

The Feasts Before Leviticus 23

All of God's Feasts are listed in Leviticus 23. Were they an afterthought God added to his laws, or were they part of his plan from the very beginning?

By Gregory Dullum

In Leviticus 23 God lists all of his holy days and Feasts that He expects his people to keep (Lev. 23:1-2). The first is the WEEKLY Sabbath, kept from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (v. 3).

Seven Annual Feasts Listed

God next lists his seven ANNUAL holy days and Feasts.

The first annual Feast is Passover, observed just after sunset on Abib 14, in the first month of God's sacred calendar. (Passover begins with sunset on April 21 this year). Passover is a *Feast* but is NOT a *holy day* (vv. 4-5). Abib 14 a *preparation day* for the annual Sabbath that follows (John 19:31, 42).

The second Feast is the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, Abib 15-21. The first and seventh days are holy days (vv. 6-8). The Feast of Unleavened Bread is April 23-29 this year.

The third Feast is unnamed here but is called Pentecost in Acts 2:1. The name means "fifty" for it comes 50 days after the Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is the third Feast and third holy day (Lev. 23:15-21). Pentecost this year is June 12.

The fourth Feast (and fourth holy day) is the Feast of Trumpets on Tishri 1 (vv. 23-25). This Feast will be Oct. 3.

The fifth Feast (and fifth holy day) is the Day of Atonement on Tishri 10 (vv. 26-32). The Day of Atonement will be Oct. 12 this year.

The sixth Feast is the Feast of Tabernacles, Tishri 15-21. The Feast of Tabernacles is Oct. 17-23 this year. The first day of the Feast of Tabernacles is the sixth holy day (vv. 33-35).

The seventh Feast (and seventh holy day) is the day immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles—Tishri 22.

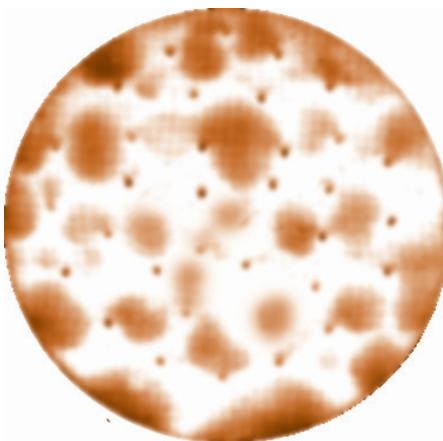


Photo by Greg Dullum

Why did Lot serve unleavened bread to visiting angels when he owned a home and had time to bake leavened bread? Could he have been keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

Here it is called "The Eighth Day" but we, in the Church of God, have traditionally called it "The Last Great Day" based upon John's use of those words (John 7:37). This year, it will be Oct. 24.

God begins Leviticus 23 by stating, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts" (v. 2), and concludes this section of Scripture by stating, "These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations" (v. 37).

These seven are the GRAND TOTAL of ALL God's Feasts. THERE ARE NO OTHERS. Christmas, Easter and other *man-made* holidays that originated in PAGANISM are not included and are actually *prohibited* by God (Deut. 12:30-32). National holidays that are NOT pagan observances (such as Independence Day or Thanksgiving) are *allowed* by God but are NOT *commanded* by Him. (Biblical examples of such days are the Jewish national holidays of Purim, Es-

ther 9:19-22; and Hanukkah, the "Feast of Dedication," John 10:22). New moons, which ancient Israel observed as monthly markers of time, were NEVER holy days or Feasts of God.

Plan of Salvation Revealed

The seven annual Feasts of God are SPECIAL because they *reveal God's plan of salvation*.

Passover pictures Christ's sacrifice that washed away our sins and paid the death penalty for us (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures putting sin out of our lives as we put leaven out of our homes (v. 8). Once forgiven of our sins, we are to strive to live sinless lives (Rom. 6:1-2, 12-14).

Pentecost pictures God giving his holy spirit to his church, empowering Christians to overcome sin (Acts 2:1-4).

