

Things to Celebrate

Detailed outline from the Sermon on October 21, 2007

The festivals of Israel were tied to commemorations of God's saving acts, and to the spring and fall rains and harvests. They included public rituals, family rituals and personal observances. They also portend New Testament truths revealed in Christ.

The Fall Festivals

Rosh Hashanah - Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah)

The "head of the year," commemorated with trumpet blasts (Leviticus 23:23-25, Numbers 29:1-6) and offerings.

New Testament implications:

Matthew 24:31, 1Corinthians 15:52, 1Thessalonians 4:16

Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement

The holiest day of the Hebrew calendar, marked by self-denial, rest, offerings and ceremony. On this holiest day, blood would be sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies as an atonement for sin by the High Priest (Leviticus 23:26-32, Numbers 29:7-11, Exodus 16, 30:10)

New Testament implications:

Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, Mark 14:24

Sukkot - Feast of Tabernacles (Booths); Feast of Lights Celebrates the day of God's provision in the wilderness under Moses. People lived in tents for eight days, culminating with ceremonies including offerings and "the water pouring" that commemorates God's providing water in the desert. (Exodus 17, Leviticus 23:42-43, Numbers 11:31-35). They later lit bright lights in the four corners of the Temple to commemorate the completion of the Temple.

New Testament implications:

John 7:37-38, John 8:1-11, John 8:12, Jeremiah 17:12-13

The Spring Festivals

Pesach – Passover

Celebrates the night that the angel of death "passed over" Israelite households, and their firstborn were spared the worst of the ten plagues on Egypt. At 3:00 pm, a lamb is slain and blood is spread on the door frame. Later, a lamb would be slain by the high priest at 3:00 (between the evenings).

New Testament implications:

Matthew 27:46, 1Corinthians 5:7, 1Peter 1:19

Hag ha Matzah - Festival of Unleavened Bread

During the Passover Week, unleavened bread would be eaten, commemorating the Lord's command in Exodus 12:15. A stack of matzahs are eaten ceremonially. The middle matzah is broken; one half is placed in linen and buried, though it reappears later in the meal. (Leviticus 23:6)

New Testament implications:

Matthew 26:17-30

B'Yom Haneefchem Et Ha Omer - First Fruits, or "the day you bring in the sheaf of the wave offering.

On the Sunday after Passover, this commemorates the day that God delivered Israel from the Red Sea. It is also a day to bring the "first fruits" of the barley crop. Ceremonies include "waving the sheaf" and offerings. (Leviticus 23:9-14)

New Testament implications:

Jesus is the "first fruits from among the dead," resurrected on this holiday (1Corinthians 15:20-23). He rescues us from slavery (Romans 6:6, Galatians 4:3) And the thing about Joseph and Joseph (Exodus 13:19, Matthew 27:57).

The "Counting of the Omer" and **Shavuot** - the Feast of Weeks Seven weeks, or forty-nine days plus one after the First Fruits, is the Feast of Weeks; also known as Pentecost (fiftieth day). This day celebrates the arrival of the Torah (the Law) from Mt. Sinai. (Leviticus 23:15-22, Numbers 28:26-31)

New Testament implications:

Jesus' promised gift of the Holy Spirit arrives on this holiday (Acts 2)

More about Messiah from Hosea 6:3)