

March 16-17 2013

Leviticus 23

“Sacrifices, Priests, and Feasts”

Part 3 - The Feasts

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Our final study in the book of Leviticus focuses on the Feasts, which are basically what we would recognize as holidays. There are two primary purposes for the feasts: to rest and to commemorate or celebrate an event. In [Leviticus 23](#), some 1,450 years before Christ, God introduced seven feasts, and just as the sacrifices and the priesthood pointed to Jesus, so do the feasts. This book is all about finding Christ in the maze of rituals and regulations, and if we look carefully, we'll find Jesus throughout the book of Leviticus.

One of the most important things we can learn about the feasts is that they are both historic and prophetic in nature. In other words, each feast commemorates a specific event in the past, while at the same time, each feast anticipates a specific event in the future. In the feasts, God called the Jewish people to remember different events in their past, while pointing to distant events in the future. All of these future events center on the 1st and 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ.

#1 Passover And #2 Unleavened Bread - [Leviticus 23:5-8](#)

1. Passover and Unleavened Bread make up an eight-day celebration in March/April on the Jewish religious calendar.
2. The first day of the feast is Passover, and the remaining seven make up the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - a. Passover commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from their slavery in Egypt.

- b. When God passed over the homes of the Hebrews, they were protected from the 10th Plague (death of the firstborn), and the reason God passed over their homes was because he had given them instructions to mark their homes with the blood of a lamb across the doorposts and lintels.
 - c. God honored the blood, so death did not come to those homes.
3. Unleavened Bread (bread without yeast) commemorated the fact that they had to leave their life of slavery in haste, so they didn't have time to add yeast and let their bread rise.
- a. In the Bible, leaven or yeast, is a picture of sin.
 - b. Today, Jews use the Haggadah, which provides special prayers and instructions concerning how to prepare an elaborate meal called a Seder,¹ which commemorates the entire exodus experience.
4. The Crucifixion of Jesus
- a. The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread point to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who was crucified on Passover.
 - b. At the same time that Passover lambs were being slaughtered on the Temple Mount, Jesus was on the cross, just outside the city, being slain for the sins of the world.
 - c. There are a number of New Testament references that demonstrate that it was understood that Jesus was the perfect, spotless Lamb.
 - i. Paul - [1 Corinthians 5:7b](#) - *"For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."*
 - ii. Peter - [1 Peter 1:19](#) - *"... Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*
 - iii. John the Baptist - [John 1:29](#) - *"... the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
 - iv. John the apostle - [Revelation 5:6](#) - *"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne..."*

#3 Firstfruits - [Leviticus 23:9-14](#)

5. The Feast of Firstfruits was a one-day feast celebrated in March/April, on the day after the Sabbath following Passover.
6. The Resurrection of Jesus
- a. Since Jesus died on Passover, and Firstfruits is the Sunday after Passover, then Jesus rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits!
 - b. Jesus presented himself as the first of many to follow, in that just as barley stalks represented a great harvest to follow, so too Jesus, in his

¹ <http://www.jewfaq.org/seder.htm>

resurrected body, represented a great harvest of souls who would also one day receive a resurrected body.

- c. [1 Corinthians 15:20-22](#) - *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ² For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”*

#4 Weeks (Pentecost) - [Leviticus 23:15-21](#)

7. Pentecost ³ (mid-May honored God with the harvest) commemorates the giving of the Law, when Moses received the 10 Commandments on Mt. Sinai.
8. Pentecost comes 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits.
9. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- 50 days after Christ rose from the dead, to the exact day, on the Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon all of the believers who were gathered in the Upper Room!
 - [Acts 2:1-4](#) - *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*
 - Following this work of the Spirit, Peter preached to the crowds who had gather there, and *“about 3,000”* were saved! ⁴
 - There is a marked contrast between this event and the giving of the Law, when about 3,000 died! ⁵

Summer Gap

10. There is a summer gap between the first four feasts and the last three, which happen in the fall.
11. The remaining three feasts point to the future and the 2nd Coming of Christ.

² *“Asleep”* is a euphemism for death.

