

# **The Feasts of the Lord**

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The Feasts of the Lord were given to Israel as part of the Mosaic Covenant. They represent a series of seven observances that Israel was commanded to observe on a yearly basis. Like other things that Israel was commanded to do under the Law, these seven feasts had special meanings for Israel and were a means by which God intended to teach Israel something about Himself and His plan. The Feasts of the Lord are an accurate picture God's plan of redemption. For Israel, they looked back to their history but, at the same time, they also looked forward to their future. While they were given specifically to Israel as part of the Mosaic Covenant, it is helpful for the Christian to understand them, since they also have meaning for us in the Church today in more ways than you might imagine.

The Feasts of the Lord are not the same as the Feasts of Israel. The Feasts of the Lord were given to Israel by God and are limited to seven feasts we will be discussing. The Feasts of Israel include the Feasts of the Lord in their list but also include other observances added by Israel like Purim and Chanukah.

## **The Jewish Calendar**

To understand the feasts, we need to understand the Jewish calendar, which is very different from our own Gregorian calendar today. Modern Gregorian calendars use a solar year as a base. The Jews actually have two calendars: A religious calendar and a civil calendar, but both are based on a lunar month rather than a solar year like our calendar. The lunar months are all approximately 29 days 12 hours long, which is the actual length of a lunar month in which the moon completes its monthly cycle from new moon, to full, to waning moon, and back to new moon again. That means each lunar month falls about half a day short. To even out the months on their calendars they observe one month is thirty days and the next one is twenty-nine days and then back to thirty again, etc.

The Feasts are always observed on the same day of the Jewish Calendar. But because of their 29.5 day months, their year is eleven days shorter than ours. The Jewish calendar date will fall on different Gregorian dates in subsequent years. To compensate for this annual eleven day drift, the Jewish calendar adds an extra month every few years. The month of Nisan, for example, occurs 11 days earlier each year for usually three years and then jumps forward 30 days, balancing out the drift. In ancient times, this month was added by observation when the Sanhedrin observed the conditions of the weather, the crops, and the livestock, and if these were not sufficiently advanced to be considered "spring," then the Sanhedrin inserted an additional month into the calendar to make sure that Pesach (Passover) would occur in the spring. This explains why Mardi Gras moves around on the calendar because it is related to Easter which is related to Passover.

The Jews observe a civil calendar year and a religious calendar year. The religious calendar year begins in the spring on their month of Nisan 1 which could fall in March or April of our Gregorian calendar. Their civil calendar year begins seven months later on Tishri 1 which would fall in September or October of our Gregorian year. I will have more to say on this later when we look at the Feast of Trumpets.

There are seven Feasts of the Lord that are divided into two groups: the spring feasts and the fall feasts. The spring feasts are Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost. These are related to the beginning of the spring grain harvests. As we will see, the spring feasts are also related to and speak of the first coming of Messiah of what Christians call the First Advent.

The fall feasts are Rosh HaShanah (Trumpets), Yom Kippur, and Tabernacles (Booths). These are mainly related to the fruit harvests in the fall. These fall feasts are related to and speak of the Second Advent.

The first spring feast, Passover, is at the beginning of the religious calendar year. The first feast in the fall, Rosh HaShanah (Trumpets), begins the civil calendar year.

**Talmud and Mishnah** — The Talmud is a rabbinical commentary on the Scriptures. The Mishnah is a rabbinical collection of Jewish traditions associated with the Torah. We will be using both sources to get a picture of how the Jews observed these feast days with details not found in the Bible. I do not consider either divinely inspired but are useful to understand some details of Israel's history, religious practices, and daily life.

## Passover (Pesach) and Unleavened Bread

**Ex 12:1** Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup> And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. <sup>8</sup> Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. <sup>10</sup> You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. <sup>11</sup> And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the Lord's Passover. <sup>12</sup> ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the

firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup> So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. <sup>15</sup> Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup> On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. <sup>17</sup> So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. <sup>18</sup> In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. <sup>19</sup> For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. <sup>20</sup> You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ”

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the second feast to be observed and because it starts right after Passover, the two feasts are so closely related that they are almost considered as one feast.

