

Leviticus 19-23 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

The theme of Leviticus is the Holiness of God.

Because God is holy, His people must be holy too.

The first 17 chs describe how the people were to approach God when they came to worship.

Ch. 18 through the end of the book largely deals with how the people were to live out *practical holiness* in their relationships with one another.

Where We Are In The Outline of Leviticus

VI. LAWS CONCERNING PERSONAL CONDUCT Chs 18–22

A. Laws of Sexual Purity Ch 18

B. Laws of Everyday Life Ch 19

¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy. ³‘Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

Active honor and respect is to be shown to parents.

While all of us ought to *live honorably*, the fact is, honor isn’t something *we earn*; *it’s a debt to be paid* to those in authority over us.

God is placing a *debt of honor* on us toward our parents.

One of the most obvious ways the people could show honor to God as their heavenly Father was by keeping the Sabbath, which was that unique sign God had given Israel to mark their covenant with Him.

⁴‘Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

Idols were never to be fashioned or turned to for guidance or blessing.

Notice that each of these quick injunctions end with the phrase, “I am the LORD your God.”

Yahweh was their God & they were His people – therefore they were to be *different*. These commands marked them out & identified them as belonging to Him.

There’s been a whole slew of revelations lately of celebrities who are claiming to be “Christians.”

Whether they are or aren’t is between them and the Lord.

What’s distressing is that some of them who make this claim demonstrate a lifestyle that is not only *no different* from the decadent lifestyle of their unsaved peers, it is at some points pushing the envelope of that lifestyle into immoral territory.

God is clear in v. 2 - ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.’

Christians are to be different! Not *weird*, just different.

In vs. 5-8, Moses recaps the rules for eating the peace offering that we read about in ch. 3.

⁹‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap

the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

When the harvesters would go through the fields & orchards, they didn't collect *all* the grain or fruit on the first pass.

Some would be unripe & the hurried pace of the harvest would cause them to miss some.

Going through a 2nd or 3rd time to collect what had been left was called "gleaning."

God told them *not to glean* or to collect from the corners of their fields.

This was left for the poor who didn't have land.

This was *the welfare system* of ancient Israel. But notice – it's "*workfare*;" the poor had to work to get it.

¹¹You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

There was to be no stealing, cheating, or lying among those whose God **IS** Truth!

¹²And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

The common practice in that time was to pay wages to workers at the end of each day.

God forbade *keeping* the wages that were owed. There was a good chance the worker needed them to buy food for himself & his family.

¹⁴You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

There was to be no mistreatment, making fun of, or taking advantage of those hindered & hassled with handicaps.

¹⁵You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

Justice was to be blind to a person's social & economic position.

¹⁶You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Gossip, slander and all maligning talk were banned!

This is an extension of the principle of the sanctity of human life.

Not only were they not to murder, they were not to slay another person's reputation through character assassination.

God wanted them to consider life so precious that not only was taking a life forbidden, so was diminishing *the quality of a life*.

Let's take heed to this principle and see gossip as nothing less than the murder of a reputation.

¹⁷You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Note this – if they had a problem with someone, they were to deal with it and seek to resolve it, not just grow bitter and hateful toward one another.

God calls bitter unforgiveness a sin here!

19‘You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

Livestock, seed, & different fabrics were not to be mixed.

This makes little sense to us because we don’t come from the agricultural milieu in which this given.

One of the chief superstitions of the pagan world was the belief that by *combining* certain things, you could magically create something better or more powerful.

This is where the various concoctions like moisture from a pig’s ear, the powdered knee bone of an Abyssinian greyhound, and bat’s blood would cure warts came from.

V. 19 is God’s command that the Jews were not to ape the superstitious practices of the pagans.

They tried producing new strains of livestock by combining different herds and flocks.

They tried to produce new grains by mingling various seeds in the same field. And they tried to make special magical clothes by mixing their yarns & threads.

God is pure, and calls His people to purity as well.

If something is pure, it means it is **ONE THING!**

So God calls His people to be a people of **ONE THING** – even down to such things as their livestock, fields, & clothing.

20‘Whoever lies carnally with a woman who *is* betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; *but* they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. **21**And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. **22**The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him.

Here’s the sitch described here; a slave girl is the bound concubine of her owner.

Some *other* man has sex with her. She can’t be held guilty because she’s a slave and has no one to look out for or protect her.

