feast of Weeks or (Pentecost). These Feasts are important because they provide us with clear insight concerning the significant events centered around Christ, the Messiah, and His First Coming.

These four Feasts are interrelated—The Feast of Weeks is considered the conclusion to Passover. The season of Passover is not considered totally over until Pentecost is completed.

Passover had its beginning in Egypt (a type of the world) where the children of Israel had become slaves.

In the days of Joseph, there was a famine in Israel, and the children of Israel went down to Egypt for food, and consequently subjected themselves to the rulership of Pharaoh.

Because of this, Pharaoh had legal ownership over the people. This ownership could only be broken by the death of Pharaoh, thus setting the stage for the children of Israel to make their journey to the Promised Land.

Even with the introduction of a new Pharaoh, God was faithful in freeing his people, through the leadership of Moses.

Spiritually speaking, Pharaoh is a “type” of Satan. Until you accept Jesus into your life, Satan has legal ownership of you. Just as Moses was sent by God to lead his people out of Egypt to the “Promised Land”; even so, Jesus, the Christ,... was sent by God to die on the Cross, thus freeing His people from the ownership of Satan.

With Satan’s legal right over your life broken, you are now free to enter the “spiritual” Promised Land of God—receiving all the promises He has spoken over your life.

From the crossing of the Red Sea, (on the 17th day of Nisan) until the day when Moses met God on Mt. Sinai was a period of forty-seven days.

For forty-seven days, the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness, before arriving at Mt. Sinai on the 3rd day of the third month. (Exodus 19:1)

In Exodus 19:10-11 we read, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow and let them wash their clothes,” (vs. 10)

“And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mt. Sinai.” (vs. 11)

This day would mark the fiftieth Day following the crossing of the Red Sea. It came to be known as “The Revelation of God on Mt. Sinai”.

This day, the fiftieth day, from the crossing of the Red Sea (which again occurred on the 17th day of Nisan) would be memorialized as the “Feast of Weeks” or “Pentecost”.

From the Exodus story we can see that the Lamb was slain on (the 14th day of Nisan) the “Day of Passover”. The next day, (the 15th day of Nisan) is commemorated as the “Day of Unleavened Bread” marking the exodus of God’s people out of Egypt.

Two days later, on (the 17th day of Nisan), the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea. Fifty days from that date, we find the children of Israel gathered around the base of Mt. Sinai as marking the “Feast of Weeks” or “Pentecost” as God gives Moses the Commandments.

In studying the “Feasts” we see how Jesus died on Passover (the 14th day of Nisan), was placed in the grave on the “Day of Unleavened Bread” (the 15th day of Nisan). Later, He is resurrected on the “Day of First Fruits” (the 17th day of Nisan).

Fifty days later, following the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Ghost empowers the believers on the “Day of Pentecost”. We study the Feasts so that we can understand God’s redemption Plan, but more importantly, we can gain insight into a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him.

OVERVIEW OF THE FALL FEASTS

In Hebrew, the Fall Festival season begins with 40 days called “Teshuva”, which means “to repent or to return”.

This 40-day period starts in the sixth month of the Spiritual Calendar, (the month of Elul) and concludes on the (10th day of Tishrei), which is set aside as Yom Kippur, “The Day of Atonement”.

Following the morning prayers during these 40 days, a Trumpet (Shofar) is blown—the exception being on the Sabbaths or the day preceding “Rosh Hashana”.

“Rosh Hashana” begins the “Feast of Trumpets”. Its Biblical name is “Yom Teruah”, which means the “Day of the Awakening Blast”.

God memorializes this day to teach us about the Resurrection of the Dead, the Coronation of the Messiah, the Wedding of the Messiah, and so much more.

This day is beginning of the Jewish New Year, and it is also the start of a period of soul-searching known as “The High Holy Days”, culminating on (the “Day of Atonement), also known as “Yom Kippur”.

Therefore, the last 10 days of the forty days of “Teshuva” or “Repentance”, are also called “The High Holy Days”.

The first and second day of the ten High Holy Days, marked as (Tishrei 1-10) are collectively known as one day. (Day 3 through Day 9 of the month Tishrei) are called the “Awe Days” or the “Awesome Days”.

God set aside these special days to teach us about the future Tribulation period on earth. These seven days will correspond to the seven years of the Tribulation, known in Hebrew as “the birth pangs of the Messiah”.

Now, “Yom Kippur”, also known as “The Day of Atonement” is observed on (the 10th day of the Month Tishrei)

“Yom Kippur” teaches us about the literal Second Coming of the Messiah when he will set His foot down on the Mt. of Olives. (Zechariah 14:4)

The next Feast is the “Feast of Tabernacles” or “Booths” which is observed from the (15th day of Tishrei to the 21st day).

This festival teaches us about the joy of the Messianic Kingdom, or the Millennial reign of Christ.