Passover represents the last of the plagues brought upon Pharaoh for his failure to release the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. The death angel swept through the land of Egypt and took the first born of both men and animals. Historically, Passover celebrates God's deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. They were delivered by putting the blood of a lamb upon the doorposts of their houses and, of course, faith that the blood would protect them as promised by God. Spiritually, this is a picture of the Messiah and how those who believe in Him are delivered from the bondages of sin and the rule of Satan in their lives.

During Passover (*Pesach* which means to pass or hover over), the head of each household was to take a lamb of the first year on the tenth day of the first month known as Nisan. Passover was the beginning of months, and Nisan is the first month of the religious calendar. The lamb was to be set aside until the fourteenth day. In the evening of the fourteenth day, at exactly 3:00 p.m., the lamb, which had been carefully examined to be without spot or blemish, was to be killed. The blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts of the household door. The lamb was then to be roasted with fire, with bitter herbs, and with unleavened bread, and the entire household was to feast upon the body of the lamb, and all of it must be consumed. The people were instructed by God to eat the lamb with haste and to be dressed and ready to leave Egypt.

The lamb was of the first year. The firstborn of both man and beast was to be set aside and given to God (Exodus 13:2,11-13). Jesus was the firstborn of Mary naturally, and the firstborn of God spiritually (Matthew 1:21-25; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15,18; Revelation 3:14).

The sacrifice was to be a male (Exodus 12:5). It was through one man's sin that sin came into the world (Romans 5:12; 1 Timothy 2:12-14). Because Adam, the first male, sinned, so a male, Yeshua, must die to atone for that sin (Romans 5:17-19).

It is a lamb for a house. God's intention was that all (households) experience salvation. The lamb was a lamb for the house. By believing in the Messiah Yeshua, we become members of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19).

A Passover lamb was to be killed between the evenings. The phrase, "between the evening" (from Exodus 12:6) refers to the period of the day that goes from noon to 6:00 p.m., which is exactly 3:00 p.m. This would be the traditional ninth hour of the day, counting from 6:00 a.m. *Yeshua* died at the ninth hour of the day (Matthew 27:45-50), exactly 3:00 p.m.

The whole assembly shall kill it (Exodus 12:6). Every person who has ever lived on planet Earth and sinned is guilty of killing Yeshua because He died for all sinners (Romans 3:10,23), thus we all are responsible for His death on the Cross.

The blood must be applied to the door. Those who believe in the Messiah are the house of God (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6). The only way into the house of God is through the shed blood of the Messiah Yeshua, who is the Door (John 10:7-9).

The body of the lamb must be eaten. We spiritually eat of the body of the Lamb (Yeshua) when we eat of His body, which is physically and symbolically today represented by the bread, and spiritually as the Word of God (Luke 11:3; 4:4). By following the Word of God and obeying the commandments of God with sincerity of heart, we spiritually eat of His body.

It must be eaten the same night (Exodus 12:8). Yeshua was crucified, suffered, and died the same day.

It must be eaten with unleavened bread. Leaven speaks of sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). As believers, we are instructed to live holy (unleavened) lives before God

It must be eaten with bitter herbs. Bitter herbs first speak of the bondage and burdens we experience while living in this world (a type of Egypt) before we accepted Yeshua into our lives. Second, the bitter herbs speak of the bitter things that come into our lives after we accept Yeshua and attempt to follow Him on a daily basis. For Yeshua, dying on the tree was a bitter experience because He had to pay for man's sin with His sinless life.

The lamb must be roasted in fire. Fire speaks of judgment, refining, and purification. Our faith is judged and tested by fire so it can be refined and purified and come forth as pure gold (Zechariah 13:9; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 3:18).

It must not be sodden with water. The gospel of Yeshua must not be watered down (Mark 7:9,13; 2 Timothy 3:5).

The head, legs, and other parts of the lamb must be eaten. Those who believe in Yeshua must feed on the mind of Yeshua (Philippians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:21-23; Hebrews 8:10). The legs speak of our walk (Colossians 2:6). How are the believers in Yeshua to walk? (See Romans 6:4; 8:1,4; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; 5:2,8; Colossians 1:10, 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 John 1:7; 2 John 1:6; 3 John 1:4.)

