

There has been an increasing interest and debate within Christian circles regarding the relevance of the feast days instituted in the Old Testament. Many sincerely believe that God requires Christians today to observe the festivals that He once required of the Jewish nation. Often, the convictions are so strong that some believe that one's eternal salvation and the finishing of God's work on earth are dependent upon their strict observance. Are these conclusions correct? Are they Biblically based? Are Levitical festivals and annual ceremonial Sabbaths obligatory after the cross, and can they be legitimately observed in the absence of the earthly temple? Let's study and discover What God Says About..."Feast Days and Sabbaths."

FROM SHADOW TO SUBSTANCE

1. **According to Hebrews 10:1, of what are the law of sacrifices a shadow?**

   "For the law having a shadow of _____ _____ _____ _____, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." *Hebrews 10:1*

   Note: *A shadow is not the substance. The shadow spoken of in Hebrews 10:1 pointed forward to the substance or reality—Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments are not a shadow. They define sin (1 John 3:4) and are a transcript of the character of God. According to scripture, two distinct laws are brought to view: the ceremonial law that pointed forward to Christ and ceased to be in force when Christ died on Calvary, and the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God indicating permanence.*

2. **According to Hebrews 10:4, what is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away?**

   "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away _____." *Hebrews 10:4*

Note: *It is impossible for the blood of sacrificial animals to take away sins. Therefore, the sacrificial system clearly pointed forward to the death of Jesus Christ and the blood that He would shed for the sins of the world.*

ANNUAL LEVITICAL FESTIVALS

Note: *The annual Levitical festivals of the sanctuary were observed by the Israelites on a specific date each year. The first four feasts were celebrated in the spring and the last three were celebrated in the fall. The ceremonial festivals were: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First fruits, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. These annual festivals were ceremonial Sabbaths that pointed forward to the cross and ceased to be observed when Christ died on the cross. They are not to be confused or blended together with the Seventh-day Sabbath that occurred weekly (Leviticus 23:3; 37, 38). The Seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before sin in the Garden of Eden and points back to creation. The ceremonial feast days were instituted after sin and pointed forward to the cross. The Seventh-day Sabbath is not a feast day and cannot be regarded as such.*

3. Ancient Levitical festivals are feasts of whom?

[1]"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [2]Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the _____ _____ _____ _____, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts." *Leviticus 23:1, 2*

4. How were the Israelites to regard the feasts of the Lord?

"These are the feasts of the LORD, even _____ _____, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." *Leviticus 23:4*

SPRING FESTIVALS

5. What feast was held on the 14th day of the first month?

"In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's _____." *Leviticus 23:5*

Note: *The annual Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and its history was to be repeated when the children asked the meaning of the ordinance (Exodus 12:25-27). God's miraculous deliverance of Israel was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The Passover Service and Lamb met it's fulfillment in Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7) and was replaced with the Lord's Supper that He instituted before His death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Luke 22:13-20).*

6. Which feast began on the 15th day of the first month? How many days were the Israelites required to eat unleavened bread during this feast?

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ unto the LORD: _____ _____ ye must eat unleavened bread." *Leviticus 23:6*

Note: *The Feast of Unleavened Bread was associated with the Passover. It began on the day after the Passover and was celebrated for seven days. All leaven—which represented sin—was to be removed from the homes of the Israelites and from the bread to be eaten or they would be cut off from the congregation. The apostle Paul instructed the Corinthians to purge out "the old leaven" that they may be a new lump (1 Corinthians 5:7). This feast was fulfilled when Christ our Passover was sacrificed for our sins.*

7. Which two days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were considered ceremonial Sabbaths?

7"In _____ _____ _____ ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 8But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in _____ _____ _____ is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." *Leviticus 23:7, 8*

Note: *The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated for seven days and began and ended with a ceremonial Sabbath.*

8. Which feast pertained directly to the barley harvest?

9"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a _____ _____ _____ _____ of your harvest unto the priest." *Leviticus 23:9, 10*

