

Is There a “Festivus for the Rest of Us?”

It has become a trend in recent years for Christians to misappropriate the Scriptures and attempt to become the “Israel of God.” Rightly dividing the Word of Truth helps us understand “Israel” is God’s “earthly” people, and the “Church,” His body, is God’s “heavenly” people.

As “heavenly” people, we are not to celebrate or observe what the Scriptures refer to in the Mosaic Law as the “Feasts of the Lord” (**LEV. 23:2**). During the time that the Lord walked the earth, the Feasts were so corrupted and perverted by the Jews that the Lord no longer even claimed them as His own: they became referred to as “the Feasts of the Jews” (**JOHN 5:1**).

Yet, there is much to learn from the study of these feasts.

Among Christians, the saying, “What would Jesus do?” should be replaced with the more profitable: “What has the Lord Jesus done?” In the context of the seven Feasts of the Lord, He is the fulfillment and substance of each one, including the future final three. Let us not embrace symbol or picture, since we know by faith the substance - the Lord Himself - seated at the right hand of the Father, and that we are seated with Him there (**EPH 2:6**).

The Seven Feasts of The Lord			
PAST (fulfilled in Christ)		FUTURE (fulfilled in Christ)	
FEAST	REPRESENTS	FEAST	REPRESENTS
Passover	Redemption	Trumpets	Remembrance
Unleavened Bread	Remission	Day of Atonement	Repentance
Firstfruits	Resurrection	Tabernacles	Rest
Pentecost (Weeks)	Refreshing		

FOR WHOM ARE THE SABBATHS?

These feasts were Sabbath (Rest) days, and according to **EZEK. 20:12**, “Moreover also I gave them (Israel) my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them ...” Thus, all Sabbath days (**LEV. 23:3**), all Sabbath years (**LEV. 25:4**), and all Sabbath 50th years (**LEV. 25:10**) were for the nation of Israel. Even though the Lord Jesus Christ created the heavens and the earth (**COL. 1:16**) in six days and rested on the seventh day, the commandment for man (Israel) to observe Sabbaths (**EX. 16:23**) was instituted after the exodus of Israel from Egypt, 2500 years later.

SABBATHS ARE PART OF THE MOSAIC LAW

The Church in Jerusalem - with apostles and elders - came together and determined not to put the believing Gentiles under a “yoke” of bondage (The Law) that “neither our fathers (Israel) nor we were able to bear” (**ACTS 15:10**). Paul confirms this same message in **ROMANS 6:15**, “What then, Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?”

Many Christians put themselves under certain aspects of the Mosaic Law. Others put themselves under other man-made laws. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians is a warning not to wander off from the principle by which we were saved, “By grace through faith.” This principle is reiterated for us in **COL. 2:6**, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” We have not received Him by works of the law: we continue by faith, not by any law principle, including the Mosaic Law.

The epistle to the **GALATIANS (4:9-10)** gives us strong warning not to return to former religious and ceremonial ways, “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.”

Paul is obviously criticizing the Galatians for observing days. Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and blessing can be obtained from studying the seven feasts of the Lord, but we are not to observe them. These feasts were a significant part of the Mosaic Law.

To be consistent, we should take heed to **GAL. 3:10**, “...Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” If we observe the seven Feasts, we (all males) need to gather three times a year in Jerusalem at the Temple (**EX. 23:17**) and offer animal sacrifices at each of these Feasts (**DEUT. 28:16 -29:40**).

WHERE’S THE TEMPLE?

Many years ago a Jewish woman came to me. She was taking the next day off from work. I asked why, and she told me it was because of the Jewish high-holy day, Yom Kippur. She said, “I bet that you do not know what Yom Kippur means.” To her surprise, I said, “Day of Atonement.” I asked her, “What does that day mean to you?” She proudly said, “That is the day that God forgives all of our sins.” “Why does He do that?” I asked. She said in a slightly irritated way, “I don’t know, He just does.”

Feeling bolder than usual, I said, “Well, He never used to. God required the Jews to offer animal sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem, and since Jesus Christ died on the cross, He is the fulfillment of all of those Old Testament sacrifices.” The woman didn’t want to talk to me anymore and scurried off.

The Mosaic Law is impossible to observe while there is no Temple. The epistle to the Hebrews warns the saved Jews not to return to Judaism. We find out in the later chapters of the Acts of the Apostles that the Church in Jerusalem was zealous for the Law and had thrown out the substance (the Lord Jesus Christ) for the shadow (the Law – **HEB. 10:1**).

