

OT Feasts Overview: Part 1 of 8; Leviticus 23:1-4

How Are the OT Feasts Connected to Jesus?

Second Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at 11 AM & 7 PM

Wednesday Services during Lent at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: How did OT believers remain focused on the:

- First coming of the Savior? Through their *spirit and truth* observance of the SPRING feasts – *Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost!*
- Second coming of the Savior? Through their *spirit and truth* observance of the FALL feasts – *Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles!*

Today is an overview of the seven feasts; then, *during this year*, I plan to write a sermon on each of the seven feasts.

As NT believers, our roots are in the OT – the OT Scriptures, which include the OT feasts. So our study of the feasts will grow ♦our understanding of the OT Scriptures and ♦our faith in Jesus as the promised Savior!

1. **The Feasts in General:** Let's draw a parallel between the **OT Feasts** and the **NT Church Year**: As the Feasts formed *the yearly structure for OT believers*, so the Church Year forms *the yearly structure for NT believers!*
 - a. ^{NIV} **Leviticus 23:1** **The LORD said to Moses,**
² **“Speak to the Israelites and say to them:**
‘These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.’” // Note that the feasts

were appointed *by the LORD*; He called all who believed in Him to *distinguish His appointed times* “*from the ordinary course of daily life...*” (Kreztmann, OT I:225)

- b. ³ **“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.”** // So there were *some* appointed feasts, but *every week* included a Sabbath – a day when “*the Jews desisted from work...for the purpose of worship...*” (Ibid.) The regular Sabbaths took place wherever the people lived, *but the festivals took place at the tabernacle, then at the temple.*
- c. ⁴ **“These are the LORD’s appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times...”** // Leviticus chapter 23 goes on to explain the details of the seven feasts; they are grouped in 3, then 1, then 3.
- d. Different calendars: Our calendar is based on the sun; every four years we add one day. The Hebrew calendar is based on the moon; seven times *during every 19-year-period*, they add one month. We also call our months by *different names* – as you will see.

2. **The Spring Feasts**: There are four of them: *Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost.*
- a. The first three spring feasts: They were three separate feasts, *but they occurred together.* Why don’t NT believers celebrate these feasts? The feasts pointed ahead to Jesus, but now that He has come *we focus on Him!* “*...do not let*

anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These [*the feasts, etc.*] are a shadow of the things that were to come; **the reality, however, is found in Christ.**" (Col. 2:16-17 NIV)

Passover

Nisan 14

We were united to Jesus' death in baptism (Rom. 6:3). *He died for us!*

Unleavened Bread

Nisan 15-21

We were united to Jesus' burial in baptism (Rom. 6:4). *We were freed from sin!*

Firstfruits

Nisan 16

We were united to Jesus' resurrection in baptism (Rom. 6:4). *We now live for Him!*

- i. Passover began *at sundown* on **Nisan 14** (*first month of the Hebrew calendar, 14th day*); it was a one-day feast, which ♦looked back to **God's rescue from *physical death*** thru *the slaying of the Passover lambs* and ♦pointed ahead to **God's rescue from *spiritual death*** thru *Jesus*—the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world!
- ii. Unleavened Bread began *at sundown* on **Nisan 15**; it was a seven-day feast, which ♦took place the day after Passover, ♦looked back to **God's rescue from *physical slavery*** and ♦pointed ahead to **God's rescue from *spiritual slavery*** through *Jesus*!
- iii. Firstfruits began *at sundown* on **Nisan 16**; it was also a one-day feast, which ♦fell on *the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, ♦looked back to **God's *temporal provision*** through the barley harvest, and ♦pointed ahead to **God's *eternal provision*** through *Jesus*! The Bible calls *Jesus* "**the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**" (1Co 15:20) Since He was raised, *we also will be raised!*

- b. The fourth spring feast: It is *Pentecost*; it was also called the *Feast of Weeks*! The *first three*

*feasts are very close together (during 8 days), while Pentecost is fifty days after Firstfruits; it began at sundown on **Sivan 6** (the third month of the Hebrew calendar). (In the Church Year, Easter Sunday is followed – fifty days later – by Pentecost Sunday.) Pentecost looked back to God’s giving of the **Law**, which brought **death**—since no one could keep it and pointed ahead to the gift of the **Spirit**, who brings **life**—as He unites people to Jesus!*

3. **The Fall Feasts**: In the OT era and even today *they are pointing ahead to Jesus’ promised return!* There are three of them:
- a. Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah; *it began at sundown on Tishri 1, the seventh month*): It is the *civil* Jewish New Year (Nisan, above, is the *ecclesiastical* New Year) when the shofar, **the ram’s horn** was blown; **“the trumpet call of God”** (1 Thess. 4:16) *will announce Jesus’ return!*
 - b. Atonement (Yom Kippur; *it began at sundown on Tishri 10*): It was the holiest day of the year, a day to receive God’s forgiveness **or** face His judgment – *as when Jesus returns!*
 - c. Tabernacles or Booths (Sukkot; *it began at sundown on Tishri 15 and continued through Tishri 22*): It celebrated the fall harvest and pointed ahead to the final harvest – *when all believers will share in the joy of God’s kingdom forevermore!*

Conclusion: In the weeks ahead, we will expand on the seven OT feasts. *Please join us!* And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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