

A Summary of the Seven Feasts
The Seven Feasts Fulfilled in Christ
Leviticus 23

There are seven feasts broken down into three major groupings:

- The Feast of Passover – Leviticus 23:4-5
- I. The Feast of Unleavened Bread – Leviticus 23:6-8
 The Feast of the Sheaf of Firstfruits – Leviticus 23:9-14
- II. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) – Leviticus 23:15-22
- The Feast of Trumpets – Leviticus 23:23-25
- III. The Feast Day of Atonement – Leviticus 23:26-32
 The Feast of the Tabernacles – Leviticus 23:33-44

Christ fulfilled historically and personally the Feasts. The external form is done away with (II Chronicles 4:16; Hebrews 8:13; Romans 2:20), but there are spiritual and eternal truths hidden the previous external forms.

I. A definition of the word feast

English – “Festival” – “a religious festival of rejoicing as opposed to a fast”

Hebrew – “Chagag” – “to dance,” indicating occasions of joy and gladness. “To move in a circle,” to march in a sacred procession, to observe a festival

Greek – “Heorte” – of uncertain affinity “a festival.” It is translated “Feast, holyday,” “an appointed day” or “an assembly,” or “a fixed time or season,” (Isaiah 33:20).

II. Israel’s duty to observe the feasts

The Lord commanded Israel to keep these set appointments three times in the year (Exodus 23:14; 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16, 17). Three times in the year all were to appear before the Lord and keep His appointments. Three is the number of the eternal Godhead. It is also the number of a complete or perfect testimony and witness

III. A description of the feasts

A. An Appointed Nation

1. It was to a redeemed people, redeemed from the slavery of Egypt and separated unto the Lord, that the instructions concerning the Feasts were given. Israel was a people near unto Him (Exodus 19:4; Psalm 148:14)
2. These Feasts were not given to any Gentile nation. The only way any Gentile could participate in the Festivals was to become a proselyte to the faith of Israel in the one true God. He could be initiated into the Israel of God by forsaking idolatry and immorality and by being brought into covenant relationship with Jehovah through the rite of circumcision
3. Hence God enjoined the rite of circumcision upon Israelite or stranger before they could partake of the Paschal Lamb (Exodus 12:43-50)
 - a. The Lord’s instruction was that all the males were to keep the Feasts (Deut. 16:16)

- b. When the males came to appear before the Lord and keep the Feast they were not to appear before Him empty handed. All were to give as they were able. These freewill offerings were in turn distributed to the Levite, the stranger, the widow, the fatherless, the poor and the needy.
- c. The Lord gave the nation a great promise of preservation if all the males would keep the set Feasts. He promised that He would cast out enemy nations before them and enlarge their borders. He also promised that no enemy would desire their land when they went up to keep these Feasts in the set times of the year. Therefore all the males had assurance that their inheritances and their families would be looked after by the Lord while they attended the Festivals.

B. The Appointed Times and Seasons

1. The Sun, Moon and Stars were given for signs and seasons, for days and years. The sun and the moon actually governed the Festival seasons (Genesis 1:14-19; Psalm 104:19; Jeremiah 33:20; Psalm 81:3; Deuteronomy 16:6).
2. The former and latter rains were given to Israel in their proper "times and seasons" (Jeremiah 5:24; Ezekiel 34:26; Leviticus 26:4; Deuteronomy 11:14; 28:12; Acts 14:17).
3. The Feasts of the Lord were to be kept in their "times and seasons" also (Leviticus 23:4). Passover was to be kept in its appointed season (Exodus 13:10; Numbers 9:2, 3, 7, 13). This is applicable to each of the Feast days.
4. The sacrifices were to be offered to the Lord in due season also (Numbers 28:2).
5. Before Jesus' ascension, He told the disciples that it was not for them to know "the times and the seasons" which the Father had put in His own power (Acts 1:7).
6. Paul later on, however, reminded the Thessalonian believers that they had no need to be told again of these "times and seasons" (I Thessalonians 5:1).
7. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).
8. Passover was to be kept in the **first** month of the sacred year. The Feast of Pentecost was to be kept in the **third** month of the year, and Tabernacles was to be kept in the **seventh** month of this same year. Passover and Pentecost were seasons of rain and harvest; corn harvest. Tabernacles also was a season of rain and harvest; fruit harvest.

C. The Appointed Place

1. Israel was commanded to utterly destroy all places where the idolatrous Canaanites served their gods (Deuteronomy 12:2, 3).
2. The Lord said: "But unto **the place** which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put **His name** there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek and thither shalt thou come..." (Deut. 12:5).
3. And again: "Then there shall be **a place** which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there..." (Deut. 12:11).
4. And finally it says in Deut. 16:16, "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of the Weeks, and the Feast of the Tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty." **The place** where **His name** was placed, put, set dwelt and recorded was **the Tabernacle** of Moses, the sanctuary of the Lord. The whole purpose of building the Tabernacle was that God might have a place where He could dwell in His Presence and Glory; a place where He could record his name. The same is true of the Temple built by Solomon (Read Exod. 25:8; II Sam. 6:2; I Kings 8: 12, 21, 29, 35, 43, 44).

