

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Leviticus 23:1-44

Foreshadowing God's plan of the ages from the past eternity to the future eternity

by

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CHAPTER THREE

“THESE ARE THE FEASTS OF THE LORD” (Leviticus 23 :4)

Before we begin the study of each feast in detail, let us read the whole of the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, noting certain significant facts.

First let us note that they were to be observed annually, at certain stated times. Israel was thus continually reminded, year after year, century after century, of the lessons God was teaching her concerning her coming Messiah.

Again, these “**holy convocations**” began with the Sabbath and closed with the Sabbath. This is an important truth for us to grasp.

- The Sabbath before the feasts of the Lord points back to God's eternal rest which He had before sin entered the world to break that rest.
- The Sabbath following the feasts points on to God's eternal rest which He will share with the redeemed throughout the endless ages.

And between these two Sabbaths there came the feasts of the Lord—a picture of God's purpose for man throughout the ages, in redeeming him and leading him on, even unto his eternal rest in heaven. By faith we “**enter into**” that rest even in this life; but in its full and complete enjoyment “**there remaineth . . . a rest** (or 'keeping of a sabbath') **to the people of God**” (Hebrews 4:9).

As we examine the record further, we note that there were seven of these feasts; and seven is the number that speaks of completion. We find also that some of them were to be observed in one day each, whereas the others covered a period of seven days each.

- The one-day feasts represented definite acts of God, accomplished in a day;
- The seven-day feasts represented His dealings with His people over a period of time.

They pointed on to the outcome of these one-day acts.

Again we turn to the inspired record and read:

“These are the feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:4).

Let us outline them before we take each one up separately to see what distinct message it holds for us:

1. *The Feast of the Passover*, which finds its fulfillment in the death of **“Christ our passover”** (I Corinthians 5:7), was to be observed **“in the fourteenth day of the first month at even”** (Leviticus 23:5).

2. *The Feast of Unleavened Bread* immediately followed the Passover, and was closely linked with it. It began **“on the fifteenth day of the same month,”** and was to be observed for seven days (Leviticus 23 :6).

This finds its fulfillment, as we shall see, in the holy walk of the believer as he feeds upon Christ, **“the bread of life.”**

3. *The Feast of the Firstfruits*, observed **“on the morrow after the sabbath”** (Leviticus 23:11); that is, three days after the Passover, on the first day of the week, is a remarkable type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, on the first day of the week, **“when the sabbath was fully past,”** three days after He offered Himself as the Paschal Lamb on Calvary's cross. He is, indeed, **“the firstfruits of them that slept”** (I Corinthians 15:20).

4. *The Feast of Pentecost*, so called because it came fifty days after the feast of the firstfruits (**“Pentecost”** is a Greek word meaning *“fiftieth”*), finds its fulfillment in the descent of the Holy Spirit **“when the day of Pentecost was fully come”** (Acts 2:1), exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ.

Between the feasts of Pentecost and trumpets there was a long interval of several months, during which time Israel was to glean in the harvest field (Leviticus 23:22)—a striking type of this present Church Age, from Pentecost to the translation of the Church, while the harvest of souls is being gathered into the garner of the Lord. Then in the seventh month the three remaining feasts were observed; the fulfillment of which is yet future.

5. *The Feast of Trumpets*, **“a memorial of blowing of trumpets”** (Leviticus 23:24), gathered the people together to worship the Lord God. Before Christ returns in glory to be worshipped as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Israel will have been re-gathered to her own land of Palestine; and then the feast of trumpets will find its fulfillment.

6. *The Day of Atonement* was a time of mourning, and points on to the time when Israel shall **“look upon”** Him **“whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son”** (Zechariah 12:10). The details of the ritualism of the Day of Atonement are highly significant; we shall go into them later.

7. *The Feast of Tabernacles*, observed for seven days (Leviticus 23:24), was a time of rejoicing, and points on to the millennial reign of Christ, the Son of David, over re-gathered and redeemed Israel and over the whole world.

“These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons,” God said to Moses as He **“called unto”** him, and **“spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation”** many centuries ago at the foot of Mount Sinai.

“And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:44), even as God had commanded him to do.

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