

Jesus in the Biblical Feasts

| Sunday 6pm | Session One

Jew and Gentile

Parts of the Law became optional to Gentiles (but not forced)

1. Circumcision

A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. (Acts 16:1-2)

Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (Acts 16:3)

Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. (Galatians 2:3)

2. Dietary Laws

The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. (Romans 14:3)

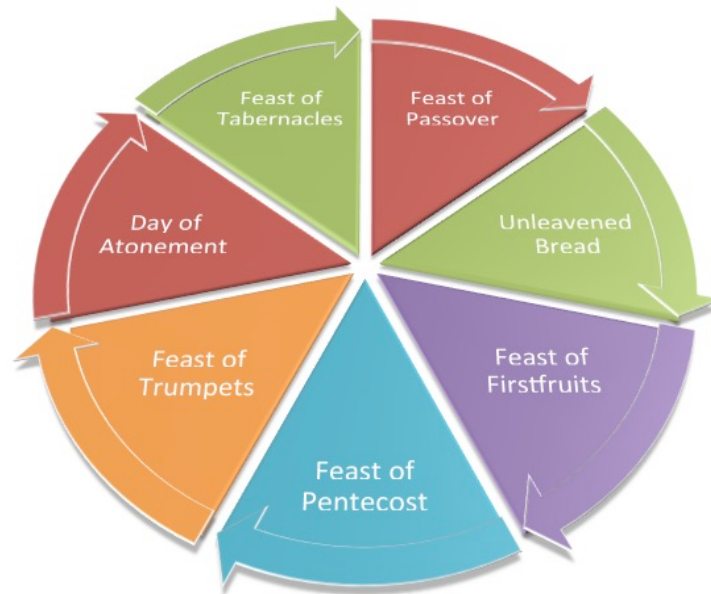
3. Observance of Sabbath day, Holidays

Therefore 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. (Colossians 2:16)

Yet was the Jew called to keep their Jewish identity? YES!!!!

When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. (Acts 28:17)

These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts. (Leviticus 23:1)



Windows into the Kingdom

Jesus was raised in Egypt and then in Nazareth and his family was accustomed to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. We know from scripture that Jesus had four brothers and two or more sisters.

Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" (Mark 6:3)

During the feasts, the whole family would walk from Nazareth to Jerusalem, which is approximately 70 miles. We could estimate the walk would take about 3 days or 24 hours of straight walking without breaks! Imagine traveling this distance with an entire family! Scripture mentions one account of losing the boy Jesus on the way home from the Feast of Passover!

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. (Luke 2:41-44)

Joseph and Mary must have missed the parenting seminar! They walked an entire day without their 12-year-old son without turning back! They did not even bother to make sure everyone was in the car before they left! Imagine walking back to Jerusalem with the entire family and the inconvenience that must have followed. You thought your vacation was stressed!

The Scripture say this was the custom of Jesus' family- to go up to the Feast ever year. This custom required a great sacrifice of time, energy and money. I believe the Yahweh richly rewarded His people for coming to His parties and they did not go up experiencing a have-to-mentality but a get-to-mentality instead!

This account reminds me how many of us have lost Jesus during our celebrations. If Joseph and Mary lost Him, how much more your and I! We must embrace what it means to have a Yahweh party and not leave Jesus behind! God commanded the Israelites to celebrate often! They were commanded to party in Jerusalem three times each year.

Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed. (Deuteronomy 16:16)

If you do the math, including travel time, plus the length of the feast, you are looking at over five weeks of celebration with just three feasts. God is very serious about taking time to celebrate! And the five weeks does not include the weekly Sabbath or the other feast that they were to celebrate. Imagine asking your boss to take off that much vacation time!

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. **“When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom”** (Luke 2:41-42). The redemptive acts of God are to be celebrated weekly through the Sabbath, monthly through the New Moon festivals and annually through the feasts. The feasts commemorate the mighty works of God in the past, His awesome power in the present, and our soon coming deliverance in the future. In the Jewish culture Jesus was raised, there was a repetitive cycle of events that continued throughout one's lifetime.

Every Week → 7-day cycle → SABBATH

Every Month → 28-day cycle → NEW MOON CELEBRATION

Every Year → 364-day cycle → SEVEN FESTIVALS

The calendar that the Jews followed in Biblical times was not based on the earth's rotation around the sun, but instead based on the moon. This would be called a "lunar" calendar- it is also where we get the word "lunatic!" The Jews would look to the moon to determine the time of the month and hence when they would celebrate or make plans. Even the wayward woman told the young man she was seducing:

"My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey, he took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon"
(Proverbs 7:19-20).