The lamb must be eaten in haste. Bible believers must be quick to leave Egypt, representing the influences of the world, and run toward the life that is in the Messiah (Luke 19:5-6).

It must be eaten with our loins girded. Our loins being girded speaks about our hearts' desire to eagerly serve and obey God. Our spiritual loins are the truth of the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14).

Shoes must be on our feet. Shoes on our feet speak about our walk with God.

A staff must be in our hand. A staff in our hand speaks about the believer's authority in the Kingdom of God by the name of Yeshua (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is a memorial forever (Exodus 12:14; Luke 22:1,7-8, 13-15,19). Passover is one of the feasts that will continue into the Kingdom.

It is to be observed at the going down of the sun (Deuteronomy 16:2,6). This was fulfilled by Yeshua at His crucifixion and the three hours of darkness (Matthew 27:45-46).

Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (Exodus 12:43-46). Not a bone of Yeshua was broken on the tree (John 19:33).

There was to be an explanation of the service (Exodus 12:25-28). Yeshua explained each part of the Passover as He did the service (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

You must be circumcised to eat the Passover (Exodus 12:48; Joshua 5:2-10). The physical act of circumcision was only a picture of the inward or spiritual circumcision that God wanted us to have (Romans 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:46; 2 Corinthians 4:18).

The Passover feast was to be a holy convocation, and no work was to be done (Exodus 12:16). A believer finds true rest in ceasing from his own works and resting in the

finished work of Yeshua, God's Passover Lamb (Genesis 2:1-2; Matthew 11:28-30; John 17:1-4; 19:30; Hebrews 3:14-19; 4:1-10).

The Passover must be killed outside the gates of the city (Deuteronomy 16:5). Yeshua was crucified outside of the city walls of Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha (John 19:16-19; Hebrews 13:10-13).

## Redemption

The God of Israel's historical redemption of His people from Egypt is a type and foreshadowing of our individual redemptions and the *Messianic Redemption* in the end of days – Kingdom/Millennium. When doing a Passover Seder, you are supposed to see yourself as if you are personally being redeemed from Egypt. In First Corinthians 10:1-4, the apostle Paul reminds the followers of *Yeshua* as Messiah to have the mindset that they and their fathers were redeemed from Egypt. In Exodus 15:1 it says, "I will sing" (future). This reminds us that there will be a *future redemption* to come that will be like the historical Egyptian redemption. Those redeemed in this future redemption will sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:3).

## The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Feast of Unleavened bread immediately follows Passover and is so closely associated with it that the two feasts are often viewed as one long feast.

**Lev 23:5** On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the Lord's Passover. <sup>6</sup> And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup> On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. <sup>8</sup> But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*' "

For seven days Israel was to eat nothing with leaven in it. This is a picture of their hasty departure from Egypt that was so quick they didn't have time to put leaven in their bread and let it rise. The lack of leaven means the bread is more compact, and they could carry more of it. It is also a picture of their freedom from the bondage in Egypt, which is always seen as a type of sin. It is also associated with the Israelite's crossing of the Red Sea as a type of baptism, which is a picture of God's identification with them as His own people.

The fifteenth of Nisan begins *Hag HaMatzah* (the Feast of Unleavened Bread). Unleavened Bread is a seven-day feast to the Lord. It was seven days after leaving Egypt that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea with the resulting destruction of the Egyptian army. With their pursuers destroyed, the Israelites could finally pause long enough to bake bread with leaven. Thus the Feast of Unleavened Bread is seven days

long and the last day is a day of rest for the Israelites. God did the work of destroying the pursuing Egyptians.

## Summary

The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are directly related to Israel's deliverance from bondage in Israel. The two feasts commemorate events in that process. Passover is God's protection from the plague on Egypt and deliverance from bondage. Unleavened Bread is God's sustaining them in their flight and destroying their tormentors. Together they also represent a picture of the individual believer's deliverance from the bondage of sin. Passover is analogous to being born again, and Unleavened Bread is being delivered through trials and tribulations, conditioned on obedience and ridding leaven from our lives to be positioned to receive this grace. Unleavened Bread then is analogous to the believer's spiritual walk after salvation. While these two feasts had historical and spiritual significance, they were also eschatological in that they pointed forward (for Israel) to the coming of Messiah and His work on the Cross that these events/feasts pictured.