The Feast of Trumpets looks forward to the conclusion of this age of man's rule, signaled by seven heavenly trumpet blasts (Rev. 8:1-2, 6, 11:15). At the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Christ will return and the firstfruits will be changed into spirit beings (Mat. 24:30-31, 1 Cor. 15:52, 1 Thes. 4:16-17).

The Day of Atonement pictures the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-2).

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the 1,000-year reign of Christ and the spirit-born "firstfruits" on this earth (Rev. 20:4-5, 5:20).

The Last Great Day pictures the white throne judgment period when all who have lived but who had never known God's way, will be brought back to human life and taught God's way without Satan's influence. They will be given God's holy spirit. If they choose to

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live God's way, they will receive eternal life. Those who reject God's way will be cast into a lake of fire and burned up (Rev. 20:11-15, Ezek. 37:1-6, 14).

God's plan of salvation is pictured by his Feasts! We are commanded to keep them forever as "an everlasting ordinance" (Ex. 12:17). Why would God wait until Leviticus 23 to reveal his plan of salvation to his people through his Feasts? Why would this "everlasting ordinance" begin at so late a date?

Feasts Kept Before Lev. 23?

Did God INVENT his Feasts for the Israelites to keep *after they left Egypt*? Or did He plan the Feasts *from the very beginning of creation*? Could it be possible that some people knew about the Feasts and kept them before Leviticus 23? Absolutely! Let's examine the evidence.

Israelites Kept Feasts Earlier

The most obvious example is ancient Israel itself! The Israelites kept the Passover back in Exodus 12—while still in Egypt (vv. 21-23, 28-30). They left Egypt as the Feast of Unleavened Bread began and kept it seven days (vv. 42, 13:6-10).

The Israelites were told about additional Feasts, including Pentecost [the Feast of Weeks] and Feast of Tabernacles [Ingathering] (Ex. 34:22)!

Long before God told Moses how to keep the Passover in Exodus 12—even BEFORE the 10 plagues came upon Egypt—Moses gave Pharaoh a message from God: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" (Ex. 5:1). This is the FIRST *specific* reference in the Bible to God's FEASTS.

Even before Moses, there are some obscure clues that God's people *may have* kept the Feasts of God! Let's keep moving backward in time and examine them.

Lot May Have Kept Feasts

Lot lived in the sin-filled city of Sodom when two angels visited him. They said God was going to destroy Sodom because of its wickedness (Gen. 18:20, 19:1-2).

What did Lot serve the angels for dinner? "Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate" (v. 3). Why make UNLEAVENED bread?

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible gives this explanation: "...and he made them a feast; a large, liberal, and generous entertainment, as Abraham did, consisting of a variety of eatables and drinkables ...

and did bake unleavened bread; not because it was the time of the passover, as Jarchi suggests, for as yet that was not instituted; but for quicker dispatch, that his guests might have supper the sooner, and get to bed earlier, and rest themselves; bread without leaven in it being sooner baked than that which is made with it."

I find Gill's explanation *contradictory*. If Lot's goal was a "quicker dispatch," would he have created "a large, liberal and generous entertainment"?

Gill assumes Passover "was not yet instituted" because the Israelites had not yet kept it. But God's people could have kept his Feasts "as a shadow of things to come" (Col. 2:16-17). Indeed, we, today, observe the *first three* Feasts as memorials of *past* events but the *final four* picture things that have *not yet occurred*. At the time of Lot, God's people could have kept *all the Feasts* as shadows of *future* events!

H. E. Jacob claims there was time and opportunity to bake leavened bread if Lot had wanted to: "When Lot was visited by the angels, he offered them unleavened bread, although he dwelt in a settled house and had time to finish baking his bread" (*Six Thousand Years of Bread: Its Holy and Unholy History*, 2007, p. 37). There seemed to be another reason!

Who was Jarchi? Why did he think *this was Passover*? Jarchi was the Medieval French Rabbi Rashi Salomonis Jarchi, author of a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud.

