

THE MESSIAH IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL/LEVITICUS 23

COMPANION NOTES FOR CHART

God gave the children of Israel “appointed times”. He gave them a calendar, a GRAPHIC calendar with object lessons and visual aids to set their course and to cause them to recognize that God is Lord of every moment and must rule over every second of their lives. Are we submitting all our days, hours, & minutes to Him?

The “appointed times” are the seven feasts of Israel. *Mow-ed* in Hebrew means appointed times. God gave the children of Israel seven feasts in their set seasons. The root word for feasts is *ya-ad* - to be set, to MEET by appointment. What a beautiful picture of God’s heart! God is a personal God Whose desire is to meet with man – for relationship – for communion – for fellowship – and to teach man His plan for them individually and for the world! We find these feasts throughout Scripture – in both the OT and the NT. However, we find all seven holy days listed in chronological sequence only in one book – in the Torah – in Leviticus 23.

Lev. 23:1-2, 4 - *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² 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. MY feasts: they belong to God, they reflect Who God is! They are sacred assemblies during which to gather. “Appointed times” – these appointed meetings between God and the children of Israel are fixed. They’re set in stone. They’re not going to change. God does not change – Malachi 3:6 – “I am the Lord, I change not.”*

The reason God gave the children of Israel the Feasts was to lead them to their Messiah Jesus. Every feast given to the children of Israel points to Jesus. Every feast has its fulfillment in the Messiah. The Feasts are Jesus Feasts.

The feasts are divided up into Spring Feasts and Fall Feasts. The Spring Feasts have already been fulfilled; and they speak to Jesus’ first coming. The Fall Feasts have yet to be fulfilled; and they speak to Jesus’ second coming. The feasts point to the first coming of the Messiah and His second coming.

Each feast either commemorates an historical event in the history of Israel. For example:

- The first Passover occurred the night before the Exodus.
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the day of the Exodus when they left Egypt.
- The Feast of First Fruits was celebrated during the barley harvest,
- Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks); Pentecost was celebrated during the wheat harvest. Jewish tradition teaches that the giving of the law occurred at Shavuot.

... AND, each feast looks forward to a future event which gives the feast its deeper meaning – its fulfillment. The feasts are historical (taking place in Israel's history) AND they are prophetic. They speak to a past event and a future event.

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These appointed times are God's plan of Redemption/God's plan of Salvation.

SPRING FEASTS – JESUS' FIRST COMING - FULFILLED

PASSOVER

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

HISTORY: Passover commemorates the first Passover in Egypt when God delivered the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt after following His instructions in Ex. 12. God told them to kill a spotless lamb and to apply its blood to the lintel (crossbeam over the door) and the doorposts (Ex. 12:6, 7). Those who had the blood of the lamb applied to their doorposts were delivered as the Lord passed through the land of Egypt – and the firstborn in each home with the blood on the doorposts was spared.

FULFILLMENT: the crucifixion of Jesus ON the day of Passover. Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth day of Nisan.

APPLICATION: For believers in Jesus, the feast of Passover is a clear picture of redemption/salvation. Jesus, the Lamb of God, shed His blood so that we can be forgiven and freed from the bondage to sin forever. We are justified – declared righteous by God!

After a person is born again/saved, they are sanctified. Sanctification means being set apart for a particular purpose. Sanctification is walk with the Lord; it is a life-long process.

Scripture teaches that there are three aspects of salvation:

- Justification - at a moment in time we are saved; we are declared righteous. We are saved from the penalty of sin. Jesus took our place – He died our death – He paid for our sin! (Gen. 15:6 – Abraham believed at a moment in time and God accounted it to him as righteousness; II Cor. 5:21 – *He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin [to take on our sin] that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*)
- Sanctification – we then grow in the Lord; He matures us. We are being saved from the power of sin as we walk with the Lord. (Phil. 2:12-13 – *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling* (pursuit of obedience in the process of maturing in Christ) *for it is God Who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.* Eph. 2:8-10 READ)
- Glorification – when we see Jesus we will be saved from the very presence of sin. (Rom. 8:29; 13:11; I Pet. 1:3-5; I John 3:2)

And, as we continue to look at God's plan of redemption in the feasts, having already seen redemption/salvation through Passover which occurred on the 14th day of Nisan, we come to the Feast of Unleavened Bread which occurred on the 15th day of Nisan.

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) is used to produce fermentation. As leaven sours bread dough, tiny gas bubbles are produced which cause the dough to expand – to rise – to puff up. Leaven in Scripture speaks to corruption, fermentation, deterioration. It is more generally a symbol for sin in the Scripture. Unleavened bread means “sweet with no sourness” and speaks to our sinless, perfect Messiah.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred the day the children of Israel fled Egypt. After they killed the Passover lamb, applied the blood on the doorposts and lintels and ate the Passover meal – finding shelter and being spared the death of the firstborn - they left Egypt the next day – on the 15th of Nisan (Ex. 12:29-36). Egypt is a symbol of the world in Scripture. Going down to Egypt in Scripture represents not seeking God and relying on the strength of man (Isa. 30:1; Isa. 31:1).

