

Jesus Seen In The Feasts Of The O.T.

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With all of the Bible studying that we do, there is one very plain teaching of God that is ignored by most, taught by few, and yet may have the most significant impact on your understanding of the Good News of Messiah, of God's plan, and of salvation, and of about any subject you can ever learn in Church.

That teaching is God's plan for mankind that is revealed right in the Scriptures, just waiting for us to find and understand! I am speaking of how God has outlined this plan and given it to the very people who He chose to bring the Scriptures to us today. That teaching which God passed down to us through the Jewish people is His prophetic calendar.

Most people think of a calendar only as the way in which we conveniently mark the passing of the days, synchronizing it periodically so that it coordinates with the seasons. Obviously people need a calendar, and so God created one that would not only help people keep track of the seasons, would not only be a way of remembering when to celebrate events in the eternal relationship between God and His children, but would also be a way to pass down and foreshadow this plan for mankind.

There are 2 different words used in Leviticus to describe the feasts. They are:
Mo'ed – which means “an appointment, a fixed time or season, an “Assembly”. Used in Leviticus 23:2

Chag – meaning festival, derived from the Hebrew word chagag, which means to “move in a circle, to march in a sacred procession, to celebrate and dance”. Used in Leviticus 23:6

Thus we see that God's feasts are appointments with mankind that God has set, and that we should keep (or at least study) because He has set these times for a purpose. Also, they are to be times of joy, as God's message to man is revealed to us: His grace, power, love, redemption, and provision are all shown in the feasts, and give us cause to rejoice.

Another word that is used in Leviticus, starting in 23:2 is translated into English as “convocation”, but in Hebrew is “miqra”, which literally means “rehearsal”. Thus we also see that the feasts, as we celebrate them, are rehearsals for future events relating to our redemption.

How Christ Is Seen In The Feasts (Summary)

Passover speaks of the substitutionary death of the Lamb of God. Christ died on the day of Passover. Unleavened Bread speaks of the holy walk of the believer (1 Cor. 5:6–8). Firstfruits speaks of Christ's resurrection as the firstfruit of the resurrection of all believers (1 Cor. 15:20–23). Christ rose on the day of the Firstfruits. Pentecost speaks of the descent of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension. Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles speak of events associated with the second advent of Christ. This may be why these three are separated by a long gap from the first four in Israel's annual cycle.

THE NEW YEAR

In studying God's prophetic calendar, it would make sense to start at the beginning. But there are at least two "beginnings." The first was given by God during the Exodus from Egypt, and is written about in Exodus 12:1-3

God said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household." This Scripture is speaking of the month of Nisan (at that time called "Aviv"), in which we find Pesach (Passover). God gave this month as the beginning of the year for the Israelites because they had been "redeemed" or "saved" or "reborn" as a people, brought out from slavery in Egypt. This time of the year was to mark a celebration of Pesach for all eternity. It is the New Year for the Nation of Israel. Notice that there are 2 "New Years"; Civil (Rosh Hashanah) and Religious (Passover), just as there are 2 "beginnings" for people. You are "BORN", and have earthly (CIVIL) life, but you must also be "BORN AGAIN" through the Lamb of God (PASSOVER) to have SPIRITUAL life also.

ROSH HASHANAH - THE NEW YEAR ALSO?

Most of us have also heard of Rosh Hashanah, ("Yom Teruah" in the Bible) which is commonly known as the "Jewish New Year." Rosh HaShanah literally means the "head of the year." But it is not the beginning of the "new year" according to God. Since the exodus, that has been the month in which God told us to celebrate Pesach. It is believed that this date, the 1st day of Tishri, designates the creation of the world. Therefore it is not only the anniversary of the beginning of the world and the beginning of our relationship with God, but it represents the beginning of the bringing about of His Plan — His plan for bringing to completion the perfecting of His relationship with us. For this reason the modern "Jewish" calendar starts with 1 Tishri, as does God's "prophetic" calendar.

It is interesting and useful to look at the rabbinic interpretations of these feasts and festivals, and it is a curious fact that Rosh Hashanah is conspicuously lacking in the same sort of imagery and symbolism that the other holy days are. We are told that Rosh Hashanah is the "Day of the Blowing of the Shofar" (Yom Teruah). A shofar is the rams-horn trumpet that God commanded be blown on this day. Rosh Hashanah is the start of the ten days of introspection leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. But even more interesting than Rosh Hashanah on the 1st of Tishri and Yom Kippur on the 10th of Tishri is another festival, Sukkot ("Feast of Tabernacles") that occurs on the 15th of Tishri. The cycle of God's prophetic calendar actually comes together at the Feast of Tabernacles, when, we believe, Messiah Y'Shua came to "tabernacle among us" and was born in the flesh in Beit Lekhem (Bethlehem) about 2,000 years ago. So to start our study we will, for now, pass by these three occurrences in the month of Tishri, and start just after Y'Shua's birth. As in all calendars, the end of one era is the beginning of the next, and this month of Tishri is both the beginning and the end of God's prophetic calendar.

