



The Spring Festivals: An Overview

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Yearly Festival Observance:** the Festivals are dress rehearsals where we repetitively celebrate God's themes (Leviticus 23). A broad overview can be found in the teaching notes from *Preparing for the New Year* from two weeks ago

II. SPRING FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

"The feasts offered to the Israelites an opportunity to commemorate specific saving acts of God which revealed unique attributes of His character. On the Sabbath, the Israelites acknowledged God as their *Creator* (Ex 20:11) and *Redeemer* (Deut 5:12-15). At Passover, they especially praised God as their *Deliverer* from Egyptian oppression (Deut 16:1; Ex 12:13). At Pentecost (Feast of Weeks), they thanked God for being their *Provider* of the material blessings of the harvest (Lev 23:10, 18, 19). At the Feast of Trumpets, they acknowledged God as their *Judge* who would decide their destiny ten days later on the Day of Atonement (Num 29:7; Lev 23:29). On the Day of Atonement, they would celebrate the fact that God was their *Vindicator* and *Restorer* who had forgiven and cleansed them of their sins (Lev 16:14-15, 21). At the Feast of Tabernacles, they rejoiced that God had been their *Protector* throughout their pilgrimage to the Promised Land (Lev 23:43)."

"The commemoration through the annual feasts of the saving acts and attributes of God can enhance the worship experience of Christians today as it did that for ancient Israel. There is a prevailing skepticism today about God being the *Creator, Redeemer, Deliverer, Provider, Judge, Vindicator, and Restorer.*" (Bacchiocchi, 15)

- A. Passover: Justification** - Saved by the Blood of the Lamb; Yeshua Our Passover Lamb; Yeshua as our Savior/Deliverer

1. Yeshua is the starting point of our holy convocation

2. We are to observe the Passover but are not commanded to have a holy convocation

2"Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. 3On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances." 4So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. Numbers 9:2-4

21This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Messiah in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. 23But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it. Colossians 1:21-23

3. Internal Issues often arise preceding Passover: We still need a Savior

4. Second Passover: If Israelites missed this festival, they were to observe it a month later in the second month.

a. 9Then YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the Lord. 11In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it. Numbers 9:9-12

b. King Hezekiah and the Israelites observance of the Passover in the second month (2 Chronicles 30)

- B. Unleavened Bread: Sanctification** - Leaving "Egypt's bread" behind; leading us out of sin & into God's teachings; Yeshua as our Sanctifier

1. Learning a New Way

2. "How long O Lord": 7 Days—a number of completion—represents our sanctification process being until we are dead or until He comes for us

3. Two Holy Convocations: First & Seventh Days

4. Removing the Leaven on the first day of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15)

5. Commanded to eat Unleavened Bread: this is indicative of our need to “feast on” Yeshua regularly for our nourishment/sustenance
- C. Firstfruits: Resurrection** - Yeshua’s Resurrection & Our Promised Resurrection; Firstfruits – we are accepted in Him; no commanded holy convocation; offered unleavened firstfruits of the barley harvest; initiated the grain harvest in Israel; Yeshua as our Resurrector
1. Crucifixion Precedes Resurrection
 2. Power of God Dwells Within Us (Romans 8:11-14)
 3. A Living Hope (1 Peter 1:3-4)
 4. We Can Trust Yeshua’s Words (He prophesied of His own resurrection before it happened and then delivered)
 5. We Have Our Own Promised Resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
- D. Counting of the Omer**: 50 day count connecting Passover to Shavuot (Leviticus 23:15-17); Yeshua as our Sustainer
1. Building Expectancy
 2. Justification to Sanctification to Empowered Multiplication
 3. Testings Increase
 4. Yeshua’s admonition to tarry...until (watch and pray)
- E. Shavuot**; Yeshua as our Provider
1. Word: Giving of the Torah
 2. Spirit: Outpouring of the Spirit in order to be witnesses
 3. Symbol of Remission (A yearly mini-“year of Jubilee”); freedom to the captives; from physical to spiritual liberation
 4. Firstfruits of the wheat harvest (leavened loaves); thanksgiving to God and dedication of that which is coming to Him

III. DOING THE FESTIVALS FOR YHWH

- A. Festival Observance**: There are multiple times in Israel’s history when YHWH was not pleased with Israel’s festival observance (Isaiah 1:12-20 & Amos 5:21-24)
- ⁵*Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: “When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? ⁶When you eat and when you drink [the annual feasts], do you not eat and drink for yourselves? ⁷Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous?” (Zech. 7:5-7)*
- B. Pleasing YHWH**: How would I/we please You in observing the festivals this year?
1. Repent: we can be honest about the times that we fall short, acknowledge it, ask His forgiveness, and then make any necessary changes.
 2. Thank You: we can grow in our practice of thanking YHWH for what He’s done.
 3. First Commandment: we are to love Him with all of our heart, soul mind, and strength (our everything)
 - a. Grace: there’s grace to be wholehearted in loving God
 - i. There’s grace for a wholehearted, zealous, radical love for and pursuit of God
 - ii. There’s grace for this! Is there a radical God-loving desire in your heart? There’s grace for that!
 - iii. There’s grace to ask God what changes are necessary in our life at this time.
 - iv. He wouldn’t have called us to love Him with all of our heart if it wasn’t within reach
 - v. Grace gives you a greater ability to press in towards God, but grace doesn’t give you the ability to shrink back from a wholehearted pursuit of Him
 - vi. We are saved by grace and kept by grace; we have His grace to be firm to the end
 - b. Non-grace: Does it take any grace to eat junk food or to binge watch Netflix? No, we don’t need any help to do that or other unedifying things. There’s mercy available when we blow it with a focus on superfluous or inconsequential things but God doesn’t give us grace for those things.
 - c. Unbelief: We often struggle with unbelief that wholehearted obedience to God is within reach; He’s called us to a wholehearted response towards Him.
 - d. Refusing to Hear: “But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Zechariah 7:11
 - i. Yeshua says quite often that we are to take heed how we hear
 4. Second Commandment: we are to love our neighbor as we love ourself.

