

## The Feasts of Leviticus 23

### Picture of Israel and Messiah in Prophecy

The feasts of Leviticus 23 can be viewed, at least, in two ways.

First, the feasts of Leviticus 23 are feasts with Israel. Thus, God's dealing with Israel has to always be in the forefront of our understanding when we typify these feasts and can be understood with a prophetic intent of Israel.

- 1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*
- 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.*
- 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.*
- 4 *These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.*

"The seven appointed times were given as a typical presentation of the commitments made to Israel in the Abrahamic Covenant and those which amplified it. As these can be fulfilled only by Israel, so the typology of the feasts can relate only to that nation."

Terry Hulbert, "The Eschatological Significance of Israel's Annual Feasts," 1965 Doctoral dissertation at DTS

"When God fulfilled the first four feasts He had provided everything necessary for Israel to enter into literal kingdom blessing--redemption, separation, resurrection, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Israel's rejection of these, however, made necessary a national change of heart before the Kingdom could be established. Foreknowing this, God included the Feasts of Trumpets and Day of Atonement in the annual cycle. Thus, the Feast of Trumpets predicted God's alerting of the nation for the impending event which would bring about repentance. The Feast of the Day of Atonement predicted, not the death of Christ which had already been typified in the Passover, but the new reaction of Israel to the Redeemer's death. This change will take place when the believing Remnant repents during the Tribulation period. The event which fulfills this sixth feast is identified as God's intervention to save Israel from destruction as Gentile armies attack Jerusalem."

Terry Hulbert, "The Eschatological Significance of Israel's Annual Feasts," 1965 Doctoral dissertation at DTS

Second, the feasts can be seen as a picture of Messiah.

Colossians 2:16-17 *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

Feasts, in the Hebrew, have the meaning of keeping an appointment.

**מועד** mo-ade' - properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; also a signal (as appointed beforehand)

#### 1. PASSOVER (Israel's Messiah provides redemption)

##### Leviticus 23:5

Exodus 12

- |    |            |   |
|----|------------|---|
| A. | Vs. 3-5    | "a - the - your" lamb   |
| B. | Vs. 2,3, 6 | "first month, 10 <sup>th</sup> day, 14 <sup>th</sup> day"   |
|    |            | Palm Sunday was 10 <sup>th</sup> of Nisan - First night of Passover was 14 <sup>th</sup> of Nisan |
| C. | Vs. 21     | "The lamb is the Passover"  |

**PROPHETIC:** it speaks of Israel's Messiah paying the penalty for the sins of the nation - Isaiah 53.

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of Jesus death as the Lamb of God, John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7

## 2. UNLEAVENED BREAD (Sanctification)

### Leviticus 23:6-8

Exodus 12:15-20

Unleavened bread and Passover are seen as one and the same in New Testament days

Luke 22:1                    *"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover."*

1 Corinthians 5:8        *"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."*

**PROPHETIC:** it speaks of separation. God required Israel to be a "holy nation," Exodus 13:1-9; 19:1-6.

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of the sanctification process in the life of a believer, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, Gal. 2:20

*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: 8 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.*

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

## 3. FIRSTFRUITS (Resurrection)

### Leviticus 23:9-14

**PROPHETIC:** it speaks of the promise of resurrection for the righteous of Israel and (ultimately) dwelling in the land as God's covenant people and enjoying its fruits, Joshua 5:1-12, Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of Jesus as the "down payment" for all resurrections to come - 1 Corinthians 15:19-23

## 4. PENTECOST (Outpouring of the Holy Spirit)

### Leviticus 23:15-22

Variety of Names:

Feast of Weeks -	Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10
Feast of Harvest -	Exodus 23:16
Day of the First Fruits -	Numbers 28:26

It is the only festival that does not have a fixed date.

The dating is from "the next day after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days" (Leviticus 23:16)

Different days suggested for the beginning of the count:

Sadducees -	understood the Sabbath to refer to the first Saturday of Passover; thus, the counting was to begin on the first Sunday always putting Pentecost on a Sunday.
Pharisees -	interpreted Sabbath not to mean Saturday but the first day of the rest (the first day of the Passover Festival). The counting would begin on the second day of the Passover Festival and Pentecost could fall on any day.

The Pharisees method became the generally accepted method and is used today among the Jewish people.

The Christian dating of Pentecost is the seventh Sunday after Easter.

The lack of a specific date for this festival is seen by Jewish authorities, as well as the counting from Passover, as a continuous link or flow of the first three festivals.

**JEWISH INTERPRETATION**

Liberation (from bondage)

unto

the Law

**CHRISTIAN APPLICATION**

Liberation (from bondage of sin)

unto

Law of God (Rom. 7; Eph. 2:8-10)

This festival's purpose was initially agricultural. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Shavuot took on an historical basis for its celebration. Based on Exodus 19:1, this festival became the celebration of the giving of the Law and the birth of the covenant nation.

**PROPHETIC:** Pentecost was the ratification of God's covenant with Israel and speaks of the promise that Israel will one day receive the Spirit of God and dwell in His kingdom.

