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THE SEVEN ANNUAL SACRED FEASTS OF THE OLD COVENANT: The Feasts of Remembrance

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*Yahweh said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them:
'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of Yahweh, which
you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.'*

Leviticus 23:1-2

*Then never let anyone criticize you for what you eat or drink, or about observance of annual
festivals, [...]. These are only a shadow of what was coming; **the reality is the body of Christ.***

Colossians 2:16-17

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* = Pilgrim feasts: Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:1-16

SACRED FEAST	OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	OLD TESTAMENT / MODERN TIME	DESCRIPTION Old Testament and application New Testament
<p>PASSOVER (begins the liturgical year) (PESACH) -Signified the Redemption of Israel</p>	<p>Ex 12:1-4; Lev 23:5; Num 9:1-14; 28:16 Dt 16:1-3, 4-7; Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12-26; Jn 2:13; 11:55; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 11:28</p>	<p>14th Aviv (Nisan) Mar./Apr.</p>	<p>Old Testament: Slaying and eating a lamb or kid, Remembering Israel's deliverance from death, the 10th plague. N.T.= last legitimate Old Covenant Passover sacrifice</p>
<p>*UNLEVENED BREAD (HAG HAMATZOT) -Signified the Sanctification of the Israel</p>	<p>Ex 12:15-20; 39; Ex 13:3-10; Ex 23:15; Ex 34:18; Lev 23:6-8; Num 28:17-25; Dt 16:3, 4, 8; Mk 14:1,12; Act 12:3; 1 Cor 5:6-8</p>	<p>15-21 Aviv (Nisan) Mar./Apr. 7 day feast</p>	<p>Old Testament: Eating the Passover sacrifice in a sacrificial meal. This feast lasted 7 days (8 if Passover is counted) in which eating bread with yeast (the symbol of sin) is forbidden. Remembering how Yahweh redeemed Israel out of Egypt in haste and that they are called to be a "holy people". Making designated daily offerings. N.T.= The Last Supper/first Eucharistic sacrifice and the Crucifixion</p>
<p>FIRSTFRUITS (YOM HABIKKURIM) This feast is no longer observed in Rabbinic Judaism (only the "firstfruits" of the wheat harvest</p>	<p>Ex 23:19; 34:26; Lev 23:9-14; Deut. 26:5,9-10; Matt 28:1; Mk 16:1-2; Lk 24:1; Jn 1:20; Ro 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20-23</p>	<p>The day after the first Sabbath after Passover (Lev. 23:11) = Sunday Aviv = March/April</p>	<p>Old Testament: Presenting a sheaf of the first barley harvest as a wave offering; making a burnt offering and a grain offering. Recognizing the</p>

at the Feast of Weeks is observed today) -Signified Resurrection of Israel as a free people			redemption of the first-born in Egypt and recognizing God's bounty in the Promised Land. N.T. = Resurrection Sunday
*WEEKS (PENTECOST=50 th day in Greek) (SHAVUOT or HAG HASHAVUOT) also known as FEAST OF THE HARVEST (HAG HAKATZIR) -Signified the Origination of Israel as the Covenant people Of Yahweh	Ex 23:16; 34:22a; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12; Act 2:1-4; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8	Sivan May/June 50 days after Firstfruits = on a Sunday	Old Testament: A festival of joy; mandatory and voluntary offerings including the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. Recalling the giving of the Law at Sinai 50 days after crossing the Red Sea and thankfulness for the Lord's blessings and birth of the O.T. Church. N.T.=birth of New Covenant Church

THE LONG SUMMER HARVEST

TRUMPETS (ROSH HASHANA) beginning of the civil year. -Signified the calling Israel to judgment	Lev 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6; 2Sam 6:15; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4-16	1 Tishri Sept/Oct	Old Testament: Ingathering of the nation of Israel. A sacred assembly and a day of rest commemorated with trumpet blasts and sacrifices. Israel presents itself before the Lord for his favor. N.T. = The Second Coming of Christ?
DAY OF ATONEMENT (YOM KIPUR) -Signified the Atonement of the Covenant people	Lev 16:1-34; 23:26-32; Num 29:7-11; Ro 3:24-26; Heb 9:7; 10:3, 30-31; 10:19-22; Act 27:9; 2Ptr 3:7; Rev 17:4 & 20:12	10 Tishri Sept/Oct	Old Testament: A day of rest, fasting and sacrifices of atonement for priests and people and atonement for the tabernacle and altar. Cleanse people and priests and king from their

