

The Book of Leviticus, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 14: The Feasts of the Lord

Leviticus 23:1–24:23

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

What is doctrinally at stake in this lesson is the relationship between the Old Covenant calendar and the life of the Christian. These feasts, including the weekly Sabbath, were genuinely given by God to Israel, holy and good in their place. But they were shadows, and the body that cast them is Christ (Colossians 2:16–17). The teacher must help students see both the beauty of the feasts and their fulfillment, so that we neither despise the shadow nor mistake it for the substance. We do not bind feast days or Sabbath-keeping on Christians as law. Christians gather to worship on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), in joyful response to the resurrection, not under Old Covenant Sabbath regulations. Guard the class from two errors: treating the Lord's Day as a Christian Sabbath governed by Mosaic rules, and dismissing the Old Testament as having nothing to say to us (Romans 15:4).

The gospel is hidden in plain sight in this chapter. Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7), Christ the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20–23), the church born at Pentecost (Acts 2), atonement accomplished once for all (Hebrews 9:11–12), and the believer's rest in Christ (Hebrews 4:9–10) are all foreshadowed here. The teacher who walks students through these connections will give them a thrilling sense that the whole of Scripture is one unfolding story aimed at Jesus.

For the student's formation, this lesson is an invitation to recover a worshiping rhythm. We live in a frantic, calendar-cluttered age, and gratitude is the first casualty of busyness. The aim is not to revive Israel's festivals but to learn their heart: deliberate stopping, faithful remembering, generous rejoicing, and eyes fixed forward on Christ. A class that leaves wanting to keep the Lord's Day with fresh joy, to give God the firstfruits of their time, and to remember the poor in their celebration has been formed well.

Question 1

Student Question:

Leviticus 23:1–3 opens the chapter not with an annual festival but with the weekly Sabbath, calling it a "holy convocation" and a Sabbath "of rest" rooted in God's own pattern (Exodus 20:11). Why does God place the recurring weekly rhythm at the head of the list, and what does this teach us about the value God places on regular, set-apart times of worship and rest?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter announces a theme before listing a single annual feast: “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:3). God places the weekly Sabbath at the head of the calendar, and the placement preaches. Before any once-a-year festival, God establishes a weekly heartbeat of rest and assembly. The most formative rhythm in our spiritual life is not the rare mountaintop but the regular, repeated, set-apart day.

The Sabbath was rooted in God’s own pattern of creation, resting on the seventh day (Exodus 20:11), and in His redemption of Israel from slavery (Deuteronomy 5:15). It taught Israel that they were not slaves driven without rest but a free people under a good God. The word “convocation” means a sacred assembly, a calling-together. Worship was never meant to be merely private. God gathers a people.

We must be careful and clear here. The weekly Sabbath was given to Israel under the Old Covenant. It is good and instructive, but it is a shadow, and Paul explicitly lists “the sabbath days” among the things that “are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16–17). The Christian is not bound to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as law. We are not under that covenant (Hebrews 8:13).

Christians gather on the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, to break bread and worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), in joyful response to the resurrection of Jesus. We should resist calling this a “Christian Sabbath” governed by Mosaic Sabbath rules. The day is different and the basis is different. Yet the heart of the Sabbath, regular set-apart worship and rest in God, is timeless wisdom we dare not lose.

The deeper rest the Sabbath foreshadowed is the rest we now have in Christ. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9–10). The weekly stopping pointed forward to soul-rest in the finished work of Jesus and ultimately to eternal rest with Him. So the question is not chiefly which day, but whether our lives have any rhythm of stopping to rest in God at all.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The weekly Sabbath was given to Israel under the Old Covenant and is good in its place, yet it is a shadow fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:16–17).
- Christians are not bound to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as law (Hebrews 8:13).
- Christians worship on the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), not as a Christian Sabbath under Mosaic rules.
- The heart of the Sabbath, regular set-apart worship and rest in God, remains timeless wisdom.
- The ultimate rest the Sabbath foreshadowed is rest in Christ’s finished work (Hebrews 4:9–10).

Discussion Prompts

- Why might God put the weekly rhythm first, before any annual feast?
- What is the difference between honoring the Lord's Day in joy and keeping a Christian Sabbath under Mosaic rules?
- How does rest in Christ (Hebrews 4:9–10) deepen what the Sabbath was always pointing toward?