So both she and the man were to be scourged for fornication.

The man is then to make the appropriate sacrifices for his sin and marry her.

23‘When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten. **24**But

in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD.

25And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God.

When they arrived in the land and planted *new fruit trees*, they were to leave the fruit produced for the first 4 years.

This fruit would ripen & drop to replenish the soil with important nutrients.

When done this way, delaying the harvest till the 5th year, it *maximized* the take of future crops.

26‘You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. **27**‘You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. **28**‘You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD.

These were all pagan religious practices that marked them as devotees to a particular deity.

Again, as we covered this issue last week, this has much to say *in principle* about the whole issue of identification & who or what our heart is longing for.

29‘Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

Some men, in their greed for riches would use their own daughters to seduce men into paid sex.

That is forbidden outright. But there is a deeper principle here too.

The role of a father in the life of his daughter is crucial, especially as she enters the teen years.

His tender attention to her, making her know she is loved and thought of as special by him is the single biggest factor arming her to resist the unholy advances of predatory men.

Studies have shown that young women who felt unloved by their fathers have a much higher occurrence of sexual promiscuity as they try to find some other man to love them.

You dads be aware; a daughter can be prostituted in more ways than just “pimping” her.

A young woman can be turned into a sexually promiscuous female simply because her father is a selfish bore!

Dads have a solemn duty to raise their sons & daughters for the Lord.

30‘You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD. **31**‘Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

There was to be no traffic with the occult arts, no attempts to contact the dead or to communicate with the spirit realm.

By principle, this means Christians ought to have no involvement with séances, Ouija boards, Palm readers; anything that dabbles in the spirit world is off-limits.

32‘You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an

old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.

God's people ought to show respect & reverence for the elderly!

Parents, one of the ways we can teach this to young children is by cautioning them to show restraint when they are around the elderly.

One of the most effective ways to do this is to teach them to not run about when at church or at functions that are crowded with people.

A careless child can easily run into a elderly person and knock them down, causing great harm.

33'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Get this – people who are *different* – different nationality, different races, are to be treated as **EQUALS!** God forbade racism in the law of ancient Israel.

This was simply *unheard* of in the ancient world!

35'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

There was to be no shenanigans in business.

Integrity was to mark all their dealings both at home & in public & business life.

37'Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD.'"

C. Punishment for Gross Offenses Ch 20

In this chapter we see the punishment that was to be meted out for particularly egregious offenses.

There were 15 crimes that required the death penalty in Israel:

- striking or cursing a parent
- breaking the Sabbath
- blaspheming God
- engaging in occult practices
- prophesying falsely
- adultery
- rape
- fornication
- incest
- homosexuality
- bestiality
- kidnapping
- idolatry

false witness in a case involving a capital crime

kill^[1]ing a human intentionally

There are only a few countries in the world today where these things would result in capital punishment.

But the *biblical view of law* is different from the modern view.

God gave His law to *restrain sin, not to reform sinners*; the penalties He imposed were for the purpose of *upholding His law, not improving the offenders*.^[2]

The main form capital punishment took was by stoning.

Once an offender's guilt was established by a duly authorized court, then his accusers and other representatives of the community would gather to execute him/her.

They would be taken to a hill and cast off. The fall was usually enough to break a leg or stun the offender.

Then the people would pick up as large of stones as they could lift, raise them overhead, and plunge them down onto the victim.

There were usually enough people involved in this that the one being punished would soon be completely buried under rock.

This pile of stones would then stand as a memorial to his crime and its consequences – a perpetual reminder of the cost of disobeying God.

Do you think all of this would have acted as an effective deterrent to crime? It did!

¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. ³I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. ⁴And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, ⁵then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

Molech was the primary idol worshiped by the Ammonites, one of the major Canaanite peoples.

According to Latin & Greek writers of the ancient world, the image of Moloch was a human figure with a bull's head & outstretched arms.

The hollow image of metal was heated red hot by a fire kindled within.

Infants were Molech's preferred offerings, and once the arms were glowing red, a child would be laid on its arms & rolled into the fiery pit below.

These sacrifices were thought to secure prosperity from Molech.

Since the Ammonites were a hardy people who effectively resisted Israel, it was inevitable that apostate Jews would be seduced by their lifestyle & religion.