Jarchi's comment is quoted and commented on in an Internet article, "Precursor to Passover?" After quoting Gen. 19:1-3, we read, "what struck me was the reference to Lot baking unleavened bread. Rashi simply says, 'it was Passover,' but it couldn't have been Passover since this was more than 400 years before the Passover took place (Ex. 12).

"I do wonder if there is any significance with the unleavened bread here. This is the first time we see unleavened bread in the Bible and we don't see it again until Exodus 12. The ESV Study Bible says that '*Unleavened bread implies that it was baked in haste.*' Could that be the connection if there is any? I don't know.

"Was this a precursor to the Passover? God did (in a way) pass over Lot as He was destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot flees Sodom in manner not wholly unlike the children of Israel fled from Egypt. Of course there's the missing blood in Lot's story, i.e., no lamb's blood on the door posts, but perhaps his willingness to offer his daughters up to the mob was seen as a sacrifice of sorts" (<https://rdtwot.wordpress.com/2008/12/03/precursor-to-passover>).

Let's dig a little deeper as we ask why

Jarchi (Rashi) claimed this was Passover.

An Internet blog, "Vayera: Why Do We Care That Lot Ate Matza [unleavened bread] On Pesach [Passover]?" states:

"Rashi notes:

"and he baked unleavened cakes It was Passover. ...

"But this question—'what is motivating Rashi?', causes one to look more broadly, to see what this particular comment adds to some overall point.

"And there is indeed a point. That point is not Lot's conduct. Whether Rashi believes Lot actually ate *matzot* on Pesach or not (and it is plausible that Rashi does believe this), the point is not Lot's conduct but rather an establishing of the time of year this happened. Chronology is extremely a *peshat* concern. [*Peshat* is one of the four classical methods of exegesis.]

Many things are established by midrash to have happened on Pesach [Passover]. ... It is a specific time which draws events over and over. [Even in our day we see major world events often occurring around the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles.]

"Besides that, it is connected to the extremely important questions of

"1) when Yitzchak [Isaac] was promised to Sarah

"2) when Yitzchak was born

"3) when Yitzchak was promised to Avraham [Abraham], and how this relates to question #1" (<http://parsha.blogspot.com/2007/11/vayera-why-do-we-care-that-lot-ate.html>).

The blog explains that if Lot made unleavened bread *at Passover time*, then the *promise* of Isaac to Sarah (Gen 18:14), the *birth* of Isaac one year later at a "set time" and the *promise* of a son to Abraham (Gen. 17:21) ALL OCCURRED AT PASSOVER TIME.

Some Jews begin counting with the birth of Isaac (on Night to Be Much Observed) the 430 years that Israel sojourned. The

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Bible states, “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:40-41, emphasis added). In other words, exactly 430 years after Isaac was born, on the very same day, Israel left Egypt!

The promise God made to Abraham regarding the birth of Isaac states, “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this SET TIME next year” (Gen. 17:21, emphasis added). The Hebrew word for “set time” is *moed* (Strong’s No. 4150), and it means “an appointment, i.e., a fixed time or season; spec. a festival” (Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary included in his *Exhaustive Concordance*, p. 63).

Lot being born at a “set time” indicates he could have been born during a Feast!

The blog makes this conclusion: “[W]e can note the specific word *moed* in play, such that *moed* should refer to a Festival, in this case Passover. This is then bolstered by Lot serving *matza*” (p. 3 of 5).

The Jews call the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread “Passover.” The angels *could* have come to Sodom on the eve of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as Lot was observing it. *That’s why* Lot offered UNLEAVENED BREAD to the angels. Lot’s removal from Sodom before it was destroyed for its sins fits well with the theme of removing sin from our lives at this Feast time (Gen. 19:15-17, 24-25)!

Lot’s flight from Sodom *could have occurred* on the same day (the first day of Unleavened Bread) that Israel left Egypt!

