

HOLY CELEBRATION

The Significance of God's Feasts

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THE LORD'S FEASTS

Throughout the Bible God's presence is shown in various ways as he communicates to his people. He has stated that He has given us His beloved Son to prove His love for all men. God wants us to have an understanding of, and a reminder, of his presence among us.

*These are the feasts of the **LORD**, even holy convocations, which you will proclaim in it's seasons.*

Leviticus 23:4

*The origin of the biblical feasts are clear in scripture and God given. **Holy** convocations (special assemblies) which were intended by Him to be forever. These feasts and their consecration is important: God wants us to re-dedicate ourselves to him. Similarly, our souls are defiled by sin and apathy, and such a consecration becomes a renewed blessing for us.*

God the Father desires that we have a picture which represents Him and reminds us of his presence. Over the years 'modernism' has tainted the Church and has had influence on its power to faithfully adhere to the bible.

Moses was instructed by God on how to be honoured by His people. He called for seven feasts throughout the year, with the final one known as the Feast of Tabernacles. (Leviticus 23 v.33-43.)

(33) And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

(34) Speak to the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month will be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.

(35) On the first day will be a holy convocation: you shall not do any servile work.

(36) Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation to you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.

(37) These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:

(38) Beside the sabbaths of the Lord, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord.

(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.

(40) And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.

(41) And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

(42) Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

(43) That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

We cannot forget or deny that these feasts were special occasions for God's people to remember the goodness of God. By remembering these wonderful works of God, it is a celebration and appreciation of who he is.

These were festivals given by the Father, and were commanded to be an eternal practice prescribed for the Israelites at the time. So, why is it important that Christians today, especially Gentile believers, (non-Jews) honor God by keeping these feasts? Yet the church tends to reject these special events and has replaced them with celebrations which have become traditions not necessarily prescribed by God. Three examples come to mind -- the observance of Christmas (the date celebrated), Easter and also Halloween.

*In a number of Old Testament texts the holy days were ordained "forever" So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. **Exodus 12:14.***

This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own

country or a stranger who dwells among you. **Leviticus 16:29.**

Should the Hebrew servant choose to remain with his master “forever” meant as long as both he and his master were alive. Should either one of them die, the factors would cease to exist. Therefore, “forever” meant as long as both parties continued to exist.

The command by God was to keep the holy days “forever in your generations” still applies. Even the Apostles and the New Testament church observed them for many years after the death of Christ, which meant the holy days were not terminated at the death of Christ. Testament church is ample proof these should be kept today. The early Christians knew they were not done away.

Those who argue against God’s holy days tell us that while the Bible commands us to observe the feasts forever, it says the same thing about

ritualistic laws. Laws which have served their purpose and are no longer in effect, claiming the holy days should be placed in the same category.

It should be noted that many of the commands given to the Levites (Priests) in the book of Leviticus are not required for today's sacrifices-- washings, rites, blowing the shofar at set times, etc. These were a part of the sacrificial system. The Old Covenant could not encompass the fullness of the spiritual promises found in the New Covenant.

*Had the Old been sufficient, there would not have been a need for the New. Christ did not appear on the world scene until 1,500 years after the establishment of the Old Covenant. Those Jews who insisted on maintaining the Old Covenant failed to hear their own prophets who told them, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Jeremiah 31:31-33.***

When prophets of old foretold the New Covenant, they envisioned its expansion into the spiritual realm. Israel in the Old Testament could not keep the letter of the law. The fault was not with the covenant or with God; the fault was with the people of that time. The New Covenant was given to correct that fault. God now makes His Holy Spirit available so that those who enter into the New Covenant relationship with Him are able to keep the spiritual intent of the law. The “Israel of God” can now keep the Law of God in their hearts and minds.

*Christ our Saviour was a Jew who kept the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, the Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.” (**Matthew 26:18**)*

*What did the Apostle Paul state in the Bible? He told the Christians to follow him as he followed Christ. That means he was instructing them to do as he did and keep the holy days. “ But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.” (**1 Corinthians 16:8**). As we follow Christ, we also willingly keep the Feasts that He and Paul so faithfully observed.*

God is a God of purpose and there is a specific reason why He assigns certain Holy days. The spiritual significance of these holy days were given during the period of the Old Covenant; the significance of such days comes to light in the New Covenant. It was in the New Covenant that we find the birth and crucifixion of Christ. The spiritual meaning of the holy days is understood by the sacrifice of Christ and our need to accept that sacrifice. We must be willing to repent, turn from sin in our lives, receive the power of the Holy Spirit if we want to be overcomers. With Christ's imminent return, the resurrection of the dead in Him, the establishment of God's Kingdom for ever, the purpose of the holy days is to make Christians aware of what God is currently doing on the earth and in the future. These holy convocations

assure us that He is a God of love and mercy, and that He has established the perfect plan, now and forever, for those who believe His Word.

