

Feasting with Jesus

Ah, the feast days. There are those who are zealous for them and those who do not care for them. Some think they are a matter of salvation; some think that Christians do not keep them. What does the Bible teach about the feast days?

The Feasts

There are a total of seven feasts in the wilderness sacrificial system. Three “spring feasts” and three “fall feasts.” Of these six feasts, three are pilgrimage feasts, meaning the worshipers are to return to Jerusalem three times in a year to keep the feasts. The spring feasts are: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost. The fall feasts are: Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Additionally, the seventh-day Sabbath is mentioned as a feast in Leviticus 23 (the word feast simple means appointed time in Hebrew).

The Sabbath as a Feast?

In Leviticus 23 the Sabbath is translated as a “sabbath of complete rest” or “a sabbath of perfect rest.” It is different than the other feasts of the Jews given the title of Sabbath; it supersedes them, being established at creation and observed every seven days instead of once a year. The Sabbath “was made for man” (Mark 2:27); therefore, all mankind is required to keep it forever. Paul speaks of the perpetuity (forever) of the Sabbath in these words:

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”—Hebrews 4:9.

Or literally:

“There doth remain, then, a sabbatic rest to the people of God; for He who did enter into His rest, He also rested from His works, as God from His own.” Hebrews 4:9-10

When we enter the rest of Christ, we cease from our own works, specifically going about to establish our own righteousness:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”—Romans 10:3.

The Jews did not submit to the righteousness of Christ and continued to try to establish their own righteousness by the works of the sacrificial law, including the feasts. The feasts pointed to Christ; and, when Christ came, only one rest remained—the rest of God, which is experienced through accepting the righteousness of Christ and resting on the seventh-day Sabbath of complete rest. Is the seventh-day Sabbath a feast? It is a time God has appointed to meet with man, as Leviticus 23 specifies. Is it “nailed to the cross?” No. It remains in the Ten Commandments

as a moral obligation for all mankind. Written by the finger of God on stone, confirmed by Christ and all His apostles, it is to stand forever and will continue into eternity (Isaiah 66:23). In Leviticus 23, God told Moses to speak to the children of Israel concerning the appointed days of the Lord, the Sabbath was a moral appointment, the six other feasts were sacrificial appointments. Will anyone dare to miss an appointment to meet with God Himself? Especially when He has given it as a sign (Ezekiel 20:12) that He makes His people Holy?

The Passover

This feast was instituted to honor and celebrate the saving power of God. Paul tells us:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

The Passover was kept on the 14th day of the first month (Nisan) on the Hebrew calendar while the Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th day and lasted seven days. For practical purposes, the two feasts were considered one; yet each served a distinct purpose and identified as separate. While Passover pointed to the saving power of God, the Feast of Unleavened Bread reminded Israel of the speed that they left Egypt. They didn’t even have time to let their bread rise! Christ is our Passover. He died to save us from the second death; when we accept this salvation and His blood is applied to our hearts and lives, we are keeping the spirit of the Passover and are saved from the bondage and punishment to sin. The lamb for the nation of Israel, was chosen by the high priest on the 10th day of the first month (Exodus 12:3), four days before Passover. The Bible records this occurrence:

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.”—John 11:49-51.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolizes our response to the salvation we receive in Christ. We are to clean the leaven [something that spreads and corrupts] out of our lives. Jesus warned against the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians.

2 The leaven of the Pharisees is false doctrine (Matthew 16:6,12), hypocrisy (Luke 12:1-3), a spirit that refused the truth and yet kept others from it (Matthew 23:13), false zeal (Matthew 23:15), wrong estimate of spiritual values (Matthew 23:16-22), omission of justice, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23), undue attention to tiny details as a means of righteousness (Matthew 23:24), intolerance (Matthew 23:29-33) and cruelty (Matthew 23:34-36).