If this is true, Abraham and Sarah entertained the pre-incarnate Jesus and the two angels on Passover (Abib 14). Their noontime meal consisted of bread made quickly from fine meal (there is no mention of it being unleavened, but it didn’t need to be because the Feast of Unleavened Bread didn’t begin until sunset), roasted calf, butter and milk (Gen. 18:5-8). Later that afternoon (still Passover),

Abraham interceded on behalf of Lot in an attempt to save his life (vv. 23-33), much as the Passover sacrifice saved Israel’s firstborn from death (Ex. 12:23) and Christ’s sacrifice saves us from our sins (Rom. 5:10).

Cain and Abel’s Sacrifice

Now let’s step further back in time, to the first two sons ever born. As we do, keep in mind that ancient Israelites sacrificed LAMBS on Passover (Ex. 12:3-10).

What was Abel’s offering that pleased God? It was a LAMB. “Abel also brought the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering [of vegetables]” (Gen. 4:4-5).

One Jewish source says this was a Passover sacrifice. That would explain why Abel’s sacrifice was accepted and Cain’s was not!

“Is it really rational to assume the Avot [Biblical Fathers] commemorated events that had not yet occurred? ...

“I would answer that yes, the attitude some midrashim appear to adopt is that the Avot commemorates events that had not yet occurred. And they knew that these would occur in the future, due to prophecy or due to ruach hakodesh [the holy spirit].

“One prime example of this is in Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer:

“Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer, Chapt. 21 ... The night of the (future) Yom Tov [literally “Good Day”] of Pesach [Passover] arrived. Adam said to his sons (Kayin [Cain] and Hevel [Abel]), ‘In the future, on this night, the Jewish people will be offering their Pacal [sic, should be Paschal] sacrifices. You too should offer sacrifices before your Creator.’ Kayin brought as a sacrifice from what was left over from his food, parched corn and flax seeds. And Hevel brought from the first-born of his flock and the fattest of the sheep whose wool had not been sheared...

“Thus, the *korban* [sacrifice] of Kayin and Hevel were on the night of Pesach. And it is specifically because of this foreknowledge. And frankly, in a mindset in which prophecy was common, this might well be an attitude a rationalist can take” (“Vayera: Why Do We Care That Lot Ate Matza On Pesach?,” Nov. 9, 2007, p. 1).

Another source supports the idea of this sacrifice being on a Feast day and picturing Christ’s sacrifice:

“It seems that there was a special occasion for this offering. The text says the offering was brought in the process of time or the end of days. This may refer to some type of festival that the Lord established which was similar to the later rituals in the law of Moses. ... This act of bringing the

offering for sin was foreshadowing the coming of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who would eventually offer Himself for the sins of the world” (“Why Did God Reject Cain’s Sacrifice?” by Don Stewart, www.blueletterbible.org, p. 2).

Ariel’s Bible Commentary states, “The timing was: *And in the process of time it came to pass*. The Hebrew literally reads ‘at the end of days,’ meaning ‘at a specific appointed time.’ So already, this early in human history, there was a fixed time in which the offerings were to be offered. It was clearly a prescribed time” (“Abel’s Sacrifice,” 3amthoughts.com, p. 2)

Henry H. Halley says of Abel’s sacrifice, “It appears to have been a sort of primeval picture of the Atoning Death of Christ” (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, 1965, p. 69).

A “specific appointed time” in which a lamb was sacrificed to picture Christ’s atoning death all indicate a possible Passover observance by Cain and Abel!

Sabbaths Are a Sign

Now let us step further back in time to the seventh day of creation (or re-creation).

The seventh-day Sabbath is one of God’s Feasts (Lev. 23:1-3). The Sabbath was created in the beginning, the last day of “creation week” (Gen. 1:1, 2:1-3). God undoubtedly taught Adam and Eve to keep the weekly Sabbath, for it points mankind to Him as the Creator (Ex. 20:8-11). The weekly Sabbath is a sign between God and his people (Ex. 31:13).

But notice, it is not ONLY the *weekly* Sabbath that is a sign. God said, “Surely My Sabbaths [plural] you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you” (Ex. 31:13). The plural “Sabbaths” indicates that God’s people should keep BOTH the *weekly* Sabbath and God’s seven *annual* Sabbaths—his Feasts!

