

Thinking About Easter - Part 7 - The Feasts of Israel

The APPOINTED TIMES

JESUS *in the* FEASTS of ISRAEL

Luke 2:41-42

“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.”

A good student of the Word of God needs to understand the celebrations that took place in Israel, especially if you want to follow the footsteps of Jesus in the Gospels. There were seven major feasts that took place in Israel in any given year. Of those feasts three were required of every male to attend and present himself to God. They were, **1) Passover-Unleavened Bread, 2) Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and 3) Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)**. This would be respectively about March/April, May/June, and October. These were known as the pilgrim feasts.

Deuteronomy 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 weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:*

Knowing about the Feasts of Israel will help you understand the context of the Passover and Feast of unleavened Bread.

There are seven solemn feasts of the Lord proclaimed for Israel each year, and three important celebrations commemorating important events. There are two important Old Testament passages that list these feasts; Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28-29.

SPRING FEASTS

These feasts were interconnected. Passover itself was on day (Seder), followed by seven days of Unleavened Bread. Today these two are generally woven into one and called Passover. During the week of Unleavened Bread another feast begins, it is the feast of Firstfruits or ingathering of the first barley harvest.

- ***Passover** - Nisan 15 (Ex 12:6, Lev 23:5; Num 9:3; 28:16) Paschal being Lamb.
- ***Unleavened Bread** - Nisan 15-21 (*Hag Hamatzot*) (Dt 16:3, Ex 12:39) Matzah being Hebrew for unleavened bread. It celebrated the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, in haste, eating the bread of affliction, or unleavened bread.
- ***Feast of Firstfruits*** - Nisan 16 - (Lev 23:9-14) two days after the beginning of Passover. On this day they offer their first harvests to the Lord, this was the barley sheaves marked and left in the fields for this day.
- ***Feast of Weeks** - (50 days later) *Shavuot* or *Pentecost (in Greek)* - (Ex. 23:16) It occurred 50 days after the feast of Firstfruits. It marked the ingathering of the summer harvest of wheat. It occurred in May or early June each year.

FALL FEASTS

- ***Feast of Trumpets*** - *Rosh Hashanah* (Lev 23:23-25, Num 29:1) Jewish New Year, Tishri 1. It occurs in the Fall in September or October
- ***Day of Atonement*** - *Yom Kippur* (Lev 16:26-32) Tishri 10 It occurs in the Fall in September or October
- ***Feast of Tabernacles** (Booths) - *Sukkot* (Lev 23:33-43) Tishri 15-21 It occurs in the Fall in September or October. It is the happiest and most celebrated of the feasts. Two ceremonies spoke of Christ, the Water-libation (John 7:37-38), and the Temple-lighting (John 9:5).

There was another feast mentioned in the Gospel of John. It is called the **Feast of Dedication**, otherwise known to us as **Chanukah**(or **Hanukkah**), the Feast of Lights.

The Chanukah is the Jewish Festival of Lights or Feast of Dedication that remembers the atrocities of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and the victorious war lead by Judas Maccabeus. The Apocryphal Books of the Maccabees tell the story of Hanukkah.

In 165 BC after a three year struggle against the far superior forces of Antiochus' armies, Judas Maccabeus defeated the Syrian tyrant in heroic and miraculous engagements. After cleansing the Temple of the idols and destruction that Antiochus wrought against it, they found only one small cruse of oil with which to light the sacred lamps. But miraculously that oil lasted eight days. The celebration is usually in December on our calendar, but really begins on the eve of the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev and lasts eight days. It corresponds to the Christmas celebration of Christmas in that gifts are exchanged and contributions are made to the poor. Each evening another MENORAH candle is lighted until the eighth day the extra eighth candle is added to the menorah.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