9. What shall be waved before the Lord? On what day was the Feast of First Fruits held?

"And he shall wave _____ _____ before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ the priest shall wave it." *Leviticus 23:11*

Note: *The sheaf of the first fruits gathered from the barley field were presented to the priest and waved before the Lord as a recognition that the full barley harvest to be gathered in belonged to God. The wave sheaf typified Christ's resurrection as the "first fruits" of the dead. After Christ's resurrection, saints rose from the grave and appeared in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:52, 53). Many scholars believe that these resurrected saints*

ascended to heaven with Jesus (Ephesians 4:8; Revelation 4:4, 10) and were presented as a kind of wave offering of the resurrection.

10. Which feast does Moses refer to in Deuteronomy 16:10?

"And thou shalt keep _____ _____ _____ _____ unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee." *Deuteronomy 16:10*

11. The Feast of Weeks was held 50 days or how many ceremonial Sabbaths after the Wave Sheaf offering?

15"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; _____ _____ shall be complete: 16Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number _____ _____; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD." *Leviticus 23:15, 16*

Note: *The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost was celebrated 50 days after the first fruits of the barley sheaf that was waved before the Lord. This feast concluded the harvest season. Just as the Law was given to Israel from the fiery mountain of Sinai 50 days after the Passover, the Holy Spirit symbolized as tongues of fire was given to the disciples (Acts 2:1-4) 50 days after Christ was sacrificed as the Passover Lamb.*

FALL FESTIVALS

12. Which feast was held on the 1st day of the 7th month?

23"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of _____ _____ _____, an holy convocation. 25Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD." *Leviticus 23:23-25*

Note: *The feast of trumpets was held on the first day of the seventh month as a holy convocation. The blowing of the trumpets signaled that the people were to make preparations for the near approaching Day of Atonement that would occur nine days later.*

13. Which feast was held on the 10th day of the 7th month?

26"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 27Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a _____ _____ _____: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto

the LORD." *Leviticus 23:26, 27*

Note: *The Day of Atonement was the most solemn day in Israel. Sins must be confessed and forsaken as the High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary and people from their sins. This day was a ceremonial Sabbath in which Israel was to fast, afflict their souls, and refrain from all work. It pointed forward to Christ's final work of Judgment in the Most Holy Place which involved the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary—the blotting out of the record of the sins of the people spoken of in Daniel 8:13, 14; Acts 3:19; and 1 Peter 4:17.*

14. Which feast began on the 15th day of the 7th month? How many days were the Israelites to keep this feast?

[33]"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [34]Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be _____ _____ _____ _____ for _____ _____ unto the LORD." *Leviticus 23:33, 34*

15. Which two days of the Feast of Tabernacles were considered ceremonial Sabbaths?

[35]"On _____ _____ _____ shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. [36]Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on _____ _____ _____ shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein." *Leviticus 23:35, 36*

Note: *The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated the time when the Israelites dwelled in tents during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. This was the last of the feasts during the religious year and it was a time of great rejoicing. It began to be celebrated five days after the Day of Atonement and it lasted for seven days. The first and last day of the feast were ceremonial Sabbaths. This festival was held at the end of the fall harvest representing the completion of the ingathering of the fruit. It also prefigured the final ingathering of the harvest of souls as indicated in the book of Revelation (Revelation 7:9; 14:14, 15).*

FEAST DAYS AND THE TEMPLE

"Now that the sacrifices are no longer possible because of the absence of the temple, and because prophecy contained within the sacrifices has been fulfilled in Christ, it follows that sacrifices and related rituals, such as Levitical festivals, are no longer mandatory." Doukhan, J. *Ministry, International Journal for Pastors,* April 2010, p. 7.