Since the weekly Sabbath was one of the Feasts of God, and the weekly Sabbath was in force since the time of creation, it makes sense that the other Feasts (annual Sabbaths) also may have been in effect since creation!

The fact that Moses didn’t mention the Feasts by name in Genesis does not mean they didn’t exist. Moses didn’t explain what makes an animal clean or unclean until Leviticus 11 but Noah knew the difference already in Genesis 7:2.

Moses didn’t mention God’s instructions regarding the Feasts in Genesis because *that was not the purpose* of that book. Genesis was meant to be a synopsis of time from the beginning until Israel

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. What compliment did Jesus give John the Baptist?
2. Who probably wrote Hebrews?
3. Who wrote Revelation?
4. On what island was John when he wrote Revelation?
5. Who wrote Proverbs?

(Answers on page 4)

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Why Did God Reject Cain's Offering?

God had no respect for Cain and his offering. Why? As we bring our offerings to God this holy day season, will we make the same mistake Cain did? Will God respect our offering?

By Gregory Dullum

God commands us to bring an offering to him at the time of his Feasts: "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you" (Deut. 16:16).

Will God be pleased with the offering we give Him? How can we be sure? In the first recorded offerings in the Bible, two brothers gave offerings to God; one pleased God and was accepted, while the other didn't please God and was rejected:

"Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering" (Gen. 4:2-5).

What was the difference in the two offerings? Both men appear to have given *as they were able*: farmer Cain from his produce; shepherd Abel from his flock. Did God expect Cain to offer a lamb even though he was a farmer?

If the occasion of this offering was the PASSOVER as *some have speculated* (see article beginning on p. 1), then yes, Cain's sacrifice was WRONG—God required a LAMB to be sacrificed for PASSOVER.

Did God ever allow people to offer "fruit of the ground?" Yes, through Moses, God gave the Israelites instructions for such offerings. But they had to be prepared a SPECIAL way (Lev. 2:1-2, 4, 11-16).

There is no evidence that Cain followed these instructions. Cain's offering was neither fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense nor was it firstfruits. If Cain offered plain old *vegetables* as a BURNT OFFERING, this was NOT acceptable (Lev. 2:12)!

The problem was with Cain's OFFERING ITSELF. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4). What made Abel's offering more excellent? He offered the RIGHT SACRIFICE, by following God's instructions, and Cain *did his own thing*.

"We know from Hebrews 11:4 that God

considered Cain's sacrifice the wrong sacrifice, and the only thing we can assume strictly from the text is that the right sacrifice would have been the same as Abel's. ...

"We know that Abel's sacrifice had all the attributes of a burnt offering type of sacrifice, which would have been a blood sacrifice offered as a covering for sin. Bloodless sacrifices are not recorded in the Bible until the time of Moses. A careful analysis of the passage yields no other solid interpretation except that God told them exactly what to do. Abel obeyed and God was pleased. Cain did his own thing and God was displeased" ("Where in the scriptures does it say that God told Cain and Abel to bring a blood sacrifice?" www.goodseed.com/blog/2014/01/02/Where-in-the-scriptures-does-it-say-that-God-told-Cain-and-Abel-to-bring-a-blood-sacrifice).

How do we know God gave Cain and Abel instructions for a proper offering? We know God spoke to them audibly (Gen. 4:6-7, 9-15). When God spoke to Cain, there was no fear shown, indicating that conversations with God were commonplace. Contrast Cain's conversations with those of Mary or the shepherds when an angel spoke to them. They were afraid (Luke 1:30, 2:9-10), Cain was not.

God told Cain, "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (Gen. 4:7 *New International Version*). For God to expect Cain to do what was right, He had to have told him previously what was right (Jer. 10:23, 17:9, Rom. 8:7).

"The fact that Cain and Abel even knew to offer a sacrifice of any kind implies knowledge gained from God. ... We do not instinctively like or make sacrifices" (The Goodseed Blog, p. 5).