Question 2

Student Question:

Think about your own seven-day cycle. Is there a genuine rhythm of stopping, worshiping, and resting in the Lord, or does one day simply blur into the next? What would it look like for you to honor the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, with deliberate, unhurried worship?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is a self-examining question, so the teacher's task is to make it concrete and personal without scolding. Most of us do not have a true seven-day rhythm. The days blur. Work bleeds into rest, screens crowd out stillness, and Sunday becomes one more errand-filled morning rather than a deliberate day to worship and rest in God.

Help students see that the Lord's Day is a gift, not a burden. Gathering with the saints on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), partaking of the Lord's Supper, singing, praying, and giving is not a tax on the weekend but a privilege purchased by the resurrection. The issue is not legal obligation but loving response.

Push gently toward specifics. What time does worship begin, and what habits the night before would help a person arrive unhurried and ready? Is there margin built into the Lord's Day for fellowship, Scripture, and rest, or is it packed as tightly as every other day?

Warn against two ditches. One is treating Sunday casually, as if assembling with God's people were optional. The other is loading it with anxious, legalistic rules that strip out the joy. Aim for deliberate, unhurried, glad worship that overflows into a restful day.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Lord's Day is a privilege of grateful worship, not a legalistic burden.
- Assembling with the saints on the first day of the week is the apostolic pattern (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25).
- Casual neglect of worship and anxious legalism are both errors to avoid.
- Unhurried preparation the night before shapes the heart for worship.

Discussion Prompts

- What in your Saturday could change so that you arrive to worship unhurried?
- Does your Lord's Day have any deliberate margin for rest and fellowship?

- What is one habit that would help the first day of the week feel set apart?

Question 3

Student Question:

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:4-8) commanded Israel to remember their redemption from Egypt and to purge out all leaven. How does Paul's declaration that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7) reveal what this feast was always pointing toward, and what does the purging of leaven say about the life of the redeemed?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread stand at the gateway of the religious year (Leviticus 23:4-8). Passover remembered the night the destroyer passed over the blood-marked homes and Israel was redeemed from Egypt. For seven days afterward, no leaven was to be found in their houses, a vivid reminder of the haste of deliverance and a call to purity.

Paul lifts the veil: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb without blemish, its blood applied, its body roasted whole, all of it whispered the name of Jesus centuries before He came. The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world, and His blood marks us for life rather than judgment.

The unleavened bread carried its own message. Leaven, a small bit of fermented dough, spreads silently through the whole lump, and Scripture uses it as a picture of sin, malice, and insincerity. "Purge out therefore the old leaven... let us keep the feast, not with old leaven... but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Redemption and purity belong together.

Here is the gospel logic. The blood comes first, then the cleansing. We are redeemed by the Lamb, and therefore we put away the old leaven. Holiness is not how we earn deliverance; it is how the delivered live. The redeemed of the Lord are called to be a new, clean lump because they truly are unleavened in Christ.

Teach students to feel the urgency. Leaven hidden in a corner still works. A tolerated sin, a private grudge, a quiet dishonesty does not stay quiet; it spreads. The feast called Israel to search the house. The gospel calls us to search the heart.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Passover pictured redemption by the blood of a spotless lamb, fulfilled in Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- Unleavened Bread called the redeemed to purge sin, malice, and insincerity (1 Corinthians 5:8).
- The order is grace then holiness: redeemed first, then called to clean living.

- Leaven pictures the hidden, spreading nature of tolerated sin.
- Holiness is the response of the redeemed, not the means of earning redemption.

Discussion Prompts

- What details of Passover point forward to Christ the Lamb?
- Why does Paul connect being redeemed with purging out leaven?
- How does the spreading nature of leaven warn us about small, tolerated sins?

Question 4

Student Question:

Leaven, that small hidden thing that spreads through the whole lump, is Paul's picture of sin and insincerity (1 Corinthians 5:8). What is one piece of "old leaven" you have been tolerating in a corner of your life, and what would it mean to clear it out in sincerity and truth?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the leaven image inward. Paul says the church already is "a new lump" in Christ, and therefore must clear out the old leaven (1 Corinthians 5:7). The class should move from doctrine to honest self-inventory. Leaven is whatever small, tolerated sin is quietly spreading.