So God gave a weighty warning here, that they were not to dabble in the

worship of Molech. Anyone caught doing so was to be executed. About 400 years after Moses wrote this in Lev. King Solomon married some Ammonite women & allowed the worship of Molech to enter into the city of Jerusalem.

A massive altar was erected in the valley of Hinom next to the city walls & many people began to worship there.

This went on until the time of Josiah, who tore it down and executed anyone who'd stood accused of worshipping there, in fulfillment of what the Lord said here in Lev. 20.

6'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. 7'Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I *am* the LORD your God. 8'And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.

God utterly forbade them dabbling in the occult.

9'For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood *shall be upon him.*

Understand first of all, that it isn't a simple act of disobedience which is in view here.

This doesn't refer to the child who is simply childish and storms off in a huff when he/she doesn't get their way.

This refers to an older child who has demonstrated a determined attitude of defiant rebellion against his/her parents.

This is a young man or woman who can be properly called "*a rebel.*"

This is someone who's mode of living is disdainful of authority in general and demonstrates it by verbal abuse of his/her parents.

This one was to be taken out and stoned to death!

This seems inordinately harsh to us because we've come to *expect* childhood disobedience & disrespect in our day.

Teenage rebellion is understood by many as a *normal part of growing up.*

It isn't! It's a *fallen part* of growing up, & comes from our culture's wholesale rejection of God & His ways.

We've almost totally lost the Biblical teaching on the whole realm of authority and submission – and it has created great trouble and danger as a result.

Israel as a society was founded on their covenant with Yahweh.

Offences which threatened that covenant relationship were considered crimes, punishable in the name of the highest authority in the state, which of course was God.

The family played a central role in their experience of the covenant.

The preservation and transmission of the covenant relationship was done on a family level.

The relationships in the home were a model of the relationship with God; the two could not be separated.

So anything that threatened the family; like determined disregard for parental authority, or sexual deviation, also threatened the foundation of Israel's

social life.

The application of the death penalty to these offences was not a matter of primitive vengeance, but an indication of how seriously Israel was to take their covenant with God, and to live it out in their relationships on earth. In the NT, the covenant is no longer the foundation of a nation-state as it was for Israel.

So the nature of crime and the rationale for penalties are no longer bound to Israel's legislation. ^[3]

They are still grave moral sins that incur God's displeasure, but they do not call down the same kind of civil punishment.

Verse 9 is a classic case in point of how while we do not follow the letter of the law because it applies uniquely only to the nation of Israel in their covenant with God, the PRINCIPLE behind the law still applies to us.

What is the principle verse 9 is meant to communicate?

If stoning was the punishment for cursing one's parents, what virtue is implied? Respect and obedience to parents.

This is a value and principle of godly living that is so crucial to God's people enjoying the good life, that when it is violated, it receives the harshest penalty.

We must keep this in mind when raising our children.

In vs. 10-21, penalties are given for the many sexual sins spelled out in ch. 18, which we covered last week.

22'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. 23'And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. 24'But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 25'You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. 26'And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

God repeats the holiness imperative to the people; because He is holy, they must be holy – and this holiness must find expression in their being different from the world.

27' A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.'"

God takes one last shot at this issue of occult involvement – stay away from it!

D. Conduct of the Priests Chs 21-22

In chs. 21 & 22, we find numerous rules for the priests. We'll be summarizing this in blocks instead of reading them.

In vs. 1-4, God tells the priests that they were to limit their contact with the dead to only their immediate family.

As priests, they had been consecrated to the worship of God, and needed to stand as constant reminders to the people of what it means to live a holy and sanctified life.

A dead body was a symbol, a reminder of sin and its consequences.

So for this reason, the priest could only come in contact with his closest kin in death.

In vs. 5&6, priests were not to draw their clothing & grooming fashions from contemporary society but were to maintain the emblems of their office as priests.

In vs. 7-9, God said the only wife a priest could marry was a virgin.

As well, his daughter was to remain chaste until her wedding.

Since this was the rule for *all* men and women, there was nothing unique about this.

It was simply a sign that *the same rule* was to be applied to priests as to every one else.

In vs. 10-15, some special rules are given for the high priest.

When he was arrayed in the robes of his office & was officiating at the altar, he was not allowed to touch *any* dead body, even of those of his immediate family.

The idea was this - If the priests were to be an example of holiness to the common people, then the high priest was to be an example of holiness to the other priests.