³ The Greek word is *pentekostos*, which means, fiftieth.

⁴ [Acts 2:41](#) - *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

⁵ [Exodus 32:28](#) - *“The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.”*

#5 Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) - [Leviticus 23:23-25](#)

12. Rosh Hashanah commemorates the Jewish New Year, which was announced by the blowing of the shofar (trumpet).⁶
13. The Rapture of the Church
 - a. The Rapture is the next major prophetic event on God's timetable.
 - b. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) - *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*
 - c. [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) - *"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*

#6 The Day Of Atonement (Yom Kippur) - [Leviticus 23:26-32](#)

14. Yom Kippur is the one and only day of the year when the high priest would enter behind the curtain into the Holy of Holies, and behold the glory of the Lord as he made atonement for the people.
15. The day Christ returns will be the day when all Believers will behold the glory of the Lord!
16. The 2nd Coming of Jesus
 - a. [Revelation 1:7](#) - *"Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen."*
 - b. [Hebrews 9:27-28](#) - *"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."*

#7 Tabernacles - [Leviticus 23:33-43](#)

17. The Jews lived in booths (make-shift shelters) during his seven-day feast, which reminded them of their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, during which they lived in tents for 40 years.

⁶ A shofar is traditionally a ram's horn.

18. When Jesus came the first time, he “tabernacled” among us,^{7 8} and when he comes the second time, he will “tabernacle” among us as he establishes his reign on earth for 1,000 years, according to [Revelation 20:1-6](#).⁹
19. The Millennial Reign of Jesus
 - a. [Revelation 21:3](#) - *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’”*
 - b. [Zechariah 14:16](#) tells us that in the Millennial Kingdom, the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated.¹⁰

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Leviticus 23:1, 4-5, 9-11, 15-16, 23-27, 33-35, and 44](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s illustration to help the people in your group understand how an event can hold a dual meaning.
 - a. Suppose you were in prison, and you were released on April 8, 2010. You would always celebrate April 8th as a historic day. And if two years later you went to church on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012, and gave your life to Jesus, you would celebrate being set free from the chains of sin every April 8th! So if you were to stand in between those two events, you could say that April 8th had both historic and prophetic significance.
4. Provide an overview of each of the Feasts.
 - a. Read and discuss the associated Scriptures.
 - b. Focus your discussion on the historical and prophetic nature of each feast.
5. How will this teaching on Passover and Unleavened Bread change your understanding of Communion services?

⁷ [John 1:14a](#) - *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*

⁸ “This is a reference to the tabernacle in the wilderness and its link to glory. The Greek word translated ‘lived here on earth’ pictures living in a tent. Jesus, in becoming a man, tented on earth with the rest of mankind.” Shared from Logos Bible Software <http://www.logos.com>.
<http://biblia.com/books/tynbibcomm/Jn1.14-18>.

⁹ Following Christ’s 1,000 Reign there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

¹⁰ *“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.”*

6. If someone in your group has attended a Seder, allow opportunity for them to share the details of their experience.
 - a. Use this link to read about the order, elements, and meaning of the Seder. <http://www.jewfaq.org/seder.htm>
7. Allow people to share their experiences concerning the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
8. Read and discuss [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) and [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#).
 - a. Use this link to read #8 in the online version of the church statement of faith. http://cornerstonechapel.net/?page_id=149
9. Read and discuss [Revelation 1:7](#) and [Hebrews 9:27-28](#), focusing on the 2nd Coming of Christ.
10. Do you know a Jewish person who has come to faith in Christ?
 - a. Did the Old Testament Scriptures play an important role?
11. How can you use what you've learned about the Feasts to share the Good News of Jesus with Orthodox or culturally Jewish people?
12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: be mindful of the historic and prophetic nature of the Feasts; be thankful that the Scriptures are true concerning who Jesus is and why he came to be the fulfillment of God's promised Messiah; be eternally-minded in the way they live so they will be ready for the Rapture of the Church; be willing to share what they've learned in this teaching with Jewish friends, neighbors, and acquaintances.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).