

## **The Feasts of Israel**

### **Lesson One: The Feasts: God's Prophetic Time Clock**

Men the worlds over observe holidays. The eternal God of heaven instituted only seven. These seven holidays are discussed throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. However, in only one place, the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Leviticus is all seven holidays listed in chronological sequence. These seven holidays are called, the Feasts of the Lord.

**Lev 23:4 - These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.**

The word feasts means, "appointed times." The word holy convocation means "rehearsal." In other words, the feasts of the Lords were appointed times of worship for Israel that would serve as "dress rehearsals" in God's prophetic calendar. Things that happen to Israel in the natural usually parallel things that happen spiritually in the church. The church did not replace Israel in God's plan for man. We are part of Spiritual Israel that is that part which has accepted Jesus as Yeshua, the Messiah. National Israel however is still in the forefront of God's prophecy timetable. Israel will never be out of this plan. Replacement theology is rooted in an Anti-Semitic spirit that pervades most of the Western Church. It's a spirit has been in existence for a long time going back to the days of the Pharaohs, Hamans and Herods of the Bible and the Hitlers of modern time.

These seven feasts were carried out with great sacredness and solemnity. Let's take a look at a number of important points concerning these feasts:

These seven feasts of the Lord were given to the HEBREW nation. The Jewish people are God's covenant people. These seven feasts relate to Israel's spring and fall agricultural seasons. When the feasts were instituted, Israel was largely agricultural and that characteristic of the feasts remain even today. (Jesus spoke often in the New Testament of "harvest.")

The timing of the these seven feasts is based on the Jewish lunar (moon) calendar of about 354 day-years. Periodically (seven times every 19 years), the modern Jewish calendar literally has a 13<sup>th</sup> month to make up for its shorter year. It is for this reason that these holidays do not fall on the same day on the Gregorian calendar (the calendar commonly used today) each year.

Fundamentally, these seven feasts represent and typify the sequence, timing, and significance of the major events of the Lord's redemptive career. They commence at Calvary where Jesus voluntarily gave Himself for the sins of the world (Passover), and climax at the establishment of the messianic Kingdom at the Messiah's second coming (Tabernacles) See chart. There is no need to manipulate the feast days to conform to specific events in the Messiah's life.

All men, both Jew and Gentile, have been extended an invitation to “meet” with God through Messiah Jesus who has fulfilled each of these feasts through His life, death, burial and resurrection. His Second Coming and Kingly reign from Jerusalem will completely fulfill the feasts.

The participation of Gentiles in the blessings associated with the feasts God appointed for Israel is not by mistake. The Church and Israel are distinct entities with distinct promises. However, every blessing we enjoy as Christians is a DIRECT result of the Covenants God made with Abraham, David and through Jesus Christ – the New Covenant. These are covenants God made with Israel, not the Gentiles.

John 4:22 - Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

Gen 22:18 - And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Jer 31:33 - 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.

\*\*\*These seven feasts depict the entire redemptive career of the Messiah.\*\*\*

## The Number Seven

The number seven is the biblical number of completion. After creating the world, God rested on the seventh day. He did not rest as a consequence of being tired – omnipotence doesn't get tired. Rather, God rested in the sense of completion and satisfaction. What God created was good and satisfying. Nothing else was needed. On the SEVENTH day of the week, the children of Israel were to observe a Sabbath rest, patterned after God's creation rest. They were to rest from their labors:

Exod 16:23 - And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Exod 16:30 - So the people rested on the seventh day.

The nation of Israel was commanded to refrain from farming the ground every seventh year – to allow the soil to rest.

Lev 25:4 - But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

Seven sevens of years were to be counted (49 years), and then the next year (50<sup>th</sup>) was to be the Jubilee year in which all debts were forgiven and the slaves set free.

Lev 25:8-12 - And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.

Seventy sevens of years were determined upon the Jewish people during which time God would bring to perfection and completion His redemptive purposes.

Dan 9:24-27 - Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The book of Revelation records the consummation of this age. It uses the number seven more than 50 times. Significantly, the book revolves around:

- Seven seals
- Seven trumpets
- Seven bowls

### **The Prophetic Aspect of the Feasts**

Four of the seven holidays occur in the spring of the year. The fulfillment of these feasts are written in eternity. In other words, they represent events in the life of Messiah that have already taken place – Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. The last three feasts occur in the fall of the year and represent events future and yet unfulfilled in Bible prophecy:

- SPRING FEASTS – Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks
- FALL FEASTS – Trumpets, Yom Kippur (Atonement), and Tabernacles

The First four deal with events surrounding His first coming. The Second four deal with events surrounding His Second Coming.

Each subsequent lesson will be a brief summary on each feast. A more detailed lesson will follow that will go into greater detail of each feast.