Look at verse 10 -

He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;

Tearing one's garments was a sign of utmost grief.

Since the high priests garments were specially made, to tear them was an act of extreme distress.

We read that at the trial of Jesus, when the high priest put Him under a solemn oath to answer whether or not He was the Messiah, Jesus affirmed it.

At that point, the high priest tore his garment – something that was a grievous violation of what we find here in Leviticus 21:10!

In vs. 16-24, God said that none of Aaron's descendants who were physically deformed could officiate as priests.

These deformities were further reminders of the curse and as such stood as symbols of the decay of sin.

For that reason, those afflicted with them were not permitted to draw near the holy things.

They were allowed to partake of the priest's share of food brought by the people in their worship, but they could not officiate.

Leviticus 22

In vs 1-16, we find out who was allowed to eat of the food appointed to the priests. The rules for the clean & unclean apply to the priests just as they did to the people.

If a priest became ritually unclean, then just like the common man, he would have to go through the purification rites and wait until evening to be clean. During this time, he was banned from eating anything that had been offered on the altar.

Any member of a priest's household could eat of the priest's portion, but no visitors or outsiders could partake of it.

In vs. 17-25, God said that when people brought their sacrifices, they had to be without blemish or defect and in good health.

Their offerings were to be freely & readily given, not with a sense of coercion; not reluctantly or begrudgingly.

There had to be a sense of purposeful connection with the offering.

Paul says that the same thing should mark our giving today. Listen to 2 Cor. 9:7 - **So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**

²⁶And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷“When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. ²⁸Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. ²⁹And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will. ³⁰On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I *am* the LORD.

A mother and its offspring were not to be offered as sacrifices on the same day.

There is no deep theological symbolism here – it's a simple call for the people to not fall into a place of barbarity as it relates to the specialness of life.

God wanted them to hold life as something special/sacred, including the life of the animals they brought as sacrifices.

³¹“Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD. ³²You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you, ³³who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD.”

God keeps repeating this – calling them to holiness.

VII. THE FEASTS OF THE LORD Ch 23

Now we come to the feasts and festivals the nation was to observe as memorials to God's mighty deliverance of them from Egypt and their belonging to Him as a special people.

A. The Sabbath

Ch 23:1–3

¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.*

³“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.*

One the 7th day of every week, they were to rest and devote the time to reflecting on their relationship to the Lord.

Much like a wedding ring, the Sabbath was a symbol of their covenant with God.

B. The Passover Ch 23:4-5

⁴“These *are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. ⁵On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover.*

This feast commemorated their deliverance from bondage in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb.

Passover foreshadowed the work of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and who delivers us from bondage to sin and death.

C. The Feast of Unleavened Bread Ch 23:6–8

⁶And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. ⁸But 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.”*

Immediately following the Passover was a week long feast called Unleavened bread.

This commemorated the Exodus and how it came so quickly that they didn’t have time to let their bread rise.

They were to eat unleavened bread for a week.

Since leaven represents sin in the scriptures, this pictured how the people were delivered from the bondage of sin & liberated into a life of holiness.

The feast of Unleavened bread foreshadows how Christ has not only paid the penalty for our sin, He’s broken sin’s power over us so that as we walk in the Spirit, we can walk in holiness.

D. The Feast of Firstfruits Ch 23:9–14

⁹And 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. ¹¹He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath

the priest shall wave it. ¹²And 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. ¹³Its 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. ¹⁴You 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.

This was a springtime harvest festival that celebrated God's bounty & goodness in providing for them.

They would bring the very first sheaf of the barley harvest and wave it before the Lord in celebration of God's favor, and in anticipation of the entire harvest to come.

It was observed on the day following the Passover Sabbath – a Sunday.

Which means Jesus rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits *as the firstfruits* from the dead.

And indeed, He is, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 -

²⁰But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.

E. The Feast of Weeks Ch 23:15–22

¹⁵And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering:

That would be the Firstfruits of vs. 9-14 -

seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD. ¹⁸And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. ²⁰The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy

convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

This feast, known as “Weeks” is also known as *Pentecost*.

It’s called “Weeks” because they were to count 7 weeks and a day from Firstfruits.

This would total 50 days, which is where we get the word “Pentecost” from. 50 days after the *first* of the barley harvest on Firstfruits would mark *the end* of the wheat harvest, one of the most important harvest times of the Jewish year.