Encourage students to name the corners. It might be a habit of cutting corners at work, a low-grade resentment toward a family member, a private indulgence on a screen, a pattern of exaggeration that shades into dishonesty. Leaven thrives where it is unnamed.

Stress the spreading. The reason God commanded total removal is that leaven never stays contained. A small compromise tolerated today shapes the conscience tomorrow. The faithful response is not management but removal, in sincerity and truth.

Point them to grace as the power for change. We purge the leaven not to become redeemed but because we are redeemed. The motive is gratitude to the Lamb who was slain, and the strength is the Spirit at work in us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Tolerated sin spreads like leaven and must be removed, not managed.
- Self-examination should name specific, concrete areas (1 Corinthians 11:28).
- Purging leaven flows from gratitude for redemption, not as a means to earn it.
- Sincerity and truth are the marks of a cleansed life (1 Corinthians 5:8).

Discussion Prompts

- What is one corner of your life where a small sin has been quietly tolerated?

- Why is removal, not just management, God's call for leaven?
- How does gratitude for the cross fuel the desire to be clean?

Question 5

Student Question:

The Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9–14) brought the first sheaf of harvest to God before the rest was gathered, an act of trust that the full harvest would come. How does Paul's teaching that "Christ the firstfruits" rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20–23) fulfill this feast, and what hope does that give us about our own resurrection?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Feast of Firstfruits commanded Israel to bring "a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest" and wave it before the Lord (Leviticus 23:9–14). They could not eat of the new harvest until God had received the first of it. It was a public confession that the harvest belonged to God and that the rest would surely follow.

Two great truths lived in this feast. First, trust: by giving the first sheaf before the full harvest was gathered, Israel declared their confidence that God would provide the whole. Second, ownership: the first and best belonged to the Lord, the giver of the increase.

Paul makes the dazzling connection: "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). Jesus is the first sheaf of the resurrection harvest. His rising is not an isolated wonder; it is the pledge and pattern of ours. Because the firstfruits have been raised, the full harvest of God's people will surely be raised at His coming.

Notice how the feast answers our deepest fear. Death looks like the end of the harvest. But the firstfruits have already come up out of the ground alive. The empty tomb is God's wave offering, lifted before the whole world, guaranteeing that those who belong to Christ will follow.

This is more than comfort; it is certainty grounded in history. The same God who never failed to bring the harvest after the firstfruits will not fail to raise His people after the risen Christ. The order is fixed: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Firstfruits gave God the first and best as an act of trust and acknowledgment of His ownership.
- Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection, the pledge of ours (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).
- The resurrection of Jesus is a fixed pattern, not an isolated event.
- The full harvest of God's people will be raised at Christ's coming.
- Resurrection hope is grounded in the historical fact of the empty tomb.

Discussion Prompts

- How does giving the first sheaf express trust in God's provision?
- Why does Paul call the risen Christ the firstfruits?
- What hope does this feast give you about your own resurrection?

Question 6

Student Question:

Bringing the firstfruits meant giving God the first and best before you knew the rest was secure. In your time, your money, and your energy, does God receive your firstfruits or your leftovers? What is one area where you could put Him first this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the firstfruits principle into the student's life. To give firstfruits is to give God the first and the best before you are certain the rest is secure. It is the opposite of giving God the leftovers once everything else is covered.

Apply it across the domains the class actually lives in. Time: do we give God the first part of the day, the first day of the week, before the calendar fills, or only the scraps that remain? Money: under the New Testament we give as we have purposed in our hearts, not grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), but the firstfruits heart still asks whether God gets our first and best. Energy: do we serve when we are fresh or only when we are spent?

Avoid turning this into a guilt exercise. The firstfruits offering was an act of glad trust, not anxious appeasement. The goal is joyful priority, ordering our lives so that God genuinely comes first because we believe He will provide the rest.

Land on one concrete step. A specific morning habit, a planned and purposeful gift, a commitment to serve before exhaustion sets in. Firstfruits living is built from particular, repeated choices to put God first.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Firstfruits living means giving God the first and best, not the leftovers.
- New Testament giving is purposeful, generous, and cheerful (2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).
- Putting God first is an act of trust that He will provide the rest.
- Joyful priority, not anxious guilt, is the right motive.