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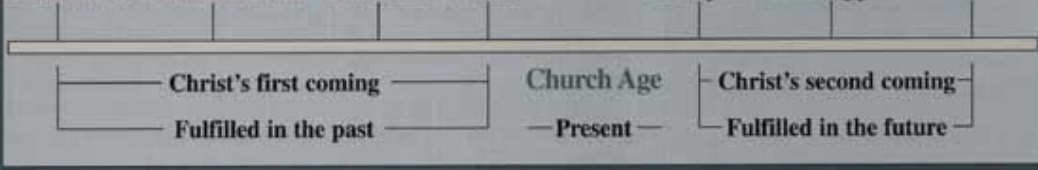
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FEAST		DATE	SIGNIFICANCE
PASSOVER		Nisan 14 Spring	Passover speaks of redemption. Christ the Passover Lamb has been slain for us.
UNLEAVENED BREAD		Nisan 15 Spring	Unleavened Bread speaks of sanctification. He was set apart. His body would not decay in the grave.
FIRSTFRUITS		Nisan 16 Spring	Firstfruits speaks of resurrection. Death could not hold her foe. On the third day Jesus rose triumphantly from the grave.
WEEKS		50 days after Firstfruits Spring	Weeks/Shavuot speaks of origination. The coming of the Holy Spirit inaugurated the New Covenant and Church Age.
TRUMPETS		Tishri 1 (new moon) Fall	Trumpets depicts the Rapture of the Church and the judgment of the wicked.
YOM KIPPUR		Tishri 10 Fall	Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement points to a great host of people, Jews and Gentiles, who will be saved when Jesus physically returns to the earth.
TABERNACLES		Tishri 15 Fall	Tabernacles speaks of the day when the Son of God will tabernacle among men, wipe away every tear, and bring in the "golden age" which men have dreamed of since time immemorial.

Passover Unleavened Bread Firstfruits Weeks Trumpets Yom Kippur Tabernacles



THE JEWISH DAY AND HOURS

It is also helpful for a student of the Word of God to understand the terminology used in the Gospels for the time of day.

Their day was twofold:

The NATURAL, consisting of twenty-four hours, which commenced at sunset; and the ARTIFICIAL, beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset, which was divided into twelve equal parts or hours.

(See John 11:9)

Their night was divided into four parts (or watches), each consisting of three hours.

The first began at sunset;

the second at nine o'clock;

the third at midnight;

the fourth at three in the morning, and continued until sunrise.

These were sometimes otherwise expressed;

even, midnight, cock-crowing, and the dawn.

(See Mark 13:35)

The artificial day was divided into four equal parts.

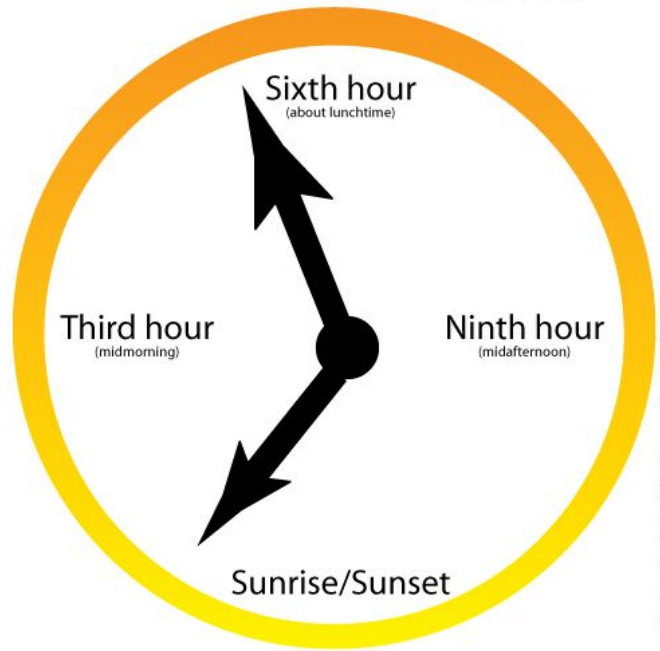
third hour: first began at sunrise to nine o'clock;

sixth hour: second at nine till noon;

ninth hour: third began at noon to three in the afternoon

the last hour began at three, and continued till sunset.

New Testament Time



Roman Night Watches