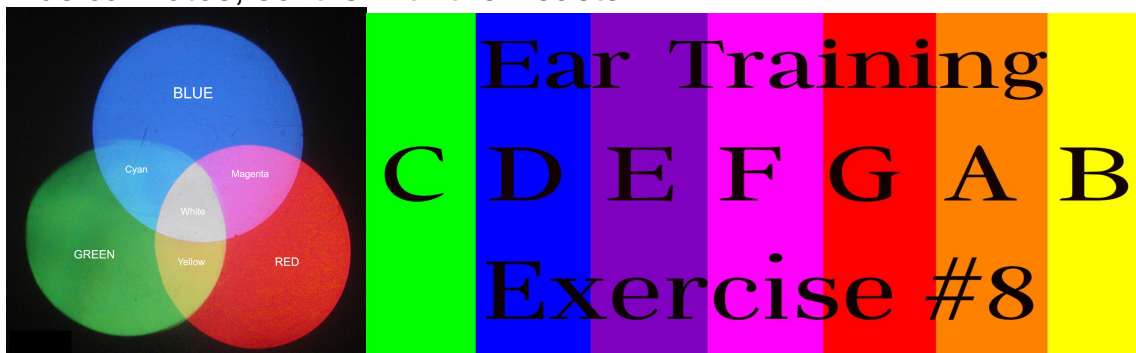
The Feasts the Israelites celebrated were a window in which we could look through to see God's purpose and plan for mankind. Every Great Move and Act of God that birthed the Church happened on the day of a correlating feast? If this was the case in the past shouldn't we expect the future acts of God to occur on the remaining feast days?

The Three Major Feast are Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles

God invites us into these yearly cycles of celebration in Leviticus 23.

So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed feasts of the LORD (Leviticus 23:44)

Just as there are three major colors in the rainbow and these three are the manifest in seven primary colors, so it is with the Feasts of the LORD. Just as there is three dominant notes in a scale but the scale has seven musical notes, so it is with the Feasts.



As will be seen in detail, the Feasts are prophetic declarations of coming future events. These days are the practice runs until we do the real event.

The Hebrew word for appointed times is *mo'ed*. These are appointed times for God to meet with His people. Would you ignore or be late for such a meeting? God calls these feasts convocations which in the Hebrew means *rehearsals*. Every time we celebrate the feast it is like a dress rehearsal in preparation for the real thing.

The 23rd chapter of Leviticus sets forth an outline of Feasts of the LORD.

- 1) The Feast of Passover (Lev. 23:4-5)**
- 2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8)**
- 3) The Feast of the First fruits (Lev. 23:9-14)**
- 4) The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) (Lev. 23:15-22)**
- 5) The Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25)**
- 6) The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32)**
- 7) The Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-44)**

The Feast of Passover took place in the first month; the Feast of Pentecost took place in the third month; and the Feast of Tabernacles found fulfillment in the 7th month.

The root is our Jewish heritage the branches are the church. Christianity did not spring up out of nowhere. It was expected that a Messiah would come, and the nations of Israel would become a light to the Gentiles. The Feasts the Israelites celebrated were a window in which we could look through to see God's purposes and plan for mankind.

Christianity is as connected to Judaism as a branch is to the roots of the tree. Christians have been trying to live out of the second half of the Bible and are not experiencing the fullness of life in God. The foundation of Christianity is our Jewish heritage, and the fruit of our Jewish heritage will be the result in the kingdom of God being released on earth. Christianity did not spring up out of nowhere and it will not survive and thrive until it is planted firmly in its Jewish roots. Since Paul's warning in the book of Romans.

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While it is true that God does not reserve the communication of His grace to specific days, it is also true that God uses time to reveal Himself. He

invites us to make ourselves free and available for Him at certain times so that we can experience more freely and fully the awareness of His presence, peace and grace in our lives.

A church calendar is more than an annual cycle of recurring festivals. It provides an opportunity to experience afresh what God has done in the past, is doing in the present and will do in the future. It enables us to take the time that God has created and offer it back to God through Jesus Christ, who has redeemed it.

The redemptive acts of God are commemorated in the Bible weekly through the Sabbath and annually through the feasts. The latter fulfilled three basic functions that are still relevant for Christians today.

- 1. The feast commemorated the past mighty works of God.**
- 2. The anticipate the future divine deliverance.**
- 3. They motivated the people to live in the present obediently before a holy God.**

There is a prevailing skepticism today about God. Many think only that God is dead or at least indifferent to what is happening in the world. Skepticism can be an outgrowth of forgetfulness.