These final Feasts give fascinating insight concerning the critical events surrounding the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Now that we have taken a look at both the Spring Feasts and the Fall Feasts, we come to understand that God gave the Feasts to teach us lessons regarding...

- The Death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah
- The Empowering of the believers by the Holy Ghost
- The Resurrection of the dead
- The Coronation of King Jesus, (the Messiah)
- The Wedding and marriage supper of Jesus, the Bridegroom
- The Millennial Reign of Christ (1,000 years of peace – Revelation 20:1-5)

The Bible also provides some powerful reasons for studying and understanding the Seven Feasts of the Messiah:

1. The Feasts are in the Bible, and the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says...

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (vs. 16)

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (vs. 17)

2. The Feasts are a shadow of things to come that teach us about the Messiah.

In Colossians 2:16-17 we read...

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:” (vs. 16)

“Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” (vs. 17)

3. The Feasts were given by God so we could learn and understand God’s Plan of redemption for the world and our relationship with Him.

In Romans 15:4, we are reminded that, **“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

In reflecting on the seven great Feasts of the Lord, there are four essential aspects to keep in mind:

- All of the Feasts are, at the same time, both historical and prophetic.
- All of the Feasts teach about the Messiah or Jesus.
- All of the Feasts are agricultural in context.
- All of the Feasts teach about your relationship with God.

THE MEANING OF THE “WORD FEAST” IN THE BIBLE

Two important Hebrew words appear in Leviticus, chapter 23, and each word is translated as “Feast” in our English language.

In verse 2, the word for “Feast” is the Hebrew word, *“moed”*. The word *“moed”* means an appointment, a fixed time or season, a cycle or year, an assembly.

By understanding the Hebrew meaning of the English word “Feast” we can see that God is telling us that He is ordaining a “set time”, or “exact time”, or an “appointed time” with humanity to fulfill certain events in His redemption plan.

Jesus came at “the exact time” as ordained by God. In Galatians 4:4 we read, **But, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His son...”**

Likewise, God has a “set time” or an “appointed time”, in the future, when He will judge the world.

Acts 17:31 tells us, **“Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness.”**

However, in verse 6, another Hebrew word is translated as “Feast”, and that word is “*chag*” which means a “Festival”. It is derived from the Hebrew root word, “*chagag*” which means to move in a circle, march in a sacred procession, celebrate, dance, or hold a solemn feast or holiday.

God gave the Feasts as cycles to be observed yearly, so that by doing so, we would gain greater clarity regarding His Redemptive Plan, as well as the role the Messiah would play in that plan.

It would also give us a clearer understanding of how we are to move away from spiritual infancy and grow into the full stature of Christ, as mature servants of God.

SPIRITUAL NUMEROLOGY DEPICTS A DIVINE PLAN

An essential key to understanding God’s word and its design is through the meaning of Biblical numbers. Their connections and patterns, when we search them out and understand, reveal the handiwork of God.

There are 7 annual Holy Days or Feast Days, beginning with Passover and ending with the Last Great Day (the day after the Feast of Tabernacles ends in the Fall season. (7 is the divine number for perfection or completeness in the Bible.)

- As you reflect on the number, 7, you recall that Creation took place over a seven-day period.
- In the book of Hebrews, written by the Apostle Paul, he uses 7 titles to refer to Christ: Heir of all things, Captain of our salvation, Apostle, Author of our Salvation, Forerunner, High Priest, and the Author and finisher of our Faith.
- And when you reflect on the book of Revelation, there are 7 Churches, 7 Angels to the seven churches, 7 Seals, 7 Trumpet Plagues, 7 Thunders, and the 7 last Plagues.

And so, we see the Hand of God divinely imprinting His pattern all throughout Scripture.

Having instituted 7 Annual Holy Days or 7 Feast Days, God continues by setting them into 3 major Festival seasons.

The Feast of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits are in the Hebrew month of Nisan, which is the first month of God’s Spiritual Calendar, occurring in the Spring of the year.

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, is observed in the third month, which is the month of Sivan.

And then you have the Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles observed in the seventh month of Tishrei, occurring in the Fall of the year.

(3 also conveys the message of Completeness in Scripture.)

- You have the three righteous patriarchs before the flood: Abel, Enoch, and Noah.
- After the Deluge, are listed the three righteous Fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Only three individuals witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Hermon.

So, when you take it all in, you come to the undeniable conclusion that these seven Feasts are instituted by God and serve as a witness to God's Divine Plan and the role of the Messiah in fulfilling that plan.

Next, we take a look at the Application of the Feasts: The Historical Application, The Messianic Application, and The Spiritual Application.