D. The Appointed Sacrifices and Oblations

1. Specific offerings were to be presented at the Feast of Passover in the first month (Numbers 28:11-25).
2. In the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) specific offerings were also presented to the Lord (Numbers 28:26-31).
3. The Feast of Tabernacles especially, had sacrifices and offerings presented to the Lord. The Feast Day of Trumpets (Numbers 29: 1-6). The Feast Day of Atonement (Numbers 29:7-11). The Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 29:12-40). The significance of these additional sacrifices which were offered besides the regular “daily sacrifice” will be considered under their respective Feast. The prominent truth that the Lord endeavored to teach Israel was that of blood atonement.” For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11).

E. The Sabbath Days and Feast Days

It is worthy to note that the Lord, in giving the outline of the Feast, does so in connection with the Sabbath days. The instructions concerning the Feasts are introduced with Sabbath day instruction. Leviticus 23 clearly shows this relationship between the Sabbath days and the Feast days, with certain differences, which we define here.

1. **The Sabbath Days** – Leviticus 23:3, 11, 15, 16, 38. The Israelites worked six days but the seventh day was the Sabbath of rest. No work was to be done on this day. They were to rest in their dwellings. The Sabbath days were holy convocations, or holy assemblies. Here the people were summoned to gather and worship the Lord when near His sanctuary. The Sabbath was given as the sign and seal of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 31:12-18).
2. **The Feast Days** – Leviticus 23:1-2, 4. The set Feasts of appointed seasons of the Lord were also known as holy convocations, or Sabbath days. No work was to be done on these days either. All were to gather together unto the Lord at His Tabernacle and keep the Divine Festivals. The Feasts days as extra Sabbaths are called “holy convocations” as seen in verses 2, 4, 8, 21, 24, 27, 35, 36, 37. The Feast days as extra Sabbaths are called “Sabbaths” as seen in verses 24, 32, 39. The difference between the Sabbath and the Feasts days may be seen in the following:

The Sabbath Days

Kept weekly ---
Rest in their dwellings ---
with their families

The Feast Days

Kept annually
Gathering of all males
at the appointed place

Or, later, attend the Synagogue services or the Sanctuary of the Lord

3. **No servile work to be done.** This is especially repeated in Leviticus 23.
 - a. Vs. 3. **No work** was to be done on the weekly Sabbaths
 - b. Vs. 7. **No servile work** was to be done on the first day of Unleavened Bread
 - c. Vs. 8. **No servile work** was to be done on the seventh day of Unleavened Bread
 - d. Vs. 21. **No servile work** was to be done on the Day of Pentecost
 - e. Vs. 25. **No servile work** was to be done on the Day of Trumpets

- f. Vs. 28, 30-31. **No manner of work** was to be done on the Day of Atonement, or else the person would be cut off from God's people
- g. Vs. 35. **No servile work** was to be done on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles
- h. Vs. 36. **No servile work** was to be done on the eighth day of Tabernacles either

The spiritual truth which the Lord sought to teach Israel was that which pertained to rest. The physical day or days of rest pointed to the spiritual day or days of rest. "Service work" spoke of the labors of man, man's efforts to provide for himself what was needed and what needed to be done for his own sustenance. Sabbath **rest** spoke of man ceasing from his own works and entering into and enjoying the work of God.

4. Sabbath Day Offerings – Numbers 28:9-10. Another thought the Lord brings to the attention of the Israelites relative to the Sabbath days as well as the Festival Sabbaths is that of the sacrificial offerings. The Sabbatical offerings were two lambs for a burnt offering, with a meal offering of two-tenths deal of flour with oil, and also its drink offering of outpoured wine.

5. Feasts of the Lord or Feasts of the Jews? When the Lord gave the revelation of the Feasts of Moses and Israel they were originally the Feasts of the Lord. "Concerning the Feasts of the Lord...even these are My Feasts" (Lev. 23:2). "These are the Feast of the Lord..." (Lev. 23:4, 44). But because of backsliding and apostasy, the prophets lamented the fact that the Feasts were no longer the Feasts of Jehovah. While keeping the letter of the Feasts they missed the spirit of the Feasts. The prophet Isaiah cried, "...the new moons and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed Feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them (Isaiah 1:13-14, 10-16 and Lamentations 2:6).

The very things that God ordained, commanded and blessed now become an abomination to Him once His people lapse into external and hypocritical observances of them (Matthew 23).

The times of Christ prove most fully the point. While the Jews were keeping the *letter* of the Law, going through the external, the formal, the ritual, they missed the *spirit* of the Law, the internal, spiritual, and eternal. It is ironic that John records the fact that, while the religious leaders were crying for the unjust crucifixion of Jesus, they would not go into "the judgment hall, lest they be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover" (John 18:28).