The leaven of the Sadducees is skepticism (Matthew 6:5-12; 22:23), a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures and the power of God (Matthew 23:23-29), and plotting evil against God's representatives (Mark 3:6).

The leaven of the Herodians is: flattery, wordiness, political strife, and hypocrisy (vs. 16-21), and plotting evil against God's representatives (Mark 3:6).

I think it interesting that these three classes of Christians still exist today. There are the legalists (Pharisees) who go about to establish their righteousness and, by their attitude and estimation of righteousness, turn many away from God. There are the Sadducees who exercise skepticism and encourage others to do so. Because they have no faith, they do not come to an experiential knowledge of the truth. Then there are the political Christians, the Herodians, uniting worldly allegiance and policy to Christianity, like a peanut butter and sardine sandwich. All this leaven must be cleaned from the life, or else we are not keeping this feast. We are to be built up with the leaven of truth and sincerity. We are purified by obedience to the truth:

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."—1 John 3:3,

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently [enthusiastically]: Being born again, not of corruptible [easily influenced and dishonest] seed, but of incorruptible [cannot be influenced by evil], by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."—1 Peter 1:22-23.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of the experience of being born again, living and acting upon new principles; a complete change of heart. This must be a cooperative effort:

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—*Desire of Ages* 466.

The Jews had to sweep all the leaven out of their houses in order to keep the feast. One speck will not take long to leaven the entire loaf of bread. So also one cherished sin will work the ruin of the entire character in short order. Christ our Passover has been offered for us; now it is time to cleanse the soul temple. This feast is a pilgrimage feast, meaning all Christians are expected to take part in both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These things were commanded; and the cost of disobedience was rejection from being part of Israel (Exodus 12:19, Numbers 9:13).

The Feast of Pentecost

The presentation of the firstfruits was part of the Feast of Pentecost (also called the Feast of Firstfruits). The countdown to this feast began on the 16th day of Nisan, the day Christ raised from the dead.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."—1 Corinthians 15:20.

The selection of the firstfruits was accomplished in this way: On Passover day (the 14th), a certain portion of a field of barley was marked off to be cut down and presented on the 16th. Three select men cut the barley in the presence of witnesses, having tied the sheaves together before cutting them. After being cut, they were tied together in one large sheaf and presented before the Lord. The three persons of the Godhead marked some of the righteous dead, in the presence of the angel witnesses. These were marked when their sepulchers were opened at the earthquake as Christ died (Nisan 14). When Christ rose from the dead (Nisan 16), these were resurrected and came forth, a sample of Christians from every age. Christ was the firstfruits and, as High Priest, He offered the resurrected ones as a wave sheaf of firstfruits to the Father—one giant bundle in Jesus Christ:

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—Matthew 27:52-53.

"When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, 'It is finished,' the rocks rent [refers to the earthquake that happened then], the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened. When He arose a victor over death and the grave, while the earth was reeling and the glory of heaven shone around the sacred spot, many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ. Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ's resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory."—*Story of Redemption*, 233.

The risen righteous were witnesses of the glory of

the firstfruits, Christ, while they themselves were also a type of firstfruits. Additionally, the Bible tells us that the 144,000 are a type of firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 14:4). From the day the wave sheaf was offered, 50 days were counted off until Pentecost. On this day, everyone was required to gather; since it is also a pilgrimage feast:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”—Acts 2:1.

After ascending to His Father on resurrection day and offering the wave sheaf, Jesus returned to earth and was seen for 40 days:

“To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”—Act 1:3.

Christ returned to heaven ten days before Pentecost. During this time, the inauguration of the sanctuary took place; and Christ is reported to have entered the Most Holy Place in Hebrews 9:12.

“When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished.” AA 38.3.