THE HISTORICAL APPLICATION

FEAST

HISTORICAL ASPECT

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| 1. Passover | Israel's deliverance out of Bondage |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | The Journey out of Egypt |
| 3. First Fruits | Crossing the Red Sea |
| 4. Pentecost | Giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai |
| 5. Trumpets | Blowing the Shofar, Jewish New Year |
| 6. Day of Atonement | Priest entered the Holy of Holies, Cleansing the Sins of the People |
| 7. Tabernacles | Entering the Promised Land/Great Rejoicing |

THE MESSIANIC APPLICATION

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| 1. Passover | Death of Christ on the Cross (tree) |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | The Burial of Jesus |

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| 3. First Fruits | The Resurrection of Jesus |
| 4. Pentecost | Giving of the Torah/Outpouring of the Holy Ghost |
| 5. Trumpets | Jesus' Resurrection, and the Resurrection of the Saints, the Rapture of the Church |
| 6. Day of Atonement | The Day of Christ's Second Coming |
| 7. Tabernacles | The Messianic Era/the Millenium |

SPIRITUAL APPLICATION OF THE FEASTS

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| 1. Passover | Repentance and trusting by Faith in the shed blood of Jesus |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | Sanctification and separation from evil represented by water immersion (Baptism) |
| 3. First Fruits | Walking in newness of Life |
| 4. Pentecost | Immersion (Baptism in the Holy Ghost) |
| 5. Trumpets | Hearing the Call of God for our lives |
| 6. Day of Atonement | Yielding ourselves to God so that we may live (face to face) in His Presence |
| 7. Tabernacles | A daily rest in the Messiah, having His "Kingdom Rest" residing in our hearts |

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEASTS

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| 1. Passover | A reminder that God is the forgiver of sins, because of Christ becoming our Passover Lamb |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | Sanctification – putting Sin out of our lives |
| 3. First Fruits | Christ, the first risen from the dead, afterwards those belonging to Christ at His Coming |
| 4. Pentecost | Reminds us that our Creator still works miracles empowering us to carry out His Will in the earth |

- 5. Trumpets Looking forward to the return of Christ, the Rapture of the Church, Resurrection of the “Dead in Christ” - the hope of all Christians

- 6. Day of Atonement Loving reconciliation with God the Father made possible by Christ’s sacrifice, Satan is ultimately defeated

- 7. Tabernacles Represents the Millennium, the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth, True peace resides

THE BIBLICAL CALENDARS OF GOD

To fully understand the Feasts as “appointed times” set by God, we must understand the Biblical calendars given by God.

There are two primary calendars in the Bible: the Civil Calendar and the Spiritual Calendar.

With the Civil Calendar, the first month is Tishrei, and the first day of that month signifies the beginning of the Jewish New Year, also known as Rosh Hashana.

The second calendar in the Bible is the Spiritual Calendar. God’s Spiritual Calendar began with Exodus 12 and carries throughout Scripture until the last chapter of Revelation, Chapter 22.

In Exodus 12:2 we read, “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”

The month that God was referring to was the month of Nisan. Prior to God establishing the month of Nisan as the first month in the Spiritual Calendar, its original placement was as the “seventh month” in the Civil Calendar.

God gave the Spiritual Calendar so we could understand the Seven Feasts that He had blessed and set as “appointed times.

These “appointed times” foreshadow important events in redemption. The critical events of redemption all take place on the days He ordained in the Spiritual Calendar.

These designated days in the Spiritual Calendar coincide with the same days declared as Festivals in Leviticus, Chapter 23.

CONTRASTING THE CIVIL WITH THE SPIRITUAL CALENDAR

<u>Hebrew Name</u>	<u>Our Month</u>	<u>Civil Year</u>	<u>Spiritual Year</u>
Tishrei	September	1st	7th
Cheshvan	October	2nd	8th
Kislev	November	3rd	9th
Tevet	December	4th	10th
Shevat	January	5th	11th
Adar	February	6th	12th
Nisan (Aviv)	March	7th	1st
Iyar	April	8th	2nd
Sivan	May	9th	3rd
Tammuz	June	10th	4th
Av	July	11th	5th
Elul	August	12th	6th

UNDERSTANDING AND OUTLINING THE FEASTS

In Leviticus 23:2 we read...

“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.”

FEASTS OF THE LORD

<u>Hebrew Name</u>	<u>English Name</u>	<u>Time of Observance</u>
1. Pesach	Passover	Nisan 14 (Spring/First Feast of the Spiritual Calendar Year)
2. Hag HaMatzah	Unleavened Bread	Nisan 14
3. Bikkurim Hag HaMatzah	First Fruits	Nisan 17
4. Shavout	Pentecost	50 days from the Feast of First Fruits
5. Yom Teruah	Trumpets	Tishrei 1/ There are 10 days of Awe Between Trumpets and Yom Kippur
6. Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement	Tishrei 10
7. Sukkot	Tabernacles	Tishrei 15-21