

THE MESSIAH IN THE FEASTS

Leviticus 23 lists seven feasts that were given to the Jews in chronological order. These feasts are rich in symbolic and prophetic meaning, as further New Testament truth reveals.

1. *The LORD's Passover*

Leviticus 23:4–5 (NKJV)

4 'These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

5 On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is **the Lord's Passover**.

The Passover is mentioned first. It was to take place on the 14th day of the 1st month, which was the month of Nisan. Nisan was the first month of the "religious" New Year. The annual Passover was to be a memorial, reminding Israel of how God had delivered them from Egypt.

Passover signifies salvation on the basis of shed blood. On that night, God passed through the land of Egypt; and those houses that had the blood of the lamb applied were safe. Those that didn't have the blood applied experienced the death of the firstborn. So, the Passover is properly mentioned first, because from redemption by blood flows all of God's other blessings.

PASSOVER is the OLDEST religious festival in the world, having been observed now for about 3,500 years.

The centerpiece of the feast is the PASSOVER LAMB. In Exodus 12, the blood of the lamb was applied to the door; and when God saw the blood, He PASSED OVER and death did not come to the household. This is a vivid typological picture of Christ, Who is the LAMB OF GOD Who takes away the sin of the world (cf. Jn. 1:29). Amazingly, Christ was crucified EXACTLY on Passover (cf. Mt. 26:2). In 1 Cor. 5:7 Paul says, "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us." Only God could orchestrate this!

2. *The Feast of Unleavened Bread*

Leviticus 23:6 (NKJV)

6 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.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed Passover. Leaven, in the Bible, consistently is a symbol for evil (cf. Ex. 23:15, 34:22, Lev. 2:11, 7:13, Num. 15:20, Mt. 16:1, 12, Gal. 5:9, 1 Cor. 5:6, Mt. 13:33). So, the Passover represents salvation by blood, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread represents holy living.

Note: There is no gap between salvation and holy living.

Holy living immediately flows out of salvation, just as the Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed Passover. It was celebrated for 7 days. The number seven represents a completed cycle, signifying that the whole of life was to be characterized by holy living.

By application, this is what Paul meant in 1 Cor. 5:8 when he said, ***“let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”*** Those saved by the blood of Christ should now live lives of integrity.

But note in particular the application to Christ. Christ was totally HOLY and completely without sin, and He is the example which we are to emulate (cf. Heb. 4:15, 1 Pet. 2:21-22). When Christ died, God did not allow His body to “see corruption” (cf. Ps. 16:10). Christ’s entire life, which we are to emulate, was “unleavened” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Jn. 3:5).

3. ***The Feast of Firstfruits***

Leviticus 23:9–11 (NKJV)

9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

10 “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.

11 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.

Firstfruits marked the start of barley harvest. The firstfruits were a pledge of more to come. In effect, this offering was a symbol of thanksgiving for the harvest that was about to be gathered, as represented in the first fruits.

The NT then takes this imagery and applies it to the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Cor. 15:20-23. Christ was the first to be risen with a glorified body, but there is a whole harvest of others to follow.

Note very specifically that the firstfruits were to be presented on the day after the Sabbath. Christ was presented as being risen from the dead on

the day after the Sabbath; namely, on Sunday. Note, too, that it was on the 3rd day after Passover that the first fruits were presented, and on the 3rd day, Christ rose from the dead (cf. Lk. 24:1, 7, 13, 21, 1 Cor. 15:4).

Amazingly, Christ fulfilled the Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits typology to PERFECTION; not only in regard to type, but also in regard to the CALENDAR. Only God could portray this 1,500 years in advance and then fulfill it with absolute PRECISION in the Messiah!

God not only plans His calendar in advance around the Messiah, He then fulfills it to PERFECTION.