Why did Cain give the WRONG kind of sacrifice? Rather than humbly *following God's instructions* for a proper sacrifice, Cain chose to *proudly and rebelliously* do it *his own way*. Giving an inferior offering indicates he gave *grudgingly* and was NOT a *cheerful giver* (2 Cor. 9:7).

"If we take the whole Scriptures, we can safely say that almost, if not all, the sacrifices up to the time of the tabernacle were burnt offering type sacrifices. They involved death and the shedding of blood. We know that these sacrifices were powerful pictures of what at that time was yet to

come [Christ's crucifixion]. To make them into anything else is to reduce the impact of Scripture. That is why we can say that the right thing that God told Cain and Abel to do, was what we find as a pattern throughout all scripture.

"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 an atonement for your soul' (Leviticus 17:11).

"We have no reason to believe that the instructions that God gave Cain and Abel were to offer any other sacrifice than this kind of sacrifice—a blood sacrifice" (The Goodseed Blog, p. 7). This is *especially* true if this was PASSOVER!

We no longer sacrifice animals. Christ's sacrifice fulfilled the need for this (Heb. 9:22, 28). We do, however, bring monetary offerings to God on the holy days. As we bring our offerings, we would do well to remember these lessons from Abel's offering.

1. Abel BROUGHT the sacrifice himself. He didn't send it with someone else. When possible, we should bring our offering to God where He chooses on his holy days. We shouldn't assume our offering will please God if we stay home and mail it, or if we attend a service where God has not placed his name.

2. Abel offered from his own flock. Our offerings should come from our own funds, not someone else's money.

3. Abel gave from the firstborn of his flock with its fat. The firstborn was considered special and the fat was considered the best part of the animal. He felt a loss. Our offering to God should be the best we can give, not just spare change from our pockets that won't be missed (Luke 21:1-4). We shouldn't give more than we are able, but our offering should be significant, planned out in advance, and one that truly represents how we have been blessed (Deut. 16:17). If our purpose is to honor God with our offering by giving the best we have; if we obey God's instructions and don't just *do our own thing*; our offering will please God!

Know Your Bible Answers

- 1) The greatest prophet born of women.
- 2) Paul.
- 3) John.
- 4) Patmos.
- 5) Solomon.

The Feasts After Leviticus 23

All of God's Feasts are listed in Leviticus 23.

Is there any record of them ever being kept by God's people?

By Gregory Dullum

God listed his seven annual Feasts in Leviticus 23. Is there any record of them ever being kept—or were they completely forgotten? Should we keep them today?

Although their observances are rarely mentioned in the Bible, the Feasts of God were kept by the ancient Israelites *to some degree*.

All Israel kept a Feast in the seventh month under King Solomon in 1 Kings 8:2. When we read the words “THE feast” with the definite article “the” instead of “a,” it usually refers to one of the seven-day festivals—either the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the first month or the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. This verse calls the seventh month “Ethanim” but it was later called “Tishri” (see marginal note in the NKJV).

Solomon's temple was dedicated at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day (2 Chron. 5:3, 7:1-9).

When the 10 tribes of Israel split from Judah and Benjamin, their king Jeroboam did not want them traveling any longer to the temple in Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. So he established his own counterfeit feast in the eighth month and established new places of worship (1 Kings 12:32-33). This counterfeit religious system led the northern 10 tribes away from God. Meanwhile, the southern nation of Judah continued to keep God's Feasts.

Under King Josiah, an especially great Passover was held. “Surely such a Passover had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah” (2 Kings 23:22). This indicates that the Passover WAS OBSERVED during all those years, but not *in such a grand manner*.

The Passover was observed, albeit incorrectly, when Hezekiah became king of Judah. He saw the need to observe it correctly as Passover approached, but there wasn't enough time to get ready. So it was observed in the second month (2 Chron. 30:1-5). The Passover observance was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 13, 21).

In the 18th year of King Josiah, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were kept in a manner that was unlike any since the days of Samuel the prophet (2 Chron. 35:1, 16-19).

Most of the time, the Houses of Israel

and Judah did not observe the Feasts *properly*. Though they continued to observe them *nominally*, they also observed pagan days. They MIXED their worship of God with their worship of pagan idols. They gave lip service to God but lived in sin. This caused God to say through the prophet Isaiah, “Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure the iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them” (Isa. 1:13-14).

