

## Feasts/Festivals of the Nation of Israel

In Leviticus 23 God instituted seven annual feasts for the children of Israel. Two other feasts are instituted in the Bible – one in the OT and one founded between the testaments but referred to in the NT. The feast of Purim is established in the book of Esther (9:20-32) and commemorates when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination by Esther. The feast of Hanukkah was established between the testaments but was sanctioned by the New Testament where it is called the Feast of Dedication (also called the festival of lights) (John 10:22). Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians in 165 BC and the rededication of the defiled temple.

The seven festivals of Leviticus 23 are broken into two groups that correspond to the agricultural seasons of Israel. There are four spring festivals corresponding to the first rain and three fall festivals related to the latter rain. The seven feasts of Leviticus were:

1. Commemorative – looking back on what God had done for the nation of Israel.
  2. Instructive – Teaching much about God and his faithfulness, holiness, and mercy.
  3. Prophetic – Looking forward to the time of Messiah.
1. Passover (23:4-5) – Details of the Passover are given in Ex 11-12. This feast commemorates the 10<sup>th</sup> plague on Egypt when the Angel of Death passed over the people of Israel. This feast pointed to the death of the Messiah as the sacrificial Passover lamb.

<sup>7b</sup>For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 1 Cor 5:7b

<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

<sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Pet 1:18-19

2. Unleavened Bread (23:6-8) – The Feast of Unleavened Bread began the day after Passover. This feast commemorated God bringing Israel out of Egypt. Leaven signifies sin in the Scriptures (1 Cor 5:8). This feast pointed to the sinless sacrifice of the Messiah.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor 5:8

<sup>21</sup>He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:21

<sup>5</sup>You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 1 John 3:5

3. First Fruits (23:9-14) – This feast commemorated entrance into the Promised Land and God's provision in the harvest. The first products of the barley harvest were brought and offered to God on the morning after the Sabbath. This feast pointed to the resurrection of the Messiah. This feast occurred on the day after the Sabbath (i.e. Sunday, the day Jesus was resurrected).

<sup>20</sup>But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 1 Cor 15:20, 23

4. Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) (23:15-21) – Another “first fruits” festival of the wheat harvest. This feast occurred 50 days after the feast of Unleavened Bread and pictured the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ and birth of the Church where Jew and Gentile were united in one body.

<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:1-4

5. Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25) – Called Israel to respond during the seventh month. This feast pictures the regathering of Israel at the second coming of the Messiah.

<sup>31</sup>"And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Matt 24:31

6. Day of Atonement (23:26-32) – This feast commemorates the nation’s need for atonement and pointed to day of national cleansing for the nation of Israel at the Messiah’s second coming (Zech 12-13).

<sup>10</sup>"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. Zech 12:10

<sup>25</sup>For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; <sup>26</sup>and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." <sup>27</sup>"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." Rom 11:25-26

7. Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths or Feast of Ingathering) (23:33-44) – This feast commemorates Israel’s journey in the wilderness and pointed to the nation’s kingdom rest and reunion with the Messiah.

<sup>16</sup>Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>17</sup>And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup>If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>19</sup>This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. Zech 14:16-19

Spring Feasts				Inter- advent Period	Fall Feasts		
1	2	3	4		5	6	7
Passover	Unleavened Bread	First Fruits	Pentecost		Trumpets	Day of Atonement	Tabernacles
Fulfilled at Christ’s First Coming				Fulfilled at Christ’s Second Coming			