

Doctrine of Israel's Feasts

by
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1. Israel's religious calendar is divided into two sections, spring feasts and fall feasts.
2. These feasts were each designed to communicate something different about God's plan in human history. Each feast revealed a different aspect of God's plan for Israel in "shadow" form (Heb. 10:1) as the Jews looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. The primary application of each feast is in relation to Israel, not the Church.
3. The Spring feasts foreshadowed events in the saving work of the Messiah at the First Advent. These prophecies or types were fulfilled literally on the exact day of the feast. It can only be assumed that the Fall feasts will be fulfilled just as literally.
4. The Spring feasts include: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost.
5. The Fall Feasts include: Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.
6. Since the Spring feasts were all fulfilled literally, then the Fall feasts must also be expected to be fulfilled literally. If you don't have a literal interpretation of prophecy, and by this I mean a dispensational, pre-tribulational, premillennial view then nothing is fulfilled on those Fall feast days and they become typologically meaningless because in Amillennial and Postmillennial systems of theology there is no future for national, ethnic Israel.
7. Passover was the first of these holy days and the first of three annual pilgrimage feasts requiring all Jewish males to celebrate the feast at the Temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 12; 23:17; Lev. 23:5; Deut. 16:16). The Passover commemorated the historical deliverance from Egypt and was observed on the fourteenth day of Nisan, the first month in the Jewish ritual calendar. Christ was crucified on Passover eve as a substitute for the sins of the world (John 19:14). Passover foreshadowed redemption through the crucifixion of the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29; cf., 1 Cor. 5:7).
8. The day after Passover, the fifteenth of Nisan, the week long Feast of Unleavened Bread began. During this week no work was done and on the first and last day sacrifices were offered (Num 28:16-25; Deut. 16:1-8). The Feast of Unleavened Bread portrayed the impeccability of the humanity of Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union, for Jesus Christ is called "the Bread of Life" (John 6:35). The prohibition of work represents believer's day by day trust in God after salvation as he is nourished on the Bread of life, Bible doctrine which is the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
9. On the day after the Sabbath following Passover was the Feast of Firstfruits. At Firstfruits, which was dictated by first harvest, the first sheaf of barely was brought in and cut and waved before YHWH as a sign of divine blessing and a guarantee that the harvest would be bountiful (Lev. 23:9-14). The Feast of First Fruits portrayed the resurrection of Christ, "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). The feast occurred on the first day of the week, even as Christ was raised on the first day of the week. Like the feast of first fruits, the resurrection of Christ anticipates the harvest which is to follow, the resurrection of the saints.
10. Fifty days after Firstfruits came Pentecost, the "Feast of Weeks" (Lev. 23:15-22; Deut 16:9-12), the third annual pilgrimage feast that celebrated the wheat harvest, the arrival of God's provision. Thus

Pentecost represents the fulfillment of God's promise of the Spirit to Israel. Yet something had gone wrong, the nation rejected the Messiah. At the end of the Pentecost period the Holy Spirit was to come to create a unified nation. However, the people rejected the Messiah. So instead of the moon and sun turning dark and the other signs of Joel, none of those things happened the way it was supposed to happen, what happened was tongues. What was that all about? Of all the signs given in Joel, tongues was NOT a sign of the coming age. But it was a sign of coming divine judgment for the nation Israel (1 Cor. 14:21-22; cf., Isa. 28:11). Why? Because the nation had rejected her Messiah. The Holy Spirit came as scheduled, loyal to God's plan and promise, but had to manifest in a different way, instead of manifesting as blessing, there was this manifestation of divine judgment. The Holy Spirit came in a new way to build a new Body, the Body of Christ. If it had happened as originally prophesied, then the Holy Spirit would have taken the nation and made it useable unto God. Instead, a new plan and dispensation is inaugurated and in such a way as to signal judgment to Israel. The two loaves represent the Gentiles and Israel who are united into one body, the church (Eph 2:14).

11. The Feast of Trumpets (Num. 29:1-6; Lev. 23:23-25) is on the first day of Tishri, the seventh month in the Jewish religious calendar. This announces the preparation of Israel for national repentance (a change of thinking about the Messiah). This occurs at the end of the Tribulation as the Gentile armies prepare to assault Jerusalem.

12. The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:26-32), is on the tenth of Tishri and recognizes their national acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and that He died as a sacrifice for their sins. This will be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation as the nation cries out to Jesus to come and save them (Joel 2:32; Matt. 23:39).

13. The Feast of Tabernacles, Succoth or the Feast of Booths or Ingathering, occurs on the fifteenth of Tishri when the harvest is finally in and the people rejoice that all is done, all is complete, and it is a time of tremendous parties and celebration (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:33-44; Deut. 16:13). This feast lasted seven days, the first and last marked by sacrifices. Fruit was gathered in and the people dwelt in booths made of branches and foliage. A time that commemorated the complete provision of God and foreshadows the commencement of the Millennial kingdom.

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