

THE SEVEN FESTIVALS OF THE MESSIAH

An Overview of the Jewish Feasts

JOEL 2:1 Blow the **Shofar** in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:

The **festivals** are blueprints through which G-d revealed His overall plan of redemption for both man and the earth following the fall of man in the Garden of Eden as well as the role that the Messiah (Yeshua) would play in that redemption. The festivals are divided into two major portions, depending upon whether they occur in the spring or the fall. The **spring festivals** teach about the first coming of the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) and the **fall festivals** teach about the second coming of the Messiah Yeshua. **In HOS 6:3** it is written, "...His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as **the latter and former rain** unto the earth." The "latter and former rain" in this passage is commonly interpreted and understood to be the coming of the **Holy Spirit** (Ruach HaKodesh). This is indeed a valid interpretation and application; however, the former and latter rain also refers to the first and second coming of the Messiah (Yeshua). G-d set up the festivals in an agricultural context. G-d gave the natural for us to understand the spiritual:

- **1CO 15:46** **The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.**

During the course of the year, the rains come in Israel at two primary times--the spring and the fall. If we cross-reference Hosea (Hoshea) 6:3 with Joel (Yoel) 2:23, we see that the former rain is the Hebrew word **moreh** which means "teacher," and the word moderately in Joel 2:23, is the Hebrew word **tzedakah**, which means "righteousness." The teacher of righteousness was a term for the Messiah. Yeshua (Jesus) was the teacher of righteousness sent by G-d:

- **JOH 3:2** **He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."**

Yeshua was sent by G-d to the earth to faithfully teach us righteousness, just as G-d faithfully sends us the rain. The harvest (believers in the Messiah) is the product that the rain (the Messiah) produces:

- **ISA 55:10** **As the RAIN and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**

In Leviticus 23:2 it is written, ".....the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations...." The Hebrew term translated as convocation in Leviticus (Vayikra) 23:2,4 is **miqra**, which means "**a rehearsal**." From this we can see that G-d gave the festivals to be yearly "rehearsals" of the future events in the redemption. Because G-d gave the "rehearsals" to teach us about the major events in the redemption, if we want to understand the major events in the redemption, then we need to understand what G-d was teaching us by these rehearsals. The purpose of this book is to show how the "rehearsals" teach us about the real events in the redemption and the role of the Messiah (Yeshua) in these events.

- **DEU 16:16** **THREE TIMES A YEAR all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed:**

In **DEU (Devarim) 16:16**, G-d instructed the people to come to Jerusalem (Yerushalayim) three times a year to observe the feasts. As they came, they observed ceremonies given by G-d that were performed in both the temple (Beit HaMikdash) and the home. These ceremonies were twofold in nature. They looked forward and they looked backward. Many of these ceremonies and the specific instructions concerning what was done during these feasts and how they were done can be found in the Mishnah, the oral teaching of Judaism, in the section called Mo'ed. The Mishnah is divided into six orders. Each order is divided into tractates, or different sections of each order. The order called Mo'ed speaks of the festivals. Mo'ed, which we saw earlier means "an appointed time," has two meanings. First, in Deuteronomy (Devarim) 16:16, the Jewish people have an appointment to be at a specific place (Jerusalem) at a specific time (the time of the three major pilgrimage festivals). Secondly, G-d has an appointment to perform certain events in the redemption at this time. There are four important aspects to remember when dealing with each of the seven great festivals of the L-rd:

1. **All of the festivals are, at the same time, both historical and prophetic.**
2. **All of the festivals teach about the Messiah (Yeshua), or Jesus.**
3. **All of the festivals are agricultural in context.**
4. **All of the festivals teach about your personal relationship with G-d and how you are to walk (halacha) with Him as you grow in the knowledge of Him, from being a baby believer to a mature believer.**

It is important to remember that as an entire unit, the festivals teach and reveal the complete plan of G-d; however, each festival centers on a particular theme in the plan of G-d.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPRING FESTIVALS

The four spring festivals are **Passover** (Pesach), **Unleavened Bread** (Hag HaMatzah), **First Fruits** (Bikkurim), and the **Feast of Weeks** (Shavuot), or **Pentecost**.