Discussion Prompts

- In your time, does God get the firstfruits or the leftovers?
- What would purposeful, cheerful giving look like for you this month?
- What is one concrete way to put God first this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15–22), came fifty days after Firstfruits and celebrated the grain harvest with rejoicing, generosity to the poor, and gratitude. Why is it significant that on the day of Pentecost the church began and three thousand souls were harvested into Christ (Acts 2), and what does that say about God's harvest in the gospel age?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, fell fifty days after Firstfruits and celebrated the wheat harvest (Leviticus 23:15–22). It was a feast of joyful gratitude, marked by offerings and, strikingly, by a command to leave the corners of the field for the poor and the stranger. Thanksgiving and generosity were braided together.

Centuries later, on the day of Pentecost, something far greater was harvested. The Spirit was poured out, Peter preached the risen Christ, and “the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). The grain harvest of Leviticus became a harvest of human hearts, the firstfruits of the church.

This is no coincidence of the calendar. The feast that celebrated harvest became the day God began gathering His great harvest in the gospel. Jesus had said the fields were white for harvest, and at Pentecost the sickle of the gospel began its work, a work that continues in every soul brought to Christ.

Note the response Peter called for: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The harvest of the gospel age is gathered as people hear, believe, repent, and obey. This is how God brings souls into His barn, the church, today.

And the old command to remember the poor was not left behind. The harvested church in Acts cared for one another and for those in need. Gratitude for God's harvest in our lives should always overflow into generosity toward those with less.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Pentecost celebrated harvest with joy, gratitude, and generosity to the poor (Leviticus 23:22).
- The church began on the day of Pentecost as a harvest of souls (Acts 2).
- The gospel-age harvest is gathered as people hear, believe, repent, and are baptized (Acts 2:38).
- The kingdom is the church, established in Acts 2, with Christ reigning now.
- Gratitude for God's blessing overflows in generosity to those in need.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it fitting that the church began on a harvest feast?
- How is the gospel harvest gathered today?
- How does remembering the poor belong with celebrating God's blessing?

Question 8

Student Question:

Tucked into the Pentecost instructions is a command to leave the corners of the field for the poor and the stranger (Leviticus 23:22). When you celebrate God's blessing in your life, do you remember those with less? Who is one person God may be calling you to share your harvest with?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Hidden in the Pentecost instructions is a tender command: "thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field... thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger" (Leviticus 23:22). At the very moment Israel celebrated abundance, God told them to deliberately leave some behind for those who had none.

This is the heart we want to cultivate. Blessing is not meant to terminate on us. The feast of harvest included the poor by design. Gratitude that forgets the needy has missed half of what God intended.

Press the class to think of real people, not categories. Who is the widow, the struggling young family, the lonely stranger, the brother out of work, whose corner of the field God may be assigning to you? Generosity becomes real when it has a name and a face.

Encourage a concrete step that costs something. Leaving the corners meant accepting a smaller yield on purpose. Real generosity makes a real dent. Invite each student to identify one person and one specific way to share this season.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God built care for the poor into the feast of harvest (Leviticus 23:22).
- Blessing is meant to overflow to others, not terminate on us.
- Generosity becomes real when it is aimed at specific people.
- True giving accepts a real cost, like a smaller yield.

Discussion Prompts

- When you celebrate God's blessing, do you remember those with less?
- Who is one specific person God may be calling you to help?
- What is one concrete way to leave a corner of your field for them?

Question 9

Student Question:

The seventh month gathers the weightiest holy days: the Feast of Trumpets sounding an alarm, the solemn Day of Atonement when the nation afflicted their souls and was cleansed, and the joyful Feast of Tabernacles remembering God's care in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:23-43). Taken together, how do these feasts move the worshiper from being summoned, to being cleansed, to dwelling in joyful fellowship with God, and how does Christ our atonement and the believer's rest (Hebrews 4:9-10; Hebrews 9:11-12) bring the whole pattern to its fulfillment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The seventh month gathers the weightiest holy days of all, and together they trace a profound movement (Leviticus 23:23-43). It begins with the Feast of Trumpets, a day "of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation," an alarm that summoned the people to attention and prepared them for what was coming. Worship begins when God calls and we stop to listen.