The Lord did not take kindly to this, and removed the Temple (the object of idolatrous worship) by the hands of the Roman Empire in 70 A.D. The Lord Jesus prophesied of its destruction in **MATT. 24:2**. To those who returned to Judaism, Paul writes, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (**HEB. 10:26**). He continues in verse 29, “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

In other words, the Lord takes great offense to those believers who forsake Him and return to the picture, the symbol, or the shadow. All of these had to do with “sight,” not “faith.” “But without faith it is impossible to please Him...” (**HEB. 11:6**) Faithful Jews such as Moses and David could observe the Law, and by faith look forward in time to the Lamb of God (Lord Jesus) who takes away the sin of the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law: born under the Law, living the sinless life, dying on the cross, and raising Himself from the dead. No one can observe the feasts by faith: they cannot look forward to their fulfillment as David and Moses did.

To attempt to observe them is to “trample the Son of God underfoot.” The Lord Jesus Christ “fulfilled” the Law at the cross when He said, “It is finished (**JOHN 19:30**).” No Christian is called to “fulfill” the Law today, nor can he.

WHAT DO THE SEVEN FEASTS REPRESENT?

It is clear that the first four Feasts have been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ’s first coming. The Feasts take us from “redemption” (Passover – **HEB. 9:27** – “...Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”) to “rest” (Tabernacles – **MATT. 11:28** – “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. – **HEB. 4:9** – “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”).

PASSOVER & UNLEAVENED BREAD

1 COR. 5:7 “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:” We should observe **1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-25** in a worthy way. **HEBR. 9:22** “...and without the shedding of blood is no remission (a sending away of sin).”

FIRSTFRUITS

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20 “But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

PENTECOST

JOHN 14:26 “But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

JOHN 15:26 “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:” God’s desire was for the nation of Israel to receive the risen in Christ as in **Acts 3:19** “...so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

Just as the first coming of the Lord Jesus fulfilled the first four feasts on the exact day of each Feast in the Jewish Calendar, so will His second coming fulfill the final three Feasts exactly. Trumpets must happen on the first day of the seventh month (**LEV. 23:24**), the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month (**LEV. 23:27**), and the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15th day of the seventh month (**LEV. 23:34**).

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Possibly the most difficult Feast to distinguish its meaning is the Feast of Trumpets, but it is clear that it does not begin with the rapture of the Church. Among the Israelites, trumpets were blown for a variety of reasons such as declaring war (judgment), gathering the Lord’s people, moving the camp (in the wilderness), to initiate a Feast, to declare the great and terrible Day of the Lord, and as a memorial (**LEV.23:24, Numb. 10:9**).

The “New Testament” includes some blowing of trumpets that are outside the context of Israel and should not be considered as subject matter for the Feast of Trumpets. The “last trumpet” and the “trumpet of God” are mentioned in **1 COR. 15:52** and **1 THESS. 4:16**, both passages describing the rapture of the “Church, which is His Body.” Just as the Lord “came unto his own (Israel), and his own received him not (**JOHN 1:11**), His second coming will also be for His people (Israel), and they will receive Him (“And so all Israel will be saved ...” **ROM 11:26**).

The logical fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets is “remembrance,” not “judgment.” Since it will happen 9 days before the Day of Atonement, the Trumpet Judgments of the book of Revelation cannot be in mind since the 5th Trumpet Judgment (**Rev. 9:5**) alone will last for five months.

The key verses are found in **Numb. 10:9**, and **Lk. 21:20**: “When you go to war in your own land...then you shall sound the alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord...and you will be saved from your enemies.” This relates to the time of the end in Luke 21:20: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that its desolation is near.” **Zech. 14:3** states, “Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations.”

DAY OF ATONEMENT

This follows the Feast of Trumpets by nine days. It begins on the 10th day of the 7th month. “For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people” (**LEV. 23:29**). This day of affliction is supposed to be a day of conviction and repentance for all of the people (Israel).

An historical event marks this day. **ZECHARIAH 12:10** predicts this future day, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” Israel’s souls will be afflicted in that day, as paraphrased in **MATT 24:30**, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

The Day of Atonement begins with the sound of a trumpet only one day in 50 years: “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee 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 (**LEV. 25:9**) The Lord Jesus Christ was born on a jubilee year where, “...it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family (**LEV. 25:10**).

It makes sense for the Lord’s second coming to be in a jubilee year since, “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (**MATT. 24:31**). This fulfills **DUET. 30:4** when Israel returns to their land (their possession). To be consistent, this Feast cannot apply to the Christian, but to the Jew only.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Finally, after the Lord is revealed and sets things on the earth in order, “rest” can begin. In the Lord’s first coming, “...(He) dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.” True “rest” can only be achieved on the earth when the Lord Jesus Christ again tabernacles (dwells) among men.

The six previous Feasts were not for Gentiles, and certainly not for the church. The “rest” to be achieved during Christ’s millennial reign, however, will be enjoyed by Jew and Gentile alike. According to **ZECH. 14:16**, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

When Christ returns, Israel will receive its rightful place as lead nation, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (Israel) shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (**ISA. 60:12**). “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name” (**ISA. 62.2**).

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