

Lesson for October 26, 2008

## Old Testament Survey

### The Book of Leviticus Part II

#### The Feasts of Jehovah (Leviticus 23:1-44)

A feast in the Age of Israel was a festival or a celebration, as the nation gathered to commemorate certain historical events. The feasts were given by God to the nation of Israel, typifying the redemptive work of Christ that was to come. The feasts began with Passover and typified Christ's payment for sin, and they ended with the Feast of Tabernacles, which typified Christ setting up His millennial kingdom. All the feasts typify some event in the life of Christ. Since Israel was an agricultural nation, the feasts correspond to the spring and fall seasons. There were seven events (feasts) instituted by God for the nation of Israel.

#### Passover (Fulfilled)

The first feast was Passover. Passover memorializes the time in Egypt when the angel of death passed over the house of those who put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost. The story is told to us in Exodus 12, outlining the command from God to take a lamb without spot or blemish and apply its blood to the doorposts. The death angel had been sent to destroy the first-born male child in response to Pharaoh's refusal to set the Jews free.

Passover demonstrates the doctrine of Redemption, Jesus Christ being our Redeemer. The lamb was to be without spot or blemish, a type of Christ's perfection. It was to be eaten, an illustration of faith. It was to be roasted under fire, signifying God's judgment of Christ. And it was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, a picture of Christ's sinlessness and the bitterness of His death. Christ, therefore, becomes the Passover or the perfect sacrifice for the believer. Just as the life of the innocent lamb was sacrificed for the Jews that night, so an innocent Christ was sacrificed for each one of us. Therefore, this feast was *fulfilled* in Christ. (I Corinthians 5:6-7; I Peter 1:18-19)

It was this feast that Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the night He was betrayed. It is the Last Supper of Scripture and has become the Church Age ritual of Communion. It was Christ Himself that set the precedence for this transition in the upper room according to I Corinthians 11:23-26.

Unleavened Bread  
(Fulfilled)

The Unleavened Bread feast was given to Israel to remind them that they must obey the mandates of God and do so in a timely manner. They were reminded to remove sin (leaven) from their lives and to depend upon the Lord by using the faith-rest principles. This feast was tied to the Passover in that the Israelites were not to take time to even put leaven in their bread before their departure from bondage in Egypt.

This feast spoke of fellowship with God and the walk of the believer. The unleavened bread speaks of Christ's sinless life. The feast becomes a picture of God's divine provision for the Church Age believer in Christ. It is God the Holy Spirit Who provides the supernatural power necessary to live the Christian Way of Life. Jesus Christ is the example of perfection that we are to follow and He is the standard by which we are to examine ourselves. Jesus pioneered and proved the Christian life under the control of the Holy Spirit, being tested and tempted in every way in which we are, yet without sinning. This feast has been *fulfilled*, as well. (Matthew 16:6; Mark 8:15; I Corinthians 5:6; 11:23-26; II Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:7-9)

Firstfruits  
(Fulfilled)

The Feast of the Firstfruits was a type of the resurrection of Christ. Since Christ has risen, all believers will also be raised. The Feast of the Firstfruits was a celebration of the first harvest of the crops, the first to be picked. In this same manner, Jesus is our firstfruits, having conquered physical death by His resurrection. He sets the precedence for us to be raised, to conquer death and live forever. If Christ did not come back from the grave, we would have no salvation, no eternal life and no hope. However, Christ did come back from the grave, securing forever a place for each believer in eternity. Christ *fulfilled* this feast. It is the same power that raised Jesus from the grave that permanently indwells each believer. However, there is no guarantee that a believer will use the power, even though it is available to him. (1 Corinthians 15:23; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Pentecost  
(Not Fulfilled)

This feast was to be celebrated 50 days after the Feast of the Firstfruits, thus the name "Pentecost," meaning fifty. It was a harvest of the work of their hands and they were to leave part of the harvest in the fields for the poor and for strangers. The offering at this feast was to include leaven, typifying the fact that all are invited to Christ's feast. It was at this feast in the New Testament that the Church began. With the formation of the Church and the baptism of the Holy Spirit placing believers into union with Christ, Pentecost takes on new significance. The "harvest" has begun for the body of Christ (the Church, the Bride of Christ) and when the harvest is complete, the Lord will return for His bride. This feast was *prophetical*. (Acts 2:1-4; I Corinthians 10:16-17; 12:12-20)

Trumpets  
(Not Fulfilled)

The Feast of Trumpets was the celebration of the New Year. This feast was called Rosh Hashanah, which means "head of year." It was *prophetical* and refers to the regathering of Israel as a nation at the Second Coming of Christ. It will be the beginning of a new dispensation, the Millennium, when Israel will be restored as a nation in the Land of Promise and Jesus Christ will be recognized as Messiah. The blowing of trumpets signified several things to the Jews: 1. The assembling of the congregation 2. The moving forward of the nation as they were relocating 3. A warning of the approaching enemy 4. For celebration and joyful occasions. (Numbers 10:1-10; Matthew 24:30-31)

Day of Atonement  
(Not Fulfilled)

The Feast of the Day of Atonement was also *prophetical* and refers to a future coming of the Messiah. It was what was celebrated as Yom Kippur. It was the one time a year that the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle behind the veil. He could do this only after a sacrifice had been made for him, his family and the nation. It was in the Holy of Holies that blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat as a symbol of God's saving grace through Christ. There will come a day (the Millennium) when Israel, as a nation, will recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Thousands of individual Jews will come to know Christ as Savior during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. For the Church-Age believer (Jew or Gentile) Christ is our atonement having become our substitute and completely satisfying the righteousness and justice of God. Christ atoned for the sin of the entire human race. (Isaiah 66:5-9; Romans 11:25-29; Hebrews 10:3-4)

Tabernacles  
(Not Fulfilled)

This feast was a memorial to God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It was to be celebrated after the harvest, typifying the Jews being at peace and back in the land as per the Palestinian Covenant. Therefore, it too was *prophetical*. This will occur in the Millennium when Christ, Israel's Messiah, is ruling on earth. It was, therefore, a memorial to past deliverances and a future one as well. As a part of this feast, "booths" or temporary dwellings were constructed as reminders of God's daily provision for the children of Israel as they wandered in the desert. It was a time of rejoicing before the Lord as they recalled the deliverance. (Zechariah 14:16-21; Revelation 21:3-6)

Conclusion

The seven feasts of Jehovah foretold, some 1500 years before Christ, His redemptive work on behalf of mankind. The four spring festivals, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost were all associated with the first coming of Christ in Hypostatic Union. The three fall festivals, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles are all associated with Christ's physical return to earth at the Second Coming.

These feasts told the story of God's redemptive plan and should bring hope to Jews and Gentiles alike. Since the promise made thousands of years ago to Abraham (that through him all the nations of earth would be blessed) was for all people through his seed the Lord Jesus Christ, anyone can appropriate this blessing by faith in Christ. We can see in the typology of the feasts what was planned for Israel in the past and what they have to look forward to in the future (God is not through with Israel yet). We can also see Christ's redemptive work for the Church in saving us and giving us a future. The study of the feasts should give us all hope (absolute confidence) and reinforce our personal sense of destiny (God is not through with His Bride, the Church, yet either). (Hebrews 2:14-17; Romans 4:1-5, 13-25; Revelation 21:2, 22:17)