Then comes the Day of Atonement, the most solemn day of the year: "ye shall afflict your souls... for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you" (Leviticus 23:27-28). It was a day of humbling, fasting, and cleansing, when the nation's sin was dealt with and the people were made clean before God. There is no fellowship with a holy God without atonement.

And then, after the cleansing, comes joy. The Feast of Tabernacles, eight days of dwelling in booths, remembering that God brought them through the wilderness and cared for them. "Ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days" (Leviticus 23:40). The summoned and cleansed people now dwell with God in gladness.

Watch the gospel shape of it: summoned, cleansed, then dwelling in joyful fellowship. That is the very pattern of the Christian life. God calls us, Christ cleanses us, and we dwell with Him in joy. The whole movement finds its center in the atonement, the day everything else depended on.

And the atonement these feasts pictured is fulfilled in Christ. "Christ being come an high priest... by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:11-12). The Day of Atonement happened year after year because it could never finish the work. Jesus entered once, and it is finished. He is our atonement, and in Him we have the rest the feasts could only foreshadow (Hebrews 4:9-10).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Trumpets summoned the people to attention and worship.
- The Day of Atonement cleansed the nation, teaching that fellowship with God requires atonement (Leviticus 23:27-28).

- Tabernacles celebrated joyful dwelling with God after cleansing.
- The pattern of summoned, cleansed, then dwelling in joy mirrors the Christian life.
- Christ is our atonement, entering once for all by His own blood (Hebrews 9:11-12).
- In Christ we enter the rest the feasts foreshadowed (Hebrews 4:9-10).

Discussion Prompts

- How do these three feasts move the worshiper from summons to cleansing to joy?
- Why must atonement come before fellowship and joy?
- How does Christ's once-for-all atonement fulfill the Day of Atonement?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across this entire sacred calendar, every feast remembered God's work, rejoiced in His provision, and quietly pointed to Christ. Now that these shadows are fulfilled in Jesus, our Passover, our firstfruits, our atonement, and our rest, what is one specific way you want Christ to reshape how you remember, how you rejoice, and how you give Him your time?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question asks students to look back across the whole sacred calendar and see one thing: it was always pointing to Jesus. The Passover lamb, the wave of firstfruits, the harvest of Pentecost, the blood of atonement, the joyful dwelling of Tabernacles, every shadow had a body, and the body is Christ (Colossians 2:17).

Now that these shadows are fulfilled, the Christian does not keep the feasts as law, but inherits their heart. We remember a greater redemption, the cross. We rejoice in a greater harvest, the resurrection and the gathering of the church. We rest in a greater atonement, accomplished once for all. The calendar was a long arrow, and it landed on Jesus.

Help students make it personal in three directions the feasts themselves emphasized. How we remember: do we let the cross and empty tomb shape our weekly worship on the Lord's Day? How we rejoice: is our worship marked by genuine gladness in what God has done, or has it gone cold and rote? How we give our time: do we order our days and weeks so that God truly comes first?

Resist vague resolutions. Invite each person to name one specific way they want Christ to reshape one of these areas, a concrete change in how they keep the Lord's Day, how they cultivate gratitude, or how they give God their firstfruits of time. The feasts were never abstract; they were lived. So should our response be.

Close by lifting their eyes to the One every feast awaited. Israel kept a calendar of shadows for centuries, longing for the substance. We live on the other side of the cross, holding the

substance Himself. The right response to such grace is wholehearted, joyful, ordered worship of Jesus, our Passover, our firstfruits, our atonement, and our rest.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Every feast was a shadow whose body is Christ (Colossians 2:16–17).
- Christians are not bound to keep the feasts as law but inherit their heart.
- We remember the cross, rejoice in the resurrection harvest, and rest in Christ's atonement.
- Formation touches how we remember, how we rejoice, and how we give God our time.
- The right response to fulfilled shadows is wholehearted, joyful worship of Jesus.

Discussion Prompts

- Which feast most vividly shows you Christ, and why?
- How should living after the cross reshape your weekly worship?
- What is one specific way you want Christ to reshape how you remember, rejoice, or give Him your time?