			sins and purify the Holy Place in the Temple. N.T.= The Great Judgment ?
*TABERNACLES also called FEAST OF SHELTERS OR BOOTHS (SUKKOTH) -Signified God's presence with His Covenant people; looked forward to the coming of the Messiah	Ex 23:16b; 34:22b; Lev 23:33-38; 39-43; Num 29:12-34; Dt 16:13-15; 1 Kings 8:3 & 65; 2 Chr 7:1; Zec 14:16-19; Jn 7:2; Mt24:35; 2 Pt 3:7, 10 &13; Rev 21:1	15-22 Tishri Sept/Oct 8 day feast	Old Testament: A week of celebration for the fruit harvest (grapes & olives); living in booths and offering sacrifices. Memorializes the giving of the Tabernacle and giving thanks for the productivity of the land. NT = Creation of the new heaven & earth?

* The 3 pilgrim Feasts: every Israelite male, 13 years or older, must present himself to Yahweh three times a year at the Temple in Jerusalem at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 7 day feast following the Passover sacrifice), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and at the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths); see Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:16 & 2 Chronicles 8:13. The first three feasts: Passover (which begins the liturgical year), the Feast Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Firstfruits all fall in the same month within an 8 day period. The last three feasts: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles (which ends the liturgical year), also falls within the same month, with the Feast of Tabernacles covering an 8-day period. **If the 7 Sacred Feasts are a blueprint for God's plan of salvation then we are presently in the period of "the long summer harvest", and the laborers in God's vineyard are gathering souls into God's storehouse of heaven. Colossians 2:16-17: *Then never let anyone criticize you for what you eat or drink, or about observance of annual festivals, New Moons or Sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what was coming: the reality is the body of Christ.***

ADDITIONAL SACRED FEASTS

Weekly Feast of the Sabbath: The Sabbath is the 7th day of the week, commemorating the 7th day of Creation when God "rested" and was set aside as a special day of rest for the people to worship and commune with God. It was the only day of the week that was named. The Sabbath obligation was first announced in Exodus 16:23-29 in the wilderness on the way to Sinai and was associated with the event of the giving of the manna, which prefigured the Most Holy Eucharist. Other references to this obligation are repeated in Exodus 20:8-11 (10 Commandments); 31:13-16 (repeated after the sin of the Golden Calf); 35:2-3; Leviticus 23:3; and numerous references throughout the Old and New Testaments. Sacrifices: The 2 the daily Tamid lambs were doubled (see Numbers 28:4-10) and were accompanied by the prescribed wheat cake and wine libation.

Periodic Feasts (monthly and holy year feasts):