1. **Passover (Pesach)** occurs in the first month of the religious calendar (Aviv, also called Nisan), on the fourteenth day, Leviticus (Vayikra) 23:5.
2. **Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah)** immediately follows the first day of Passover (Pesach). It is observed in the first month (Aviv/Nisan) from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first day (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:6-8).
3. The **Feast of First Fruits** of the barley harvest (Bikkurim) is observed during the week of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah). It will always be the day following the weekly sabbath, the first day of the week (Yom Rishon), which we call Sunday (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:9-11). Anciently, on this day, sheaves of barley were waved before the L-rd in a prescribed ceremony. Today, this festival is not observed in traditional Judaism.
4. The **Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)** is also known as **Pentecost**. Beginning on the Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim), we begin to count 50 days. This is called the counting of the omer. On the fiftieth day following the Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim) is the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21). (Note: Pentecost is a Greek word that literally means "fiftieth.")

These **four spring festivals** are joined together as an interrelated unit. The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) is considered the conclusion or atzeret to Passover. The season of Passover (Pesach) is not considered totally over until Shavuot (Pentecost) is completed.

The Exodus Story: From Pesach to Shavuot

Pesach (Passover) begins in Egypt (a type of the world), where the children of Israel had become slaves. When the children of Israel cried out to G-d to remember the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, G-d called forth a deliverer named Moses (Moshe). G-d told Moses that He was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land (Exodus 3:8). When G-d sent Moses (Moshe) to Pharaoh, G-d did not tell Moses (Moshe) to ask Pharaoh to allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt and go to the Promised Land. Instead, G-d only instructed Moses (Moshe) to ask Pharaoh to allow the children of Israel to take a three-day journey into the wilderness to make a sacrifice to G-d (Exodus 3:18). Moses (Moshe) obeyed G-d's instructions exactly as can be seen in Exodus 5:1-3. Pharaoh's first deviance of the Almighty One of Israel was his refusal to allow the people of G-d to observe a feast and to sacrifice to Him!

After a remarkable series of plagues inflicted on Egypt because of Pharaoh's continued stubbornness, the children of Israel were finally released to leave Egypt laden with the spoils of the Egyptians. The children of Israel came to the banks of the Red Sea on the seventeenth day of Aviv/Nisan, which is three days after the day of Passover in the first month of the religious calendar. The Passover Lamb was slain on the fourteenth of Nisan and the people left Egypt before midnight in the evening of the fifteenth after the death angel struck the firstborn of Egypt. When Pharaoh saw that the children of Israel were trapped against the sea, he foolishly decided to pursue them with his army (Exodus 14:1-9). The children of Israel became afraid, but Moses (Moshe) rose up and said, as it is written, "...Fear ye not, stand still, and **see the salvation [Yeshooah in Hebrew], of the Lord...**" (Exodus 14:13). Yeshua in Hebrew means salvation or Savior (Matthew 1:21). At this point, the sea divided and the children of Israel crossed the floor of the Red Sea on dry ground while the Egyptian army, along with Pharaoh, pursued the Hebrews into the Red Sea and were drowned (Exodus 14:26-28; 15:4,19). The Bible says that the L-rd's right hand destroyed the Egyptians (Exodus 15:6,12). The right hand is a term for the Messiah, Yeshua (Psalms 44:3; 48:10; 63:8; 74:10-11; 89:13; 98:1; 110:1; 118:16; 138:7; Isaiah 41:10; 53:1-5; 62:8; Acts 2:32-36; 5:31-32; Hebrews 1:3).

It is important to note that Pharaoh, along with his army, drowned in the sea. In the days of Joseph (Yosef), there was a famine in Israel and the children of Israel went down to Egypt and gave themselves to rulership under Pharaoh. Because of this, Pharaoh had legal ownership over the people. This ownership could be broken only by the death of Pharaoh, thus freeing the children of Israel to go to the Promised Land. Because of this fact, G-d did not violate His word to Pharaoh through Moses (Moshe) when he asked Pharaoh to let the people go on a three-day journey into the wilderness, but later continued to go to the Promised Land. When Pharaoh died, his rulership over the children of Israel was legally broken and the people were free to go to the Promised Land. For this reason, the season of Passover (Pesach) is called "The Feast of Our Freedom". Spiritually speaking, Pharaoh is a type of satan (Ha satan). Until you accept the Messiah (Yeshua) into your life, Satan has legal ownership over you. By the death of Yeshua, the legal ownership that satan has over our lives is broken and we are free to enter into the spiritual promised land of G-d and receive all the promises that He has promised us.

