

The Book of Leviticus

Lesson 14: The Feasts of the Lord -- Leviticus 23:1-24:23

Open a calendar on your phone and scroll through the months. Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, the days you circle and the days you dread. A calendar tells you what a person treasures. In Leviticus 23 God hands Israel His own calendar, and it is breathtaking. "The feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Leviticus 23:2). Notice the possessive. These are not Israel's parties thrown for God. They are God's appointments kept by Israel, sacred rhythms woven into the turning of the year so that a whole nation would stop, remember, rejoice, and worship together.

Walk through the year with them. The weekly Sabbath, recurring like a heartbeat. Passover and Unleavened Bread in the spring, when the lamb's blood and the bitter exodus came flooding back. Firstfruits, a wave offering of the first sheaf, a thank-you for harvest before the harvest was fully in. Pentecost, fifty days later, hands full of grain and gratitude. Then in the seventh month a cluster of holy days: Trumpets blasting the people to attention, the solemn Day of Atonement when the nation was cleansed, and Tabernacles, eight days of living in booths and remembering that God brought them through the wilderness.

Every feast carries a sermon. Each one says, "Remember what I did. Trust what I am doing. Look for what I will do." The exodus past, the harvest present, the dwelling-with-God future. And the wonder, the thing that makes a Christian reader catch his breath, is that every one of these shadows finds its substance in Jesus. Paul says it plainly: these feasts "are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17). The calendar was always pointing forward to Him.

Chapter 24 then turns from the year to the daily life of the sanctuary, the pure lampstand kept burning, the showbread set out fresh each Sabbath, the bread of the Presence before the Lord continually. And it closes with a hard, sobering scene: a man who blasphemes the holy Name, and God's solemn law of just retribution. Holiness, it turns out, touches everything, the festivals and the lamp oil and the words that come out of our mouths. So let us walk this sacred calendar slowly, and let it teach us how to remember, how to rejoice, and how to fix our eyes on the One every feast was waiting for.

Group Discussion: As a class, walk through the seven appointed feasts in Leviticus 23 and name what each one asked Israel to remember or anticipate. Which of these rhythms of remembrance, rest, and rejoicing do you sense is most missing from the way we live and worship today, and why?

Personal Reflection: God built deliberate stopping points into Israel's year so that gratitude would never be crowded out by busyness. Where in your own week or year have you let remembering God get squeezed out, and what is one rhythm you could reclaim this month?

Read Leviticus 23:1–24:23

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?

5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?

10. 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?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, Christ our Passover and the call to keep the feast in sincerity and truth; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Christ the firstfruits of those who sleep; Acts 2:1-41, Pentecost and the harvest of the first gospel sermon; Colossians 2:16-17, feast days and sabbaths as shadows whose body is Christ; Hebrews 4:9-10, the rest that remains for the people of God

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