Ezekiel 39:29

*Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.*

Joel 2:28-29

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."*

Acts 2:12-21

The main idea that Peter is teaching by quoting the Joel passage is that what is happening is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit by God. None of the other accompanying signs of the Joel passage happened at this time, only the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The context of Joel is the end of the Tribulation period for Israel. The Acts 2 occurrence is NOT the fulfillment of Joel 2 passage, but the answer to those questioning what was this all about, Acts 2:12-13.

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of Jew and Gentile being united together in Jesus (the church)

## 5. **TRUMPETS (Return of the Jews back to the land of Israel)**

### **Leviticus 23:23-25**

**PROPHETIC:** it speaks of Israel being re-gathered back to the land in preparation for judgment and receiving their Messiah. The Abrahamic covenant must be fulfilled before the final re-gathering of all Jews to the land.

The representation of the Feats of Trumpets is the blowing of trumpets for the gathering of the people back to the land as a nation where God will save them from their enemies.

In 2 Chronicles 7 the Temple was dedicated starting on the feast of Trumpets

*"And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people." 2 Chronicles 7:10*

In Ezra 3:6 upon the return from Babylon sacrifices were first offered on Feast of Trumpets.

*"From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid."*

In Nehemiah 8:2, 8-9 the reading of the word of God brought repentance and blessing.

*"And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month."*

*"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."*

*"And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law."*

In the following passages trumpets are blown to warn Israel of danger from their enemies and the need to return to the land to worship God.

Numbers 10:9

*"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."*

Isaiah 27:13

*"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem."*

Deuteronomy 30:1-2

- 1 *And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,*
- 2 *And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;*
- 3 *That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.*
- 4 *If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:*

The rapture is a prophetic event for the church, not Israel, and thus, not the prophetic picture of this feast.

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of the Lamb of God, Revelation 6, pouring out the judgments of Revelation to prepare Israel for their day of repentance and salvation, Revelation 5:9, Jeremiah 30:11.

*"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"*

*"For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."*

Messianically it could speak of the rapture, but not prophetically.

## 6. DAY OF ATONEMENT (Israel saved)

Leviticus 23:26-32

Leviticus 16 - This chapter gives additional details on how Yom Kippur was to be practiced.

It was a national day of forgiveness when the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies and offer the blood of a sacrificed lamb for the sins of the nation - Leviticus 16:20-22

There were two lambs that made up the ONE *sin offering*.

One lamb was offered as a blood offering - Leviticus 16:5, 7-9.

The other lamb was the scapegoat - Leviticus 16:10.

Scapegoat definition (Dictionary.com)

1. A person or group made to bear the blame for others or to suffer in their place.
2. Chiefly Biblical. a goat let loose in the wilderness on Yom Kippur after the high priest symbolically laid the sins of the people on its head. Lev. 16:8,10,26.

Leviticus 17 - the principle of a blood sacrifice of Leviticus 16 is established for ever.

**PROPHETIC:** it speaks of the salvation of the nation of Israel.

Romans 11:25-26; Isaiah 66:7-9

**MESSIANIC:** it speaks of Jesus being accepted by the Jewish people (Israel), Zechariah 12:10.

## 7. TABERNACLES (Jesus reigning in Jerusalem over Israel)

### Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43

Also known as:

- 1) Feast of Ingathering - 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."*

- 2) The Feast - 1 Kings 8:2

*"And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at **the feast** in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month."*

Leviticus 23:40      *"...and **ye shall rejoice** before the LORD your God seven days." [emphasis added]*

The Temple Institute (based in Jerusalem) comments on the command to rejoice:

"It is most apropos that the Festival of Sukkot is referred to as 'the time of our joy.'"

*"What is the Source of this Great Joy at Sukkot?"*

"We can find no better illustration for this than the unique festival of *Sukkot*. For the booths in which Israel live during these days symbolize her rock-steady, unshakable faith in the One G-d of Israel. Just in the fall, as the days are getting shorter and colder, most people are coming indoors. It is no longer pleasurable to sit outside as it was in the summer. But this is just when "every citizen in Israel" moves from the comforts and security of home, and takes up residence in temporary dwellings, thanking G-d for the harvest in this season and recalling His constant, enveloping presence. This knowledge is true joy! Unconcerned with sunshine or warm weather, these temporary dwellings do not appear to be "secure" in the physical sense... they may shake a little in the wind; their roofs are but thatches open to the stars. But yet Israel sits within, unmoved and unaffected by what may be mistakenly perceived as a hostile world - for like the booth, this world is temporary, and we are but temporary dwellers within her. But just as the walls of this hut surround us, so we are surrounded by the constant, protective presence of G-d Himself. The winds may shake and the elements may confront us, but the shadow of the Sukkah is the shadow of the Divine Presence."

**PROPHETIC:** It speaks of Israel dwelling in peace in their land because of Jesus "tabernacling" with Israel on earth, Ezekiel 37:25-28.

- 25 *And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.*
- 26 *Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*
- 27 *My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*
- 28 *And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.*

**MESSIANIC:** It speaks of Jesus being in Jerusalem reigning over Israel and the world.

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

Moses was faithful - *"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 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, in the Hebrew, has the meaning of keeping an appointment. The Jewish people have "an appointment" to meet the Lord which is illustrated for us in the Feasts in Leviticus 23.