After Judah went into Babylonian captivity, a remnant later returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. Once again, ALL the Feasts of God were kept (Ezra 3:5). Specifically mentioned are the Feast of Trumpets on Tishri 1, the Feast of Tabernacles on Tishri 15-21, The Passover on Abib 14 and the Feast of Unleavened Bread on Abib 15-21 (Ezra 3:6, 4, 19, 22). The observance of the Feast of Trumpets, Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day are also mentioned specifically in Neh. 8:2, 9, 14, 18).

The Feasts in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the Feasts of God were kept by Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament church.

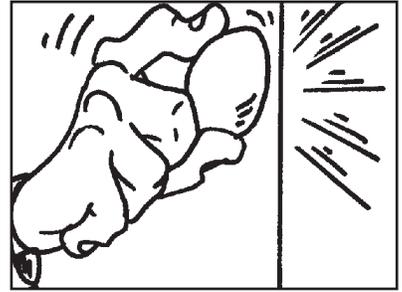
Specifically mentioned are the Passover (Mat. 26:18) Feast on Unleavened Bread (1 Cor. 5:8), Pentecost (Acts 2:1), Atonement—the only prescribed day of fasting (Acts 27:9), Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2, 8-11) and Last Great Day (John 7:37). The Feast of Trumpets is the only Feast not mentioned specifically in the New Testament, although it is in the book of Revelation that we primarily read about the fulfillment of this day.

The Feasts in the Future

After Jesus Christ returns to this earth, the Feasts will be kept by all people! We see this dramatically illustrated by a prophecy in Zechariah 14: “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feasts of Tabernacles” (v. 16).

God's Feasts were kept in history, are being kept now, and will be in the future!

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

A tradition in Bulgaria called for people to tap their Easter eggs against the wall of the church on Easter morning.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

The Thing You Think You Cannot Do: Thirty Truths About Fear and Courage by Gordon Livingston, M.D., Da Capo Press, 2012, p. 155-156.

A Matter of Luck

“When I was in Vietnam (1968-69), the first thing I noticed was that the actual fighting was done by less than 20 percent of soldiers (“grunts”) unfortunate enough to be assigned to the infantry or Marine rifle companies. ... The other 80 percent of our troops (REMFs) were busied driving trucks, maintaining PX facilities, sitting around some headquarters, or working as lifeguards at the Long Binh swimming pool. ...

“Another important discovery I made at war was that, in a combat unit, what separates the dead from the survivors is not courage but luck. The person who took the AK-47 round, stepped on a mine, bled to death before the medevac arrived was random.”

Eccles. 9:11, Luke 13:1-5

Quotable Quotes

“Whether you think you can or think you can't—you are right.”

—Henry Ford

Memory Scripture

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

—John 14:15

Feasts

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was in Egypt. Moses added the *detailed instructions* FROM GOD later, in the four books that came after Genesis.

Very few people obeyed God and kept the Feasts before Exodus 12. That's another reason Moses didn't mention them by name in Genesis. If people earlier than Moses knew about the Feasts, they learned about them directly from God (such as when Noah talked with God) or the information was passed down father-to-son since Adam.

On God's Mind

One last example shows that the Feasts were not an afterthought of God, given to Israel in Leviticus 23. Step back in time from the seventh day of creation to the fourth, and from there to the original creation of the universe billions of years ago.

Christ's sacrifice as the Passover Lamb was planned BEFORE the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:18-20, Rev. 13:8). And the Feasts were on God's mind when He created the lights in the sky. Notice the account of creation from the *Revised English Bible*:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... And God said, 'Let there be lights in vault of the heavens to separate day from night, and let them serve as signs both for festivals and for seasons and years'" (Gen. 1:1, 14).

Heavenly lights were to serve as signs for God's festivals! Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread occur when the moon is full. So does the Feast of Tabernacles. When we see a full moon, we often count how many full moons remain until Passover or until the Feast of Tabernacles (whichever is next).

