

The Feasts of the Lord

The liturgical calendar also holds a significant place in the book of Leviticus. In ancient Israel there were **seven annual religious festivals especially ordained by God:**

- 1. Passover** (*pesah*, HEB). EXO 12:1–28, 43–49; LEV 23:5; NUM 28:16; DEU 16:1–8
Time: The evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan (Abib), the first month of the biblical year (March/April).
Purpose: (1) To commemorate Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (2) To remind the children of Israel that God “passed over” their houses, i.e., spared the firstborn of the Israelites (EXO 12:27).
Prophetic Significance: (1) Christ is our Passover (cf. JOH 1:29; 19:36; 1CO 5:6-7; 1PE 1:18, 19). (2) The Passover is the foundation for the Lord’s Supper (cf. MAT 26:17–30; MAR 14:12–25; LUK 22:1–20). (3) The Passover foreshadows the marriage supper of the Lamb (cf. MAT 26:29; MAR 14:25; LUK 22:16–18).
- 2. Feast of Unleavened Bread** (*matsot*, HEB). EXO 12:15–20; 13:3–10; LEV 23:6–8; NUM 28:17–25; DEU 16:3–8
Time: It began on the fifteenth day of Nisan (Abib) and continued for one week (March/April).
Purpose: To commemorate the hardships of Israel’s hurried flight from Egypt (EXO 12:39). The absence of leaven symbolized complete consecration and devotion to God.
Prophetic Significance: (1) Unleavened bread is a type of Christ (cf. JOH 6:30–59; 1CO 11:24). (2) Unleavened bread is a type of the true church (cf. 1CO 5:7, 8).
- 3. Day of Firstfruits** (*bikkurim*, HEB). LEV 23:9–14
Time: On the day after the Sabbath of Passover week (March/April).
Purpose: To dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the barley harvest.
Prophetic Significance: (1) Firstfruits is a type of the bodily resurrection of Christ (cf. 1CO 15:20–23). (2) Firstfruits is a guarantee of the bodily resurrection of all believers (cf. 1CO 15:20–23; 1TH 4:13–18). (3) Firstfruits is a type of the consecration of the church.
- 4. Feast of Pentecost** (or Weeks: *shabuot*, HEB). LEV 23:15–22; NUM 28:26–31; DEU 16:9–12
Time: The day after the seventh Sabbath after the Day of Firstfruits (May/June).
Purpose: To dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the wheat harvest.
Prophetic Significance: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The two loaves, representative of the Jew and Gentile, contained leaven because sin is found within the church.
- 5. Day of Trumpets** (*rosh hashanah*, HEB). LEV 23:23–25; NUM 10:10; 29:1–6
Time: The first day of the seventh month (Tishri), the sabbatical month (September/October).
Purpose: To usher in and consecrate the seventh month as the sabbatical month.
Prophetic Significance: In the N.T. the blowing of the trumpet is associated with the return of our Lord (cf. MAT 24:31; 1CO 15:52; 1TH 4:16).
- 6. Day of Atonement** (*yom kippur*, HEB). LEV 16; 23:26–32; NUM 29:7–11
Time: The tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri—September/October).
Purpose: To make annual atonement for the sins of the priests and the people, and for the tabernacle (temple).
Prophetic Significance: The Day of Atonement finds its ultimate fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ (cf. HEB 9). It represents the redeeming work of Christ more adequately than any other O.T. type.
- 7. Feast of Tabernacles** (Booths or Ingathering; *sukkot*, HEB). LEV 23:33–43; NUM 29:12–38; DEU 16:13–17
Time: The fifteenth through twenty-first of the seventh month (Tishri), with an eighth day added as a climax to all the feasts (September/October).
Purpose: (1) To commemorate God’s deliverance and protection during the wilderness wanderings (23:43). (2) To rejoice in the completion of all the harvest (23:39).
Prophetic Significance: The Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the peace and prosperity of the millennial reign of Christ (ZEC 14:16).