## The Festival of First Fruits (Bikkurim)

**Leviticus 23:9-14** And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. <sup>11</sup> He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. <sup>12</sup> And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. <sup>14</sup> You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The two feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost complete the spring series of four, which are followed with about a four month span before the fall feasts are celebrated. First Fruits is observed three days after Passover, *during* the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When the standing ripe harvest of barley and wheat was ready to be reaped, the celebrant would take one sheaf from the standing harvest called "the sheaf of the first fruits" and bring it to the priest who was then to take this one sheaf and wave it before the Lord in His house. The Hebrew word for "sheaf" is *omer* defined as "a measure of dry things, a tenth part of an ephah."

The first fruits were always the choicest of all that was to follow and were holy to the Lord. Everything on the earth, both man and beast, was to be presented before the Lord

as first fruits to Him. The theme of the festival of First Fruits is resurrection and salvation.

There are several important events that happened on this Feast Day in the Bible.

- Noah's ark rests on Mount Ararat (Gen 8:4).
- Israel eats the first fruits of the Promised Land (Josh 5:10-12).
- Haman is defeated (Esther 3:1-6).
- The resurrection of *Yeshua*, the Messiah (John 12:24; 1 Cor 15:16-20).

Jesus celebrated the festival of First Fruits by offering Himself as the first fruits to all future generations (Mat 27:52-53).

The festival of the sheaf of the first fruits is prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus. *Yeshua* was slain on the tree on the day of Passover, the fourteenth of Nisan, and He arose from the grave three days and nights after He was slain on the seventeenth of Nisan, the day of the festival of First Fruits. Jesus is called the first fruits of those who rise from the dead.(1 Cor 15:20-23).

## The Festival of Pentecost (Shavuot)

The last feast of the spring series is Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks, is celebrated 50 days after First Fruits. It has meaning for Israel in a historical sense as well as a prophetic sense. The core theme of Pentecost is revelation, or God revealing Himself to mankind. The first such incident of God revealing Himself was at the first Pentecost at Mt Sinai with the giving of the Law. The second such revealing of Himself was 1500 years later in Jerusalem when the Church received the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**Deut 16:9** “You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin *to put* the sickle to the grain. <sup>10</sup> Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. <sup>11</sup> You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. <sup>12</sup> And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

The period begins the day following the sabbath during Passover and continues until Pentecost. The Torah commanded that seven weeks be counted from the time of the offering of the *omer*, (First Fruits). Because of this ritual of counting, the period between Passover and Pentecost came to be known as the *omer*.

In the third month after the Jews left Egypt, they arrived in the Sinai desert and camped opposite Mount Sinai. Moses was then told by God to gather the Israelites together to



receive the Torah (Ex19:1-8). The Torah was to be a contract between God and specifically the Israelites that we call the Law of Moses or the Mosaic Covenant. The Hebrew word *Torah*, commonly translated as "law" in English, does not mean "law," but means "instruction or teaching" in the Hebrew language. Torah was never intended, nor should it ever be understood by non-Jewish people to mean a code of do's and don'ts. Rather, it should be seen as God's instruction and teaching to us so we can understand Him better.

Israel came to Mount Sinai on the third day of the third month (Ex 19:1). The Lord visited the people three days later (Ex 19:10-17), and the Torah was given by God in the third month of the biblical religious calendar, which is the month of Sivan, on the sixth day of this month. Pentecost is called the season of the giving of the Torah.

The giving of the Law served several purposes, among them, revealing the utter helplessness of mankind to achieve righteousness by human effort even with a strict carrot and stick system, thus revealing the need for a redeemer or savior. The purpose we are most concerned with in this study is that the giving of the Law was the means by which God was revealing His perfect righteousness and His nature to Israel and ultimately mankind through Israel's witness.

Until the giving of the Law, God had revealed very little of Himself and only to a few people like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. The giving of the Law changed that. God essentially codified Himself, making mankind much more aware of His perfect righteousness and corresponding standard that needed to be met.