(1) Passover

Jesus Lamb of God crucified at Calvary.

This feast the Israelites were told to kill a perfect blameless lamb on the 14th day of Abib (April) then place its blood on the doorpost of their houses. Christ the Passover Lamb was slain at Calvary for the sins of the world. Jesus, the LAMB OF GOD that takes away the sins of the world. (Exodus 12.)

(2) Unleavened Bread

Jesus' body placed in the tomb as Bread of Life.

“And on the fifteenth day of the same month the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread.” (Leviticus 23:6’)

Jesus pure unadulterated Word of God, which is our Unleavened Bread. We commemorate and partake of His body we call it the “Communion” or the Lord’s Supper”. Unleavened Bread also speaks of sanctification. Jesus was set apart. His body would not decay in the grave.

(3) First Fruits

Jesus Resurrection from the dead.

*"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (**Leviticus 23:9.**)*

*On the third day, Jesus rose victoriously from the grave. Jesus was as if there were grain in the field. Jesus was the first corn of grain of God's wheat that had been raised from the dead. He was the **FIRST FRUITS** of them that slept after Adam.*

*(**1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-23**) " But now Christ rose from the dead, [and] became the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."*

*(**JOHN 12:24**) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dies, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."*

(4) Pentecost

Also known as Feast Of Weeks.

Holy Spirit outpouring.

(50 days from First Fruits).

"And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD." (LEVITICUS 23:15.)

*Feast of Weeks symbolizes Jesus giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit which inaugurated the New Covenant Church Age. FEAST OF WEEKS is a type of the day of **"PENTECOST"**, when the HOLY Spirit came down to indwell the lives of true believers.*

*From the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was **50 DAYS***

(5) Trumpets The possible return of Christ for his body the church. 1st Day of 7th month.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall you have a

sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, and a Holy Convocation.”(**LEVITICUS 23:24.**)

Feast of Trumpets is the first of the fall feasts. The Jews call this feast “Rosh Hashanah,” which literally means “Head of the Year,” and it is observed as the start of the civil year (in contrast with the religious year which starts with Passover) on the Jewish calendar.

*The Great Trumpet for the bride has to do with the last trumpet spoken in (**1 Corinthians 15:51-52**) and (**1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**), both referring to Jesus.*

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive

[and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD." (LEVITICUS 23:33)

(6) Day of Atonement

Christ forgives sins.

10th Day of 7th Month.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work on that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.” (LEVITICUS 23:26.)

A "holy convocation" was to draw the focus of the people to the altar of divine mercy. The Lord called the people of Israel to gather in His presence and give their undivided attention to Him.

It was to be a time of prayer and fasting. The Day of Atonement was a "sabbath of rest" (Leviticus 23:32), and the Israelites were forbidden to do any work period. If they disobeyed, they were liable to capital punishment!

(LEVITICUS (LEVITICUS 23:33) (LEVITICUS 23:33)

23:30). *Now in the New Covenant, in Christ we can set aside a time to pray and fast.*

(7) Tabernacles

Coming of the Lord.

15th Day of 7th month

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.” (LEVITICUS 23: 33-34.)

The Day when the Son of God will tabernacle Himself among men, and wipe away every tear.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning

hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (ISAIAH 2:2-4.)

*“And it shall come to pass,[tha] every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”
(ZECHARIAH 14:16.)*

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” (ZECHARIAH 14:2.)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God.” (REVELATION 21:1-3.)

Closing Thoughts

Remember the term "feasts" in Hebrew literally means "appointed times." Times in which God has planned and timed a sequence of each of these seven feasts to reveal himself. These feasts, also known as a "holy convocation", are intended to be a time of meeting between God and man for 'holy purposes.' Since these seven feasts of the Lord are 'appointed times' 'for holy purposes', they carry with them great sacredness and solemnity.

We can conclude the following:

(1) The feasts were appointed or set by God; they were sacred or holy assemblies

(2) The feasts were a time when the people came together corporately to worship and celebrate.

(3) They are religious holidays which celebrate a holy time filled with reflecting on our faith in God.

(4) Only the Day of Atonement was known as a time to pray and fast, but to also culminate in worship, joy and festivity.

A preview to what our eternal future holds as stated in the book of Revelation:

(1) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

(2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

(3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.” (LEVITICUS 23: 33-34.)

The Day when the Son of God will tabernacle Himself among men, and wipe away every tear.

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Bible reference King James Version

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