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

The First Coming of Christ = Spring

Month	Day(s)	Feast	Looks Back On...	Looks Ahead To...	Scripture
1 st Nisan	14	Passover <i>Pesach</i>	Redemption of Firstborn	Christ's Redeeming Death	1CO 5:7 1PE 1:18-19
1 st Nisan	15-21	Unleavened Bread <i>Matsot</i>	Separation from Other Nations	Holy Walk of Believers	1CO 5:7-8 GAL 5:9, 16-17
1 st Nisan	16	Firstfruits <i>Bikkurim</i>	Harvest in the Land	Resurrection of Christ	REV 1:5 1CO 15:20-23
3 rd Sivan	6	Pentecost <i>Shavuot</i>	Completion of Harvest	Sending of the Holy Spirit	ACT 2:1-47 1CO 12:13

The Summer Gap (JOH 4:35)

The Second Coming of Christ = Fall

Month	Day(s)	Feast	Looks Back On...	Looks Ahead To...	Scripture
7 th Tishri	1	Trumpets <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Israel's New Year	Israel's Regathering	ISA 27:12-13 MAT 24:21-31
7 th Tishri	10	Day of Atonement <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Israel's National Sin	Israel's National Conversion	ZEC 12:10 ROM 11:26-27
7 th Tishri	15-22	Tabernacles <i>(Booths) Sukkot</i>	Israel in the Wilderness	Israel in the Kingdom	ZEC 14:4-16 REV 7:9-17

Israel's Other Sacred Times

Besides the Annual Feasts, Israel's time was marked by these other sacred events.

- **Sabbath** Every seventh day was a solemn rest from all work (EXO 20:8-11; 31:12-17; LEV 23:3; DEU 5:12-15).
- **Sabbath Year** Every seventh year was designated a "year of release" to allow the land to lie fallow (EXO 23:10, 11; LEV 25:1-7).
- **Year of Jubilee** The 50th year, which followed seven Sabbath years, was to proclaim liberty to those who were servants because of debt, and to return lands to their former owners (LEV 25:8-55; 27:17-24; Ezek. 46:17).
- **The New Moon** The first day of the Hebrew 29- or 30-day month was a day of rest, special sacrifices, and the blowing of trumpets (NUM 28:11-15; Ps. 81:3).
- **Dedication** (Lights or *Hanukkah*) An eight-day feast in the ninth month (Chislev) commemorating the cleansing of the temple from defilement by Syria, and its rededication (JOH 10:22).
- **Purim** (Lots) A feast on the 14th and 15th of the 12th month (Adar). The name comes from Babylonian *Pur*, meaning "Lot" (Esth. 9:18-32).

The Jewish Calendar

The Jews used two kinds of calendars: *Civil Calendar*—official calendar of kings, childbirth, and contracts.
Sacred Calendar—from which festivals were computed.

NAMES OF MONTHS	CORRESPONDS WITH	NUMBER OF DAYS	MONTH OF CIVIL YEAR	MONTH OF SACRED YEAR
TISHRI	Sept.-Oct.	30 days	1 st	7 th
HESHVAN	Oct.-Nov.	29 or 30	2 nd	8 th
CHISLEV	Nov.-Dec.	29 or 30	3 rd	9 th
TEBETH	Dec.-Jan.	29	4 th	10 th
SHEBAT	Jan.-Feb.	30	5 th	11 th
ADAR	Feb.-Mar.	29 or 30	6 th	12 th
NISAN	Mar.-Apr.	30	7 th	1 st
IYAR	Apr.-May	29	8 th	2 nd
SIVAN	May-June	30	9 th	3 rd
TAMMUZ	June-July	29	10 th	4 th
AB	July-Aug.	30	11 th	5 th
ELUL	Aug.-Sept.	29	12 th	6 th

* Hebrew months were alternately 30 and 29 days long. Their year, shorter than ours, had 354 days. Therefore, about every three years (7 times in 19 years) an extra 29-day month, VEADAR, was added between ADAR and NISAN.