- New Moon Feasts:** A calendar feast which marked the beginning of each lunar month, celebrated with sacrifices and feasting. The official calendar of the covenant people was a lunar calendar and was designated by a religious or liturgical calendar which began in the spring with the month of Nisan or the civil calendar which began in the month of Tishri in the early fall. All religious feasts were commanded to be determined by the lunar calendar, even in Jesus' time when it had been determined that the solar calendar was more accurate. In addition to the daily Tamid, sacrifices included a goat offered as a sacrifice for sin along with its accompanying wine libation. Also offered for each New Moon sacrifice were: 2 young bulls, 1 ram and 7 yearling lambs without blemish. A grain offering accompanied each sacrifice: for a bull three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; for each ram, two-tenths of fine flour mixed with oil; for each lamb one-tenth of fine flour mixed with oil. A libation of half a hin of wine accompanied the sacrifice for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram and one-quarter of a hin for a lamb. Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15; 1 Samuel 20:18; 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 4:8; 8:13; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:33; Isaiah 1:13-14; Ezekiel 45:17; 46:3; Hosea 2:11, 13; Amos 8:5; Colossians 2:16.
- Sabbath Year Feasts:** Every 7th year was designated a Sabbath year of the Lord in which the land "rested." The obligations for the Sabbath year are found in Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; 18-22; and Deuteronomy 15:1-11: the land must be "at rest" and cannot be sown nor can vines be pruned for a year. This holy year feast reminded the people that the land belonged to Yahweh. In addition to the rest for the land, all Israelites held as slaves were released from bondage in the 7th year and debts were forgiven; although there is some confusion as to whether this release from bondage was always in the Sabbath year or in the 7th year from when the Israelite was placed in bondage [also see Nehemiah 10:32].
- Jubilee Feasts:** Scholars do not agree on how the date of this feast was determined, whether the 49th or 50th year. For me the Biblical account is clear: counting 7 weeks of years, or 49 years from the last Sabbath year, on the change of the civil year in the fall during the Feast Trumpets the 49th year becomes the 7th Sabbath year. Then, 10 days after the New Year celebrated on the Feast of Trumpets, the 50th year is proclaimed on the Feast of Atonement and is celebrated as the beginning of the year long Jubilee. This arrangement allowed the Jubilee year to fall on a Sabbath year and helped to adjust the shorter lunar calendar; otherwise there would be two continuous years of no sowing of the fields and no harvest. This feast provided a holy year of liberation in which the observances of the Sabbath year were enforced in addition to the return of the land to its original tribal owner. This holy feast allowed the Israelites to show the same mercy to each other that Yahweh had shown to them in the event of the Exodus: captives were liberated, debts were forgiven, and Yahweh's land was "at rest" to be given to the covenant people again the next year. This holy year observance assured that social justice was maintained among the covenant people. Jesus declared a divine Jubilee in the first year of His ministry when He quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2. Only a king of Israel or a High Priest could proclaim a Jubilee year. Jesus announced He was the Messianic Davidic heir when He proclaimed a divine Jubilee in Luke 4:16-22 [see Leviticus 25:9-52; 27:17-25; Numbers 36:2-4]. Both the 7 yearly Sabbath Year Feast and the Jubilee Feasts were dropped by the covenant people soon after taking possession of the Promised Land. Greed and a lack of social conscience led to the failure to observe these feasts. It was for this reason that Yahweh commended a 70 year exile for Judah to atone for the 490 years of failure to keep the Sabbath Year Feasts. The people owed Yahweh 70 Sabbath years and so the land lay fallow for 70 years before the return from exile. There is no evidence that the Babylonians brought any other group of people into the Holy Land to occupy the land in those 70 years.

National Feasts inaugurated by the people and not by Yahweh:

- **Purim** (Adar = February/March), which celebrates the salvation of the Jews from gentile persecution in the Book of Esther (Esther 9:18-32).
- **Hanukkah** (or Chanukah), celebrated in the month of Kislev (December). The feast of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem described in 1 Maccabees 4:52-59 and 2 Maccabees 10:6-8.

Purim and Hanukkah are **not** festivals ordained by God but are instead festivals proclaimed by the people to celebrate a historical event which demonstrated God's divine intervention and protection of the Covenant people. Jesus observed the Feast of Hanukkah in John 10:22.

Please note that sometime shortly after the resurrection of Christ the Jewish religious authority adjusted the dates of the annual Feast of Firstfruits and the next feast which was celebrated 50 days from Firstfruits, the Feast of Pentecost. They began to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits on the day **after** the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the 16th of Nisan so that feast would not be fulfilled in Jesus' Resurrection from the dead. This meant that from that time on Firstfruits and Pentecost would no longer fall annually on a Sunday. The "great Sabbath" of Passover week was also then considered to be the week prior to the week long feast instead of in the midst of that holy week.

However, the Karaite sect of Judaism, which claims descent from the Sadducees, continues to celebrate Firstfruits on the day after the first Sabbath of Passover week, **on a Sunday**, and Pentecost on a Sunday 50 days later just as commanded in Leviticus 23:11. The Karaites are also the only Jews who continue to celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits. Both Orthodox and Reform Jews count Pentecost as 50 days from the 16th of Nisan. For verification of this change see Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13.8.4 (252) where this first century AD Jewish historian and former Old Covenant Priest writes: *"And truly he did not speak falsely in saying so; for the festival, which we call Pentecost, did then fall out to be the next day to the Sabbath ..."* Josephus offers evidence that the festival of Pentecost used to always fall on a Sunday, the day next to the Sabbath which was Saturday. The feast of Pentecost was determined by counting 7 times 7 weeks from the Feast of Firstfruits and the 50th day would then be the Feast of Pentecost. Josephus' statement means that Firstfruits also used to be celebrated on a Sunday [see Leviticus 23:11], foreshadowing God's plan that the Christ should be resurrected on the Feast of Firstfruits on a Sunday and that the birth of the New Covenant Church would be on the Sunday of the Feast of Pentecost!

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