FULFILLMENT: Burial of Jesus (Matt. 27:57). Unleavened bread means “sweet with no sourness” and speaks to our sinless, perfect Messiah. King David wrote in Psa. 16:10, in speaking of the Messiah - *For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

APPLICATION: 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.* The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks to our sanctification – our being separated from the world and separated to God as we walk with Him on our way to the ultimate Promised Land, eternal life with Him.

The next feast within the Passover week is the Feast of First Fruits. Jesus had been crucified and buried in the tomb.

FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

Lev. 23:9-14 - *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ “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. ¹¹ 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. . . .*

HISTORY: In Jewish culture the first fruits was the earliest harvest in Israel – the barley harvest. During this feast the barley sheaves were waved as an offering before the Lord. Jewish thought was that if God was faithful to bless us with the early harvest, He would surely bless us with the later harvest. The priest waved the sheaf of wheat on the day after the Sabbath of Passover week.

FULFILLMENT: What occurred the day after the Sabbath at Passover when Jesus was crucified? Jesus' resurrection! The fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits is Jesus' resurrection. I Cor. 15:20 says, *But now is Messiah risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.*

APPLICATION: Who are the “them” in I Cor. 15:20??? Believers in Jesus!

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Because Jesus rose – we who are believers in Him are guaranteed eternal life. The Feast of First Fruits is clearly the resurrection of Jesus and is the promise of our resurrection. Jesus' resurrection produces a great harvest – us – believers in Jesus. Just as He rose from the dead – we who are in Him – will rise from the dead. This feast speaks to the believer's glorification aspect of salvation – when we will see Him face-to-face!

FEAST OF SHAVUOT/PENTECOST

Shavuot – *weeks* in Hebrew

Pentecost – 50 in Greek

Lev. 23:15-21 - *And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶ Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves. . . .*

The Feast of Pentecost/Shavuot occurred 7 weeks following the Feast of First Fruits – or on the 50th day following the Feast of First Fruits (Jesus' resurrection).

Pentecost, which we know as the birth of the Church, when the Holy Spirit descended and indwelt those who put their faith in Jesus – happened on the Feast of Shavuot.

HISTORY: Jewish tradition teaches that the Feast of Shavuot commemorates God giving the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Ex. 32:28 tells us, because of the worshipping of the golden calf, “about 3,000” Jewish people died that day.

FULFILLMENT: Pentecost – the giving of the Holy Spirit; “about 3,000” were given eternal life (Acts 2:41).

APPLICATION: birth of the Church – Jew and Gentile – fellow heirs (Eph. 3:5-6 – in the OT it wasn't revealed *the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel*)

Between the spring feasts and the fall feasts:

HARVEST TIME

Lev. 23:22 - *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.*

Here we have a parenthesis. We have months between the spring feasts and the fall feasts which are the summer months. It's HARVEST TIME! In God's plan of redemption – we are in HARVEST TIME! The children of Israel were told not to clear the corners of the land at harvest time. By not clearing the corners they would provide for the poor and the sojourners – the Gentiles. This coincides with Gen. 12:3 – God would bless all the families of the earth through the Jewish people. The Jews have provided for the Gentiles through the Messiah Jesus.

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FALL FEASTS – JESUS' SECOND COMING – YET TO BE FULFILLED

The last three feasts for Israel all take place on the Jewish calendar in the 7th month of Tishri. Seven speaks to completion. The fall feasts speak of end times.

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Lev. 23:23-25

HISTORY: The trumpets are blown in Israel's history to gather an assembly. God is gathering and will continue to gather the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

FULFILLMENT: The Tribulation – the “time of Jacob's trouble” (Jer. 30:7; Jer. 32:37-41)

APPLICATION: Purging of Israel (Eze. 20:33-34; Eze. 22:17-22) and their repentance (Hosea 5:15)

YOM KIPPUR/DAY OF ATONEMENT

Lev. 23:26-32

HISTORY: Yearly atonement (Lev. 16)

FULFILLMENT: Jesus' Second Coming following Israel's repentance (Zech. 12:10ff).

APPLICATION: Israel's Restoration

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Lev. 23:33-43

HISTORY: God's desire to tabernacle with man (Ex. 25:8)

FULFILLMENT: Millennial Kingdom (Zech. 14:16-19); Rev. 21:1-3 – the tabernacle of God is with men.

APPLICATION: Rejoicing (Isa. 65:18-19)

QUESTIONS

How do the feasts point to Jesus?

How do the feasts apply to YOU?

What questions do YOU have re: how these feasts point to Jesus?

Can you use the message of the feasts to share the Gospel? How?

How does this impact YOUR life?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the companion notes and become more acquainted with the chart

Note your observations and questions and seek answers in the Bible

Share what you've learned with at least one person

Become more acquainted with the Feast of Passover and pray for opportunities to share the message of Passover with a non-believer

Read the handout for Week 11 when you receive it