16. In what specific place were the males required to come and celebrate three of the ceremonial feast days each year?

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God _____ _____ _____ _____ ____ _____ _____; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty." *Deuteronomy 16:16*

Note: *Christians today are not required to travel to Jerusalem three times a year to seek to fulfill ancient obligations of "feast days." Christ's final work as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary is now to be our focus.*

17. What happened to the veil in the temple when Jesus died?

50"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51And, behold, the veil of the temple was _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." *Matthew 27:50, 51*

Note: *When Christ died on the cross, God tore the veil of the temple in two from the top to the bottom. He was indicating that the sacrificial system had come to an end once and for all. The shadow of the sacrificial system had now reached its fulfillment in the substance Jesus Christ. The earthly temple, services, festivals, and sacrifices had ended forever.*

18. According to Hebrews 7, what two things changed when the Levitical priesthood ended at the cross?

11"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12For _____ _____ being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of _____ _____. 13For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." *Hebrews 7:11-14*

Note: *The book of Hebrews indicates that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, not after the order of Aaron. Furthermore, Christ came from the tribe of Judah, not Levi. Therefore, as a result of Christ's death on Calvary, the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system or ceremonial law with its feast days ended and necessitated a change. Hence, Christ is now our great high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, and He offers His precious blood in behalf of repentant sinners.*

19. What type of ordinances were nailed to the cross?

[14]"Blotting out _____ _____ _____ _____ that _____ _____ _____, which _____ _____ _____ _____, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; [15]And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." *Colossians 2:14, 15*

Note: *The handwriting of ordinances by Moses with its curses, judgments, and penalties for transgression were "against us" and nailed to the cross (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26). The Ten Commandments which are "holy, and just and good" (Romans 7:12) is never considered to be "against us."*

20. How does Paul describe the feast days that were a part of the ceremonial law or system?

[16]"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: [17]Which are _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____; but the body is of Christ." *Colossians 2:16, 17*

"On this passage Albert Barnes, Presbyterian commentator, well observes: 'There is no evidence from this passage that he [Paul] would teach that there was no obligation to observe any holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. . .He had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not to the moral law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law—no one of the ten commandments could be spoken of as 'a shadow of good things to come.' These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal application." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* Volume 7, p. 206.

21. According to Paul, the beliefs and practices of the Galatians were objectionable because it led to what terrible condition?

[9]"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 _____? [10]Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. [11]I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." *Galatians 4:9-11*

Note: *In Galatians 4:9-11, the apostle Paul is not referring to the Seventh-day Sabbath. He is referencing the annual ceremonial Sabbaths and new moons associated with the Old Testament ceremonial or sacrificial system.*

22. Why do you think Paul speaks of keeping the feast in Acts 18:21 and 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8? (see 1 Cor. 9:19-23).

"Of course, some Christians, including Paul, may have observed certain festivals other than the Passover for whatever reason they thought best (e.g., to use the event for a platform to preach the gospel). But there is no indication that this became a Christian requirement for membership in the new church. After all, God was leading them step by step. They did not see immediately the passing significance of feasts that had been so precious to them prior to Jesus and Calvary.

Other reasons for Paul to hurry back to Jerusalem at the time of a Feast are obvious. Paul's avowed strategy to win both Jews and Gentiles was revealed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. . .This portrays his stratagem to convert Jews and Gentiles by openly fitting into their respective culture systems, without denying Christ in the process." Douglass, H. *Feast Days:* Shadows of Our Faith, p. 30.

23. What was under the symbolic woman's feet who was preparing to deliver the man child Jesus?

[1]"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and _____ _____ under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: [2]And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." *Revelation 12:1, 2*

Note: *Many Bible scholars understand the symbolism of the moon in Revelation 12 to represent the ceremonial law or Old Testament system of types and shadows. This law pointed forward to and was fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus Christ. Just as the moon reflects or borrows light from the sun, the ceremonial law functioned in a similar manner, giving way to the greater light Jesus Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness."*

SUMMARY

The annual festivals of the sanctuary were instituted by God and were to be observed by the Israelites on specific dates each year. They were a part of the ceremonial law which was a shadow that pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the substance. Christ has become the fulfilment of the festivals of the sanctuary by virtue of His death on Calvary, and as a result, Christians are not obligated to observe ceremonial feast days.

24. Dear friend, will you accept Christ as your Passover? _____

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