The Feast of Trumpets falls on a new moon—the only new moon which is a Feast of God! Jews begin their year with the Feast of Trumpets and every new moon signifies a new month. In ancient Israel, these new moons were celebrated in a fashion similar to the Feasts, but new moons were never a part of God's annual Feast days, for they were OMITTED from the official list in Leviticus 23.

Conclusion

From the beginning of creation, the Sabbath and the annual Feasts of God have been a sign between God and his people. They were not an afterthought intended only for the ancient Israelites. They were on God's mind when He created the heavenly lights and His feasts are intended to be kept as a sign between God and his people as an *everlasting* ordinance!



Mass Shootings Occur On Average Every Day

"More than one a day.

"That is how often, on average, shootings that left four or more people wounded or dead occurred in the United States this year [2015], according to compilations of episodes derived from news reports.

"Including the worst mass shooting of the year, which unfolded horrifically on Wednesday [Dec. 2] in San Bernardino, Calif., a total of 462 people died and 1,314 have been wounded in such attacks this year, many of which occurred on streets or in public settings, the databases indicate" ("How Often Do Mass Shootings Occur? On Average, Every Day, Records Show" by Sharon LaFraniere, Sarah Cohen and Richard A. Oppel, Jr., *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Dec. 2, 2015, p. 1).

Christ said of the end time, "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will wax cold" (Mat. 24:12). Mass shootings are an example of lawless behavior and you don't usually shoot people you love.

Paul warned that the last days would be "perilous times" with "unholy, unloving, unforgetting, ... brutal" people (1 Tim. 3:1-3).

North Korea Claims It Detonated First H-Bomb

"North Korea declared on Tuesday [Jan. 5] that it had detonated its first hydrogen bomb.

"The assertion, if true, would dramatically escalate the nuclear challenge from one of the world's most isolated and dangerous states" ("North Korea Says It Has Detonated Its First Hydrogen Bomb" by David E. Sanger and Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 5, 2016, p. 1).

End-time "kings from the east" will attack the "king of the North" when it occupies the Holy Land at the time of the end (Dan. 11:40-44, Rev. 16:12-16). North Korea with its nuclear arsenal may be a part of the kings from the east.

Earthquakes Hit Oklahoma and Taiwan

"Oklahoma was rocked Wednesday night [Jan. 6] by two of the state's largest earthquakes in recent years, further fueling scientists' concern that the continued burial of oil and gas wastes in seismically active areas was courting a much more powerful earthquake.

"The two quakes, measured at magnitudes 4.7 and 4.8, struck at 11:27 p.m. in rural Oklahoma, directly beneath a major oil and gas production area. The second quake, which came about 30 seconds later, was the fourth-largest recorded in the state. There were no reports of injuries or damage, the authorities said Thursday ("Earthquakes in Oklahoma Raise Fears of a Big One" by Michael Wines, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 7, 2016, p. 1).

About a month later, a magnitude 6.4 quake shook Taiwan Feb. 6, killing at least 18 and injuring 463 people.

"Tainan residents said the tremor felt considerably stronger than any they could remember on this island where earthquakes are frequent. At a magnitude of 6.4, according to the United States Geological Survey, the quake was not especially intense, but it was very shallow—just 6.2 miles deep. Shallow earthquakes frequently do more damage at the surface" ("Rescue Efforts Continue as Toll Rises in Taiwan Earthquake" by Keith Bradsher, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Feb. 6, 2016, p. 2).

"Earthquakes in various places" signal that we're getting close to Christ's return (Mat. 24:3, 7).

Zika Virus Spreads

"The World Health Organization rang a global alarm over the Zika virus on Thursday [Jan. 28], saying that the disease was 'spreading explosively' in the Americas and that as many as four million people could be infected by the end of the year" ("Zika Virus 'Spreading Explosively' in Americas, W.H.O. Says" by Sabrina Tavernise, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 28, 2016, p. 1).

"Pestilences" are a sign we are nearing Christ's return (Mat. 24:3, 7).