*Yeshua* was ascended on the Feast of First Fruits. Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the hearts and lives of all the believers (Acts 1:8; 2:1-18; Luke 24:49; Joel 2:28-29; Ex 19:16; Is 44:3; Deut 16:5-6,16; 2 Kings 21:4). We Church Age believers associate Pentecost with the beginning of the Church Age because it represents a distinct dividing line in human history and God's plan of Redemption. That's when God shifted from dealing with Israel to dealing with the Church because of Israel's rejection of Messiah. But understand that God is not yet finished dealing with Israel.

With that Pentecost, now nearly 2,000 years ago, the single most important event marking it was the giving of the Holy Spirit to all believers for leading and empowerment. Something the Israelite did not have except for certain individuals like kings, priests, prophets, and artisans associated with the building of the tabernacle. Furthermore, a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in the CA is **teaching** us about Christ. Therefore, the Pentecost for the Church is also related to God revealing Himself through the indwelling Holy Spirit! A core theme of Pentecost, then, is God revealing Himself

One of the most beautiful images of Pentecost is that of the marriage between God (the groom) and Israel (the bride). At that first Pentecost, God took Israel as His wife. God later divorced Israel for her infidelity (Jer 3:8, 14) and would take the church as His new bride. God will remarry Israel at the Second Advent (Jer 31:31).

## Trumpets (Shofar) of God

In God's system of Feasts there are three primary trumpets that are blown to mark major events in the redemptive plan of God as pictured in the Feasts of the Lord. The Hebrew word for Trumpet is *shofar* (plural *shofarim*). They are almost always made from the horn of a ram, although they did also have trumpets made of silver that resembled modern instruments. There are three trumpets that mark major events in the redemptive plan of God and are associated with specific days in the biblical calendar. They are called: the First Trumpet, the Last Trumpet, and the Great Trumpet. The First Trumpet is associated with the Feast of Pentecost when God gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:19). The Last Trumpet is associated with and is blown on *Rosh HaShanah*, which will be discussed later. The Great Trumpet (*shofar HaGadol*) is associated with and is blown on *Yom Kippur*.

In Exodus 19:19 we see a trumpet sounded in preparation of the giving of the Law, and it grew louder and louder. The Jewish writings understand this to be the first trumpet of God. Tradition held that this trumpet is the first of the two ram's horns that were present on Mount Moriah during Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22.

## Two Loaves

Part of the Pentecost ceremony was that the priest would wave two loaves of bread as an offering. Unlike the bread associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, these loaves were made with leaven. We know that spiritually speaking leaven generally represents sin. The Two Leavened Wave Loaves were to be a new meal offering to the Lord (Lev 23:16; Num 28:26). These two wave loaves were baked with leaven (Lev 23:17). At Passover, leaven was absolutely forbidden (Ex 12:15,19-20) and, in the regular meal offering, no leaven was permitted (Lev 2:1,4-5, 11). Why two loaves and why leaven now?

Pentecost speaks of the birth of Israel as a nation, as well as the birth of the church, and believers in *Yeshua* through the Holy Spirit. The two loaves speak of Israel and the Church. Since both are made up of fallen men and women, that is sin is still found in the Israelite and sin still exists in the Church Age believer, the two loaves wave offerings contain leaven.

## The Spiritual Understanding of Pentecost

The giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai involved the Aaronic priesthood, the sacrificial system, the tabernacle, the sabbath days, the festivals, the civil and ceremonial laws, and the Ten Commandments (Ex 19:17,20; 20:1,21-22; 21:1-2,12; 22:1,16; 23:10-11,14; 24:1-8,12,18; 25:1,8-9,40; 28:1; 31:12-18; 32:1; 34:27-28; Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:1-12,15,18-24; 10:1,10; 13:20). These things were given by God as a shadow of things to come (Heb 10:1), to teach us (Gal 3:24) about the Messiah, and the redemptive work of God (Col 2:16-17).

## **The Conclusion of the Spring Festivals**

The spring festivals are historic to the nation of Israel in that they are fulfilled in the Messiah and they describe how the individual believer is to walk and live his life before God. God has a plan for every individual who is willingly come to Him, so the spring festivals were not only historic, but they were also our type and example (1 Cor 10:1-2,6,11).