Fifty Days From the Red Sea: Shavuot (Pentecost)

From the crossing of the Red Sea (Nisan 17) to the day Moses met G-d on Mount Sinai were 47 days. For 47 days the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness before they came to Mount Sinai on the third day of the third month (Sivan) Exodus 19:1. G-d instructed the people through Moses to sanctify themselves before He visited them three days later on Mount Sinai, which would be the sixth day of the third month of Sivan (Exodus 19:10-11). This day would be the fiftieth day following the crossing of the Red Sea; it came to be known as the revelation of G-d at Mount Sinai. This day being the fiftieth day from the crossing of the Red Sea on Nisan 17 would be the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), or Pentecost. Therefore, from the Exodus story, we can see that the Lamb was slain on the fourteenth of Nisan, the day of Passover (Pesach). On the fifteenth of Nisan, the day of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah), the people left Egypt; on the seventeenth of Nisan the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea; and 50 days later on the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), or Pentecost, G-d gave the Torah (instruction) on Mount Sinai. In the following chapters, we will

see how Yeshua died on Passover (Pesach) (Nisan 14), was in the sepulcher on the day of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) (Nisan 15), and was resurrected on the day of First Fruits (Bikkurim) (Nisan 17), and the Holy Spirit empowered the believers 50 days following Yeshua's (Jesus) resurrection on the day of Pentecost (Shavuot). We will also discover what these feasts mean to the individual believer and how they relate to our personal relationship with G-d.

FALL FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

The fall festival season begins with a 40-day period called, in Hebrew, Teshuvah, which means "to repent or return." This 40-day period begins in the sixth month of the religious calendar, the month of Elul, and concludes on the tenth day of the seventh month, which is Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement. Each morning in the synagogue following the morning prayers, a shofar is blown (except on sabbaths and the day preceding Rosh HaShanah, the **Feast of Trumpets**). Psalm 27 is read every day. Rosh HaShanah is the thirtieth day into this 40-day period of Teshuvah or repentance. The biblical name for Rosh HaShanah is Yom Teruah, which means "the day of the awakening blast." Non-Jews call this the Feast of Trumpets. It is observed on the seventh month (Tishrei) and the first day of the month (Leviticus 23:23-24). G-d gave us this day to teach us about the resurrection of the dead, the coronation of the Messiah, the wedding of the Messiah, and much more. This day is both the Jewish New Year and the beginning of a period of soul-searching known as the High Holy Days, culminating on Yom Kippur. Therefore, the last 10 days of the 40-day period of Teshuvah, beginning on Elul 1, is also called the High Holy Days. The first and second days of the 10 High Holy Days (Tishrei 1-10) are collectively known as one day (Nehemiah 7:73; 8:1-2,13). The seven-day period from Tishrei 3 through Tishrei 9 is called the Days of Awe or the Awesome Days (Yamim Nora'im). G-d gave these special days on His calendar to teach us about the future tribulation period on earth (Chevlai shel Mashiach). These seven days will correspond to the seven years of the tribulation known in Hebrew as the "birthpangs of the Messiah" (Chevlai shel Mashiach).

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is observed on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:26-32). Since Rosh Hashanah teaches us about the resurrection of the dead, the coronation of the Messiah and the wedding of the Messiah, and the Days of Awe teach us about the tribulation (Chevlai shel Mashiach), Yom Kippur teaches us about the literal second coming of the Messiah Yeshua when He will set His foot down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

The **Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)** is observed the fifteenth day of the seventh month of Tishrei to the twenty-first day. This festival teaches us the joy of the Messianic Kingdom, known in Hebrew as the Athid Lavo or to non-Jews as the Millennium. This can be found in Leviticus (Vayikra) 23:33-44. The day following the twenty-first day of Tishrei, the last day of Sukkot, is a special day called Shemini Atzeret. It is known as the eighth day (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:36) and is the twenty-second day of Tishrei.