Let us then continue from that point on through the prophetic year.

PESACH/Feast of Unleavened Bread

The next redemption festival is Pesach ("Passover"), whose theme is redemption from slavery. Passover starts "between the lights" at the end of the 13th of Nisan and the beginning of the 14th of Nisan. The "Feast of Unleavened Bread" begins the evening at the start of the 15th. Both have become known collectively as Passover. Again, as prophecy it has more than one focus and purpose. In celebrating Pesach we celebrate and remember and thank God for redeeming His people from slavery in Egypt. But for us now, in the last days, Pesach represents the redemption that is available to us through God — redemption from slavery to sin. That is why on Passover God has made us focus on removing from our homes and from our lives yeast, or leaven, which represents sin. But did the Jewish people prior to Y'Shua put this together, and understand its prophetic significance? Yes! There

always has been in Jewish tradition a dual reason for eating the unleavened bread on Passover. One was because when the children of Israel had to leave Egypt in haste, there was not time for the dough that they had made to rise, to leaven, so they ended up eating flat bread. But in the first letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, in chapter 5 verses 6-8 it is written: "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know the [old] saying, "It takes only a little Hametz to leaven a whole batch of dough?" Get rid of the old Hametz, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because in reality you are unleavened. For our Pesach Lamb, the Messiah has been sacrificed. So let us celebrate the [Passover] seder, not with leftover hametz, the hametz of wickedness and evil, but with the matzah [unleavened bread] of purity and truth."

Passover points to redemption from sin. But even more important than that, it foreshadows the way in which God was going to allow us to have complete and eternal redemption from sin! The Passover Lamb! Tell me, what sense would it have made to anyone for John the Baptizer to proclaim of Y'Shua, "Look, the Lamb of Elohim, who takes away the sin of the world!" if the lamb didn't already represent the Messiah? And what sense would it have made to Y'Shua's disciples for Him to show them the symbolism of His body and blood? Redemption from assimilation both voluntary and forced — redemption from Sin — and the way to salvation.

The first day of the week, following the Sabbath of Passover week, is First Firstfruits, and is symbolic of redemption and salvation, making it highly important that Jesus was resurrected on this day. This is due to the historic events associated with this particular date, which are:

Noah's Ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4).

Israel crosses the Red Sea (Exodus 3:18, 5:3, 5:14).

Israel eats the firstfruits of the Promised Land (Joshua 5:10-12).

Haman is defeated (Esther 3:1-6).

Passover (Pesach, Heb.)

Ex. 12:1–28, 43–49; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1–8

The evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan (Abib), the first month of the year (March/April).

(1) To commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

(2) To remind the children of Israel that God "passed over their houses, i.e., spared the firstborn of the Israelites (Ex. 12:27)

(1) Christ is our Passover (cf. John 1:29; 19:36; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:18).

(2) The Passover is the foundation for the Lord's Supper (cf. Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–25; Luke 22:1–20).

(3) The Passover foreshadows the marriage supper of the Lamb (cf. Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16–18).

Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matzah, Heb.)

Ex. 12:15-20; 13:3–10; Lev. 23:6–8; Num. 28:17–25; Deut. 16:3–8

It began on the fifteenth day of Nisan (Abib) and continued for one week (March/April).

To commemorate the hardships of Israel's hurried flight from Egypt (Ex 12:39). The absence of leaven symbolized complete consecration and devotion to God.

(1) Unleavened bread is a type of Christ (cf. John 6:30–59; 1 Cor. 11:24).

(2) Unleavened bread is a type of the true church (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

Day of Firstfruits (Bikkurim, Heb.).

Lev. 23:9–14

On the day after the Sabbath of Passover (March/April).

To dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the barley harvest.

(1) Firstfruits is a type of the bodily resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20–23).

(2) Firstfruits is a guarantee of the bodily resurrection of all believers (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20–23; 1Thess. 4:13–18).

(3) Firstfruits is a type of the consecration of the church.

SHAVUOT

The next festival in the prophetic calendar is Shavuot or "Pentecost." It is called Pentecost because it is celebrated on the fiftieth day counting from "Early Firstfruits" (Bikkurim), which is the day after Sabbath during Passover. Bikkurim represents the day when Y'Shua ascended to the right hand of the Father in Heaven. Y'Shua's resurrection is celebrated as part of the Pesach/Feast of Unleavened Bread. The historical significance of Shavuot, or "Feast of Weeks," besides being a day of celebration and thanking God for the early harvest, is that it is believed that the Torah, God's perfect standard for His children, the first five books of the Bible, was given then on Mount Sinai. Of course this makes sense because it is also the day on which the Holy Spirit, was given to the believers in Jerusalem.

