

# Rapture Prequels

## THE JEWISH FEASTS

It's almost January 1st. Whether you are old school and are using a day planner or keep yourself organized electronically, the calendar begins anew.

God gave Israel a calendar to follow. With hindsight from reading the New Testament we see it was a prophetic calendar.

It was tied to the seasons and the history of the nation but it also anticipated Israel's future. The salvation provided by Jesus Christ, the founding of the church, and the future of God's dealings with the Jews are all in His calendar for them.

The Jewish feasts are found in Leviticus twenty-three. Though called feasts they have nothing to do with eating. For example: On the Day of Atonement the Jews fasted. The word means *appointed time*.

The feasts are also called "convocations," but not because they always met together. The word means *proclamation*. God announced certain appointed times for the nation to observe.

We'll look briefly at each of the feasts.

Leviticus 23:4 'These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

Leviticus 23:5 On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover.

The innocent lamb died in place of the firstborn and the Jews were delivered. The lamb prefigured Jesus Who came as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus provides deliverance for all who believe.

Leviticus 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

Leviticus 23:7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

Leviticus 23:8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.' "

For seven days after the Passover the Jews ate only unleavened bread and they cleansed all the yeast from their homes. Since leaven often represents sin, this feast prefigures the eliminating of the "old life" as we become new creations in Christ. Notice that the blood comes first. You can't clean up your life to get saved. You get saved and God gives you a clean heart.

Leviticus 23:9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

Leviticus 23:10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

Leviticus 23:11 He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Leviticus 23:12 And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord.

Leviticus 23:13 Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.

Leviticus 23:14 You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The day after the sabbath that followed Passover, which would be a Sunday, is when Firstfruits was celebrated. It was a harvest celebration.

The New Testament teaches us that it prefigured the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the first day of the week, on Sunday, as the token of the greater harvest of souls to be raised after Him.

Leviticus 23:15 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

Leviticus 23:16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.

Leviticus 23:17 You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord.

Leviticus 23:18 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Leviticus 23:19 Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering.

Leviticus 23:20 The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.

Leviticus 23:21 And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Pentecost was also called the Feast of Weeks because it was celebrated seven weeks after Firstfruits. The word "Pentecost" means *fiftieth*. Since it was held seven weeks after Firstfruits it, too, fell on a Sunday each year.

In Acts chapter two this feast has its fulfillment as the church was born. The two loaves represent Jews and Gentiles being brought into one body, the church. There is leaven in these loaves because there is sin until the Lord completes His work in us.

That brings us to the final three feasts. They were all celebrated in the seventh calendar month, roughly our September.

Seven is an important number on God's calendar.

- There are seven feasts - three in the seventh month.
- The sabbath is the seventh day.
- Pentecost is fifty days after Firstfruits - the first day after seven sevens.
- Both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days.

The Feast of Trumpets was the first of the September feasts.

Leviticus 23:23 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

Leviticus 23:24 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

Leviticus 23:25 You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.' "

It was the first day of the seventh month and ushered in the new civil year. It's also called Rosh Hashanah, meaning *the head of the year*.

Unlike our New Year's celebrations this was a spiritual time for prayer and the confession of sin.

Trumpets immediately make us think of the sound of the trumpet at the resurrection and rapture of the church. It's the "last trump" of First Corinthians fifteen.

Here are a few other correlations:

1. The Feast of Trumpets is known by the Jews as the Wedding of the Messiah, and the Church is the Bride of Christ, and the rapture is when the Church is caught up to heaven to be wed with Christ.
2. The Feast of Trumpets happens on the "new moon," which is twenty-nine and one-half days after the last one. That means it might occur on the 29th or 30th day, nobody knows for sure. "Of that day or hour no man knows" is an expression referring to this feast, and thus, the rapture.
3. "Of that day or hour no man knows, but my Father only" is an expression used by a groom when asked when his wedding will be. He says this because it is his father that will tell him when his preparations on the bridal chamber are completed and it is time. Again, the wedding pictures the rapture.
4. The "Open Door" of the rapture in Matthew 25, and the Revelation 3, & 4:1 is a symbol of the Feast of Trumpets. In Ezekiel 46:1 we read, "Thus says the Lord GOD: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall be shut on the six working days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened."
5. We are told that the new moon and the Feasts of the Lord are a shadow of things to come in Colossians 2:16&17. Since the Feast of Trumpets is the only Feast of the Lord that falls on a new moon, we should take particular note.
6. There are seven days of awe in between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. These picture the seven years of tribulation. Atonement pictures Satan being defeated and cast away at the end of tribulation. If you add the two day Trumpets feast, and the day of

atonement, the seven days of awe, you get "ten days of tribulation" which might be referred to in the Revelation 2:10.

As indicated, the Day of Atonement prefigures the Tribulation.

Then the final feast, Tabernacles, pictures the Millennial kingdom when Jesus returns and the Jews are saved.

The Jews added two extra rituals to the Feast of Tabernacles:

1. The first was the pouring out of water from the pool of Siloam to commemorate God's provision of water in the wilderness.
2. The second was the placing of four lighted candles to recall the pillar of fire that led Israel by night in her wilderness wanderings.

The Lord Jesus related both these traditions to Himself.

John 7:37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

John 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

John 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Every year the adult males of Israel were required to attend Passover and Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Tabernacles. In them they could see, with spiritual sight, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, and the return of Jesus.

In the overall calendar we, with hindsight, see so much more!