As Christ was anointed High Priest forever on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the sons of the high priest (the disciples), and they became a royal priesthood (Psalms 133, 1 Peter 2:9). When Christ was anointed High Priest, every article of furniture in the heavenly Sanctuary was also anointed in dedication (Hebrews 9:18-21). Thus, Pentecost was completed; the sanctuary was anointed (in fulfillment of the 70 week prophecy); everlasting righteousness was brought in; and they fulfilled, in the Spirit, the specific instructions the Lord gave for the spring feasts. Christ began His heavenly priesthood; and His followers on earth began to point all humankind to the everlasting priesthood of Christ, the true tabernacle that the Lord pitched and not man, and the spirit of the sacrificial law. They shared the gospel with every creature under the sun.

The Feast of Trumpets

This feast began ten days before the Day of Atonement on the first day of the 7th month. William Miller fulfilled the announcement of Christ’s Second Coming (the antitype of the Feast of Trumpets) through the preaching of the Second Advent. He was given credentials to preach in 1833; near the end of 1834, he fully devoted his time to preaching. In the typical Feast of Trumpets, the ram’s horn was blown every day, beginning 10 days before the Day of Atonement.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call

a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?”—Joel 2:15-17.

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of this sounding of the trumpet:

“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet? [In Jeremiah’s vision, in verse 22, the Lord says,] For My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.”—Jeremiah 4:19-23.

The trumpet has been sounding since October 22, 1844. The warning will wax louder and louder as the work of Christ nears completion, and it will swell into the loud cry of the Fourth Angel of Revelation 18. But Christ has a controversy with His people; they are foolish children, wise to do evil but ignorant of how to do good. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

Another interesting fact:

“Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile[e] to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.”—Leviticus 25:9.

The year of Jubilee came every fiftieth year, and it began on the day of atonement. All slaves were to go free; all lands returned to their owners; the entire Jewish economy was based upon this day.

“According to the number of years after the jubile[e] thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.”—Leviticus 25:15-16.

As the year of Jubilee approached, things became less and less valuable; so also, as the Second Coming of Christ draws closer, the things of this world are of less and less value. Let us not forget that we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Day of Atonement

4 It took place on the 10th day of the 7th month. We have discussed this in great detail in the newsletter titled *The Investigative Judgment (WM 3413)*. Please refer to this newsletter for information on the Day of Atonement. All those who do not participate in the Day of Atonement are cut off from Israel.

“For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among His people.”—Leviticus 23:29.

Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Ingathering) began on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Hebrew calendar. It was a feast of rejoicing. The harvest had been gathered and Israel’s sins had been blotted out. It was instituted to celebrate the 40 years wanderings of Israel in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 16:12-15). During this time, Israel left their homes and made temporary shelters for seven days. This feast points us to the 1,000 years. It is a time of rejoicing; for the earth has been reaped:

“And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”—Revelation 14:15-16.

God’s people will leave the earth after the Second Coming.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”—Revelation 20:6.

This is the last pilgrimage feast. All the righteous, from every age, will make heaven a temporary home during these thousand years. They will look over the books that have recorded the wanderings of mankind in the world of sin. They will recall the mighty power of God that brought them to the promised land of heaven. At the end of the 1,000 years, they will return to earth, where the sentencing of the wicked will take place. The earth will burn as an oven and Satan, the root of evil, will be destroyed with all his followers, the branches. Then God will recreate the earth; and it will become the center of His kingdom, an everlasting kingdom:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God

out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”—Revelation 21:1-5.

“The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”—Psalm 145:8-13.

Do Adventists keep the feasts? Oh yes, we do! We keep all the feasts, and so should you! We don’t keep them in the letter but in the spirit. Soon, no man knows how soon, we will be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”—Psalm 126:5-6.

Before we can keep this feast, we must keep each one before it. Accept the blood of Christ, our Passover, and apply it to our lives. Cleanse the soul temple of leaven. Be anointed as a priest by the Holy Spirit. Sound the trumpet to warn the world that the hour of His judgment has come. Afflict the soul; then, when Christ returns, we will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

For a finished work,



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35

More Food for the Little Flock —