To natural Israel, Passover was their freedom from the bondage of Egypt (Ex 12). First Fruits is a picture of resurrection or new birth, the ultimate picture of bringing believers to deliverance from the bondage of sin. Unleavened Bread was the separation from the land of Egypt into the immersion (baptism) into the Red Sea and the Cloud in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:1-2), Israel's divine support and protection while obedient. Finally, God led the people to Mount Sinai (Ex19:1) where they experienced Pentecost and God revealed Himself to the people in a deeper and greater way than He had ever done previously.

The spring festivals were fulfilled by Jesus, Messiah, who was our Passover Lamb, when He died on the day of Passover. He was without sin and is the Bread of Life. He was the kernel of wheat that was buried in the earth. Jesus arose as First Fruits of the barley harvest. Finally, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all flesh during the feast of Pentecost to gather all believers in the Messiah to be God's spring harvest in the earth.

These four feasts describe in detail the significant events during the first coming of Messiah when He came as the suffering Messiah, *Messiah ben Joseph*, to redeem both man and the earth back to God. We will find that the fall festivals will give us tremendous insight, concerning the events of Jesus' second coming when He will return as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and come back to earth as the Regal Messiah, *Messiah ben David*, to rule and reign on earth during the Messianic age (Millennium).

## **Spiritual Application**

Every time a person receives Christ as his personal Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover. He is to flee Egypt (the world's evil system and ways) and trust in the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and allow Jesus to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before God and experience Unleavened Bread and the grace associated with that obedience.

First Fruits – Just as Jesus arose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Messiah. We are immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit and have the power of God in our lives through the agency of the Holy Spirit. At that time, God will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life. In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon God, He will take us from Passover to Pentecost, where He will reveal His ways and His Word, the Bible, in a deeper and progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, God will not only

reveal His Word to us in ways we never imagined, but He will also refine our faith like fine flour just as was done to the wheat for the offerings.

Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust in Jesus through our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life, as God refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life. Instead, God will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual inheritance in the promised land. It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals, especially the Feast of Tabernacles, and enter into our spiritual promised land, that God will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way, as we live and serve Him. We will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! This is what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about. The Jews call it "the season of our joy" and this joy is what we have to look forward to as we study the fall festivals coming up.

## Let's talk about rain

Passover was the barley harvest, and Pentecost was the wheat harvest (Ex 34:22; Ruth 1:22; 2:23; Joel 1:11). The spring wheat and barley harvest preceded the major harvest in the fall, the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (Ex 23:16; 34:22). Both the spring and the fall harvests were dependent upon the rains coming at the right time. Watch this; it gets tricky. The fall rains are called the "early rains". The spring rains are called the "latter rains". You would think it would be the other way. Why? The Jewish *civil* calendar begins with Rosh HaShanah in the fall.

The early rain is spoken of in Deut 11:10-15; 28:12; Lev 26:4; Joel 2:23,28-29; and Zech 10:1. The harvest speaks of the salvation of people. The spring harvest was the beginning of the harvest of people who would come to receive *Yeshua* as Messiah with the greatest harvest being at the end of this age (Mat 13:39; 9:37-38; Mark 4:29). The fall harvest or the harvest at the end of this present age is in the seventh month on the religious calendar. Pentecost is in the third month, counting from the beginning of the religious calendar. From Pentecost, there are four months until the final harvest in the fall (John 4:34-35). The fall harvest is the fruit harvest. God said that the coming of Jesus would be like the former and latter rain on the earth (Hosea 6:1-3; Joel 2:23).

**Hosea 6:1** he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth

James ties the coming of the Lord to the early and latter rain (James 5:7). Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection was in the spring of the year. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Jesus was in the spring of the year, and all those who believed were first fruits of the entire harvest and were a part of the spring harvest. Christ's first coming is associated with the latter rains in the spring. This is one piece of evidence that suggests that Jesus' second coming will be in the fall of the year at the time of the early rains. And the greatest number of believers will believe at this time. Jesus spoke about this great harvest at the end of this present age in Mat 13:39; 24:13-14; and Rev

14:6,15-16. I believe He was referring to the end of the Church Age. More on this later, but keep this in mind for now.