Another festival called Simchat Torah is observed in conjunction with Shemini Atzeret. Simchat means "rejoicing" in Hebrew, so Simchat Torah means "rejoicing in the Torah." In ancient times, this festival was observed on the twenty-second of Tishrei, the same day as Shemini Atzeret. Today it is celebrated on the twenty-third of Tishrei. The celebration of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah spans a 48-hour period, but it is referred to as "one long day." It is only one of two instances in the biblical year when there is a 48-hour period known as one long day. The other is Rosh HaShanah, which spans the first and second days of Tishrei. Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah were given by G-d to teach us how things will be following the Messianic age or the Millennium when the world will enter into eternity.

1. **PASSOVER: 1CO 5:6** Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For **Christ, our PASSOVER lamb, has been sacrificed.**
2. **FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD: 1CO 5:7** Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore **let us keep THE FESTIVAL (OF UNLEAVENED BREAD), not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.**
3. **DAY OF FIRSTFRUITS: 1CO 15:20** But **Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the FIRSTFRUITS of those who have fallen asleep.** 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.
4. **PENTECOST: ACT 2:1** **When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.** 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
5. **DAY OF TRUMPETS: 1TH 4:16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and **with the TRUMPET call of God,** and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
6. **DAY OF ATONEMENT: Rom 11:26** And so **all Israel will be saved, as it is written:** "The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And **this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."**
7. **FEAST OF TABERNACLES: REV 7:13** Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and **He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.** 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

FEASTS OF THE L-RD

Biblical/Hebrew Name	English Name	Time of Observance
1. Pesach	Passover	Nisan/Aviv 14
2. Hag HaMatzah	Feast of Unleavened Bread	Nisan/Aviv 15-21
3. Bikkurim	First Fruits of Barley Harvest	The morrow after the Sabbath during Hag HaMatzah
4. Shavuot	Feast of Weeks/Pentecost	Fifty days from the Feast of First Fruits
5. Yom Teruah (Rosh HaShanah)	Feast of Trumpets	Tishrei 1
6. Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement	Tishrei 10
7. Sukkot	Feast of Tabernacles/Booths	Tishrei 15-21
a. Shemini Atzeret	The eighth assembly/conclusion	Tishrei 22
b. Simchat Torah	Rejoicing in the Torah	Tishrei 23

HISTORICAL APPLICATION OF THE FEASTS

FEAST	HISTORICAL ASPECT
1. Passover (Pesach)	Israel's deliverance out of Egyptian bondage
2. Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah)	The going out of Egypt
3. First Fruits (Bikkurim)	Crossing the Red Sea
4. Pentecost (Shavuot)	Giving the Torah at Mount Sinai
5. Rosh HaShanah (Yom Teruah)	Blowing the Shofar/Jewish New Year
6. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Priest entered the Holy of Holies; Cleansing of the people's sins
7. Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Entering the Promised Land/Great Rejoicing

MESSIANIC APPLICATION OF THE FEASTS

FEAST	MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT
1. Passover (Pesach)	Death of Yeshua on the tree
2. Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah)	The Burial of Yeshua
3. First Fruits (Bikkurim)	Resurrection of Yeshua
4. Pentecost (Shavuot)	Pouring out of Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) on Shavuot (Acts 2)
5. Rosh HaShanah (Yom Teruah)	The Resurrection of the Dead / Rapture (Natzal) of believers
6. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	The Day of Messiah's Second Coming (Zech 14:4)
7. Tabernacles (Sukkot)	The Messianic Era/Millennium (Athid Lavo)

SPIRITUAL APPLICATION OF THE FEASTS

FEAST	SPIRITUAL APPLICATION (Halacha)
1. Passover (Pesach)	Repent (Teshuvah) and trust by faith (Emunah) in the shed blood of Yeshua
2. Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah)	Sanctification and separation from evil represented by water immersion (Mikvah)
3. First Fruits (Bikkurim)	Walking (Halacha) in newness of life
4. Pentecost (Shavuot)	Immersion in the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) and growing in faith (Emunah) in G-d (making spiritual aliyah)
5. Rosh HaShanah (Yom Teruah)	Hear (Shema) the calling (Shofar) of for our lives
6. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Yielding ourselves to G-d so we may live (face to face) in His Presence
7. Tabernacles (Sukkot)	A daily rest (shabbat) in the Messiah and having the rest (menuchah) of His Kingdom in our hearts