

To Remember What God Has Done

In addition to the laws of daily worship, God set forth instructions pertaining to fixed festivals or holy days. While these events were meant to be occasions of fellowship and celebration, they also served as memorials, to remind Israel of things God had done for them over the years. There were five festivals established by God in Moses' time. Several other holy days have been added since. As always, all of these events foreshadow and are fulfilled in the life and ministry of Christ.

Day of Trumpets

Yom Truah, 1st Day of Tishri (Month 7)

Tishri is the beginning of a new year. Thus, *Yom Truah* is New Years Day (or *Rosh Hashanah*). On that day, trumpet blasts signaled everyone to gather to a solemn assembly. No one was to work, but rather it was a day to present offerings to God (*Lev. 23:23-25*) and to prepare oneself for the removal of sin nine days later (atonement). It's interesting to note that Christ will return with a trumpet of God to gather His people and deliver them from this world of sin.

Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur, 10th Day of Tishri (Month 7)

The Day of Atonement is nine days after the Day of Trumpets. Again, no one was allowed to work. It was set aside for rest and fasting. This day was special in that the High Priest would make atonement for the sins of the people. After offering a bull for his own sins, the High Priest took two goats and transferred the sins of the people onto them by the laying on of hands.

One goat he sacrificed, while the other he set loose into the desert (scapegoat). By the blood of the sacrificed goat, the High Priest sought the mercy of the Lord in the Holiest Place (*Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-32*). Jesus, of course, is our scapegoat (*2 Cor. 5:21*), and it is by His blood that we receive the mercies of God for salvation. Christ is also our High Priest, the only mediator between God and man (*1 Tim. 2:5*).

Feast of Shelters (Tents, Booths)

Sukkot, 15th-21st Days of Tishri

Five days after atonement, the Israelites celebrated this feast. It lasted seven days.

On the first day, the people were not allowed to work but rather presented offerings to the Lord. After seven days, the people celebrated the harvest by waving palm fronds and other leafy branches and by living in shelters or tents to remind them of the exodus journey (*Lev. 23:33-44*). Shelters or tents were sometimes called tabernacles. Thus, this feast foreshadowed that God would dwell in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit (*2 Cor. 3:16*).

Passover (Feast of Unleavened Bread)

Pessah, 14th-21st Days of Nisan (Month 1)

These holy days reminded Israelites of the Passover in Egypt and the night that they were freed from bondage. On the first and last days, the people could not work but rather assembled for a ceremony. On the other days, the people offered sacrifices and could not eat bread with leaven (*Ex. 12:1-51; Lev. 23:5-8*). Passover is forever linked with the Lord's Supper and



Festivals of Israel Continued...

Easter weekend, as Christ ate the Passover meal with His disciples (*1 Cor. 11:24, 25*), then gave His life so death would pass over His followers. He is symbolized in the bread as the One without leaven (sin).

Feast of Weeks (Harvest or First Fruits) *Pentecost, Seven Weeks After Passover*

Pentecost (fifty) was fifty days after Passover. On this day, the Israelites did not work (sound familiar). They assembled for offerings (*Lev. 23:15-22*). *Pentecost* is the anniversary of when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, then instituted a covenant with His people. Likewise, it was on *Pentecost* (*Acts 2*) when the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers for the first time, thus becoming the birthday of the Church.

Sabbath Year

The people were not to plant or harvest crops in the seventh year (*Lev. 25:1-7*). They could till the soil for six years, but on the seventh, they had to let the land rest.

Year of Jubilee/Liberty

After seven Sabbath Years passed, God asked the Israelites to proclaim the fiftieth as the Year of Jubilee! That year was set apart as a time when everyone was released from personal debt or servitude as a result of poverty (*Lev. 25:8-39; 27:16-24*). Thus, they were redeemed. It was also a year when the land rested (similar to the Sabbath Year). God promised to provide enough crops to last the years of rest.

Feast of Purim (or Lots)

The 14th-15th Days of Adar

This festival was established after Moses, in the days of the Persian Empire. It reminds the Jews of how God, through Esther, saved their people from annihilation by the hand of Haman. The 14th and 15th of Adar (which Haman chose by casting lots) were the days when the Jews defended themselves and avoided extermination.

The Feast of Dedication (or Lights)

Hanukah, Begins 25th Day of Chislev (9)

Hanukah is not mentioned in the Bible because it was established between the testaments (in 164 BC). It is an eight-day festival to commemorate the victory over the Greek enemy Antiochus, who had desecrated the Temple. When the famous Maccabee family recaptured the Temple, they took eight days to cleanse and rededicate it to God. During the rededication, a lamp, with only enough oil to burn for one day, burned for all eight. Thus, the Jews burn candles during *Hanukah* today.

Sevens Everywhere!

Mosaic festivals were connected with seven. So every seventh day, month, year, and even the year that came after seven times seven years (Jubilee) was marked by a festival, some which lasted seven days. These festivals were holy days, marked by the holy number. Seven is holy because God rested after the sixth day of creation.