It was on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples & empowered them to be a witness of Christ.

The result was the immediate inclusion of some 3000 who responded to Peter’s preaching of the Gospel.

Not long after this, the first of the Gentiles were brought into the Church as well, all as a result of the Spirit’s dramatic moving with power.

This is why God directed the people to celebrate the feast with 2 leaven loaves of bread.

The 2 loaves represent the Jews & the Gentiles, who now have been made one through the work of Christ.

What previously had been cast off has now been brought into the Household of God.

Both Firstfruits & Pentecost were *harvest festivals*, & since they both referred to the gathering of grain, God reminds them of an earlier command not to glean or reap the corners of their fields.

22“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.”

God wanted to make sure that the poor not only would have grain for their own needs, but also so they would have the means to celebrate the great feasts.

F. The Feast of Trumpets Ch 23:23–25

23Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.’”

After Pentecost, a period of 4 months went by, then there was this Feast of Trumpets.

It was a call to rest made by the blowing of trumpets.

This particular feast is commanded by God with no apparent significance.

It doesn’t connect with anything in Israel’s past as the other feasts do.

The Jews used this feast as a way to mark the beginning of a new civil year.

Now, this seems odd when we realize that it takes place in the *7th month*.

The Jews had *2 calendars*; one *sacred*, the other *civil*.

What we're looking at here is the *sacred* calendar, based on the Exodus, which of course would mark the first of their religious months.

The 7th month corresponds to our September-October, in which, once they entered the Promised Land, they would start the plowing & planting cycle all over again.

So it marked the perfect time for them to begin a new year since their whole outlook on life was based on an agricultural mindset.

For this reason, the Feast of Trumpets came to be associated with the Jewish New Year.

But many Bible students believe that God placed this feast here & left it's association with the history of Israel as ambiguous because it's meant to commemorate & symbolize something that is a mystery in the OT - the Rapture of the Church, when Jesus will come after a long period after Pentecost, just as Trumpets was 4 months after Pentecost, and with the sound of the trumpet, call His own to their eternal rest.

At that time, God will return His attention to the Nation and people of Israel once again and in the ensuing 7 years of Tribulation will work to reveal Himself to them as their Messiah.

And that leads us to the next feast, which also looks to a future fulfillment.

G. The Day of Atonement Ch 23:26–32

²⁶And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷“Also the tenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. ²⁸And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³²It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”*

We looked the this Day of Atonement, Yon Kippur in our study last week in ch. 16.

It was the day when the High Priest made the greatest of all offerings on behalf of the entire nation.

This feast speaks of that day when the entire nation of Israel will be regathered in her land and will be converted to faith in her Mesheach, her Messiah, Jesus.

H. The Feast of Tabernacles Ch 23:33–44

³³Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the

Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. ³⁵On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. ³⁶For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and you shall do no customary work on it.*

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the people would gather in Jerusalem and make for themselves little lean-to in which they would just camp out in celebration of God's miraculous provision for them during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

This was a great kick-back and relax time to just hang with friends and family and meditate on how good God is.

It looks forward to how God will regather the Jews into their land in the Millennial Kingdom and miraculously take care of all their needs thru the reign of their Messiah-King.

So, the first 4 of the 7 feast looked forward to what Christ would do in the Cross, Resurrection and birth of the Church.

The last 3 look forward to what He will do in the Last days when He comes again.

³⁷These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—³⁸besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

Now we get a few more instructions for the last feast – Tabernacles . . .

³⁹Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴²You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: *I am* the LORD your God.”

⁴⁴So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD. These festivals and feasts are reminders to us of how our faith is firmly rooted in history.

They commemorate the Exodus & God's miraculous provision of His people throughout their time in the wilderness.

This is the crucial thing about the Christian faith.
We do not follow cunningly devised fables – our faith is grounded and rooted
in the events of history.
God wants us to remember and celebrate these events!
Our relationship with Him isn't to be all quiet reverence & dour darkness like
some musty old medieval cathedral.
There is the proper time for quietness – but there is also the time for the
blowing of the trumpet and camping out and barbeques and eating and
celebration!

GOD IS GOOD !!!!

[1] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1994). *Be holy*. "Becoming 'set apart' for God"; "An Old Testament study-
-Leviticus" (Le 20:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible
commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Le 20:1). Leicester, England;
Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.