Prophetically it represents now. It represents the time of the combined Jewish/Gentile Church, empowered by the Spirit. This time will culminate in separation of the Godly REMNANT from the worldly FALSE CHURCH. During this time of culmination, a number of Jews around the world will come to recognize Y'Shua as the Messiah of Israel. Also during this time the rest of the Body of Messiah will recognize the Jewish roots of their faith. It is the time of Revival in which "The TRUE Church" will begin to be pulled back to the righteousness of God.

Lev. 23:15–22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9–12

The day after the seventh Sabbath after the Day of Firstfruits (May/June).

To dedicate and consecrate firstfruits of the wheat harvest.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

The two loaves, representative of the Jew and Gentile, contained leaven because sin is found within the church.

YOM TERUAH (ROSH HASHANAH)

And now we find ourselves back at the beginning - The day of the blowing of the ram's horn.

It is written in Rev 10: 7: "But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." This, then, is finally the purpose and the reason behind the "Feast of Trumpets." This is why there is not a more complete, a more symbolic meaning traditionally given. This is indeed why it is not written in the Scriptures that Y'Shua celebrated this day. The prophetic completion of this day will come when the Messiah comes back for His children. And, indeed, it will be the start of the final "Days of Awe" as the Rabbis call it – the ten days leading up to the Day of Atonement. This is the period when all of those who would stand before the Judgment Throne and have their lives opened as a book would be pondering their lives, remembering all the times they purposely broke God's Law, forgot about God and lived a worldly, assimilated, and sinful life.

The following are the names associated with the festival of Rosh Hashanah from Jewish and Rabbinical writings:

- Teshuvah (repentance)
- Rosh Hashanah (head of the year, birthday of the world)
- Yom Teruah (Day of the awakening blast, feast of trumpets)
- Yom HaDin (Day of Judgment)
- Ha Melech (Coronation of the Messiah)
- Yom Ha Zikaron (Day of Remembrance, or Memorial)
- Time of Jacobs Trouble (also, birthpangs of the Messiah)
- The opening of the gates
- Kiddushin/Nesu'in (the wedding ceremony)
- Natzal (the resurrection of the dead)
- Shofar (the last trumpet)
- Yom Hakeseh (the hidden day)

Lev. 23:23–25; Num. 10:10; 29:1–6

The first day of the seventh month (Tishri), the sabbatical month (September/October).

To usher in and consecrate the seventh month as the sabbatical month.

In the N.T. the blowing of the trumpet is associated with the return of our Lord (cf. Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement on the 10th of Tishri then represents the judgment. Too late to seek atonement. Too late to change, to repent, to turn back to God and to live a more godly lifestyle. The world as we know it will have ended and a new era will have begun on Rosh Hashanah — the "Head of the Year" — the blowing of the final trumpet call. Eternal life for believers would have started. And only one festival of God remains.

Lev. 16; 23:26–32; Num. 29:7–11

The tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri-September/October).

To make annual atonement for the sins of the priests and the people, and for the tabernacle (temple).

The Day of Atonement finds its ultimate fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ (cf. Heb 9). It represents the redeeming work of Christ more adequately than any other O.T. type.

SUKKOT

Sukkot, the "Feast of Tabernacles" — commemorates when Y'shua came to earth the first time to redeem us from our sins, when He came to earth as the suffering servant. In its final celebration it will signify when Messiah comes as the Lion of Judah - coming to reign over the earth in the Millennium. It is quite evident from Scripture that Jesus was born on Sukkot, rather than in December (when we celebrate Christmas). Thus John is quite right in his Gospel when he says, "The Word became flesh and DWELT (literally, TABERNACLED) among us."

Names associated with Sukkot:

- The Season of our Joy
- The Festival of Ingathering
- The feast of the Nations
- The Festival of Dedication
- The Festival of Lights

Lev. 23:33–43; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 16:13–17

The fifteenth through twenty-first of the seventh month (Tishri), with an eighth day added as a climax to all the feasts (September/October).

(1) To commemorate God's deliverance and protection during the wilderness wanderings (23:43).

(2) To rejoice in the completion of all the harvest (23:29).

The Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the peace and prosperity of the millennial reign of Christ (Zech. 14:16).

So you see - it is all there! It is all shown in the cycle we call the "Jewish Festivals." But I want to close by showing you what God's opinion is of whether they are only "Jewish Festivals."

God tells us about the festivals in a few places, but mainly in Leviticus chapter 23. It is written starting in verse 1:

"God said to Moses, "Speak to the Yisraeli and say to them: "These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of God, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies."