

Israel's Annual Feasts

INTRODUCTION

- A. ***This morning I want to speak about Israel's Annual Feasts in the Bible:*** I believe this is an important topic that has great significance for us today. Tomorrow is the beginning of the feast of Tabernacles, also known as Sukkot. Three of the feasts are major feasts that required all the males of Israel to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14-19). (Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, & Tabernacles)

II. ALL OF THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

- A. ***The Passover (Ex. 12:1-14).*** This is when the Jewish people under Moses were getting ready to be delivered from the slavery of Pharaoh. They were instructed to celebrate the Passover meal and to apply the blood of the lamb to their homes as a sign of being a covenant people. God said, ***“When the death angel sees the blood, he will pass over you!”***
“Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:13)
- B. ***Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15-20).*** This feast is for 7 days as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. All leavened bread was to be removed from the houses of all the Jewish people during this feast. Leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible.
“So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance... For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or native of the land.” (Ex. 12:17, 19).
- C. ***The Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14).*** Offering the firstfruits of your harvest was a way of demonstrating the principle of putting God first in all things (Mt. 22:37-40)
“And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, ‘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. 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” (Lev. 23:9-11).
- D. ***Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot) (Lev. 23:15-21).*** This feast is the 50th day from the feast of firstfruits. It was on this feast days in the book of Acts that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the people gathered at Jerusalem and they received their supernatural prayer language (Acts 2).
“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

- E. **Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) (Lev. 23:23-25)**. Rosh Hashanah literally means *head of year—the new year*, but its more than that. The piercing blast of the shofar is meant to remind the hearer to repent of his sins and make things right with his brothers and sisters. The rabbis say that reconciliation with God and man will confound the enemy.
- “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 trumpets, a holy convocation.’ (Lev. 23:24).***
- F. **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) (Lev. 16:23-26)** Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year, the Day of Atonement. The 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are known as the “Ten Days of Awe”. This is your chance, so to speak, to get your heart right before Yom Kippur. These are heavy days of reflection, and seeking God’s face as we prepare to go stand before Him in a state of fasting, a state of humility.
- “Also, the tenth day of the seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Lev. 23:27).***
- G. **Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot - Booths or Ingathering) (Lev. 23:33-36)** For thousands of years, Jewish people around the world have followed the Biblical injunction to live in temporary dwellings during the week—long **Feast of Tabernacles also known as Sukkot**. As Israeli Seth Ben—Haim reminds us: “First we are commanded to remember the Exodus from Egypt and how we wander through the desert 40 years without permanent dwellings, but it also reminds us that even though we’ve been brought into the land of Israel, we haven’t reached our final destination.
- H. For seven days, families eat, sleep, study, and pray in the *sukkah* or “booth”. Rabbis say it must have at least three sides and the roof must be made in such a way that the stars are visible through it at night and it’s open to the elements. The purpose of living temporarily in this flimsy tabernacle is so that we can remember that ultimately we are under HaShems [God’s] protection”.