



Article 3: THE FEASTS OF SCRIPTURE – PART 1

YHWH gave Israel very specific feasts and celebrations (called Miqra or Moedim in Hebrew). These are also rehearsals for Israel. These were described by Moshe to Israel in detail in the first five books of the Bible. (These five books are called the Torah in Hebrew).

These feasts (celebrations) are for different lengths of time. From one day or part of a day up to seven days long.

YHWH also gave Israel very different actions to do during each of these celebrations. These actions were to teach Israel about some events that YHWH would do in the future for Israel.

This article will discuss what these feasts required Israel to do and how long these feasts were and how the actions of these feasts were carried out.

In the Torah each of the following feasts are described.

1. Passover (in Hebrew called Pesach)
2. Unleavened Bread (Hebrew = Hag HaMatzah)
3. First Fruits (Heb Bikkurrim)
4. Feast of Weeks (Heb. Shavuot) (also called feast of sevens) [this is called Pentecost by the church]
5. Feast of Tabernacles (Heb. Sukkot)
6. Sabbath (Heb. Shabbat)

Pesach:

The first Passover is recorded when Israel was taken out of Egypt by YHWH. We read this in Exodus 12:3 to 12:27 and further in this chapter.

Exo 12:3 "Speak to all the congregation of Yisra'el, saying, 'On the tenth day of this month each one of them is to take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

Exo 12:4 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take it according to the number of the beings, according to each man's need you make your count for the lamb.

Exo 12:5 'Let the lamb be a perfect one, a year old male. Take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Exo 12:6 'And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then all the assembly of the congregation of Yisra'el shall kill it between the evenings.

Exo 12:7 'And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Exo 12:8 'And they shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire – with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.



Exo 12:9 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire, its head with its legs and its inward parts.

Exo 12:10 'And do not leave of it until morning, and what remains of it until morning you are to burn with fire.

Exo 12:11 'And this is how you eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Passover of יהוה.

Exo 12:43 And יהוה said to Mosheh and Aharon, "This is the law of the Passover: No son of a stranger is to eat of it,

Exo 12:48 "And when a stranger sojourns with you and shall perform the Passover to יהוה, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and perform it, and he shall be as a native of the land. But let no uncircumcised eat of it.

Exo 12:49 "There is one Torah for the native-born and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

It is clear from these passages that it is an evening event rather than a feast over one day. Israel is to take a perfect (unblemished) male lamb (or goat) and eat it on the Passover night. We are even told that the lamb must be cooked by roasting not by any other way. The only other items that MUST be present at this Passover celebration are Bitter herbs and unleavened bread. That means bread made without yeast.

We are also given the date on which this celebration is to be done; the 14th of Aviv according to the Hebrew calendar. The lamb however is to be taken from the flock of sheep on the 10th of Aviv and held for these few days until the 14th.

We are also told that 'no stranger' may take of the Passover meal and that all males must be circumcised.

Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah):

This feast begins IMMEDIATELY after Pesach. We read about this feast the first time Israel celebrated it in Ex12:15-20.

Exo 12:15 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. Indeed on the first day you cause leaven to cease from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that being shall be cut off from Yisra'el.

Exo 12:16 'And on the first day is a set-apart gathering, and on the seventh day you have a set-apart gathering. No work at all is done on them, only that which is eaten by every being, that alone is prepared by you.

Exo 12:17 'And you shall guard the Festival of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I brought your divisions out of the land of Mitsrayim. And you shall guard this day throughout your generations, an everlasting law.

Exo 12:18 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month in the evening.



Exo 12:19 'For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, that same being shall be cut off from the congregation of Yisra'el, whether sojourner or native of the land.'

Exo 12:20 'Do not eat that which is leavened – in all your dwellings you are to eat unleavened bread.'

We also see from this that this feast is seven days long. The first and last days are special days where no work is done and a gathering of Israel together is also done.

This feast is also mentioned again in Lev 23:6-8

Lev 23:6 *'And on the fifteenth day of this month is the Festival of Unleavened Bread to יהוה – seven days you eat unleavened bread.'*

Lev 23:7 'On the first day you have a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.'

Lev 23:8 'And you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה for seven days. On the seventh day is a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.' ”

First fruits (Bikkurrim)

The first fruits festival is given to Israel in Lev 2: 14-15 and 23:10-14.

Lev 2:14 'And if you bring a grain offering of your first-fruits to יהוה, bring for the grain offering of your first-fruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, crushed heads of new grain.'

Lev 2:15 'And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It is a grain offering.'

Lev 23:10 "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and you shall say to them, 'When you come into the land which I give you, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest.'

Lev 23:11 'And he shall wave the sheaf before יהוה, for your acceptance. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest waves it.'

Lev 23:12 'And on that day when you wave the sheaf, you shall prepare a male lamb a year old, a perfect one, as a burnt offering to יהוה,

Lev 23:13 and its grain offering: two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to יהוה, a sweet fragrance, and its drink offering: one-fourth of a hin of wine.'

Lev 23:14 'And you do not eat bread or roasted grain or fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your Elohim – a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.'

This festival is celebrated on the day after the weekly Sabbath. This means that this feast always occurs on a Sunday in the Gregorian calendar.

The priest of Israel waves before a sheaf of the first grain harvest – the barley harvest!.

They also were to give an offering of a one year old male lamb. The grain offering was to be



mixed with oil, frankincense and wine. Any grain from the new barley harvest was not to be eaten until this first fruits festival had been celebrated.

Shavuot:

The feast of Shavuot (which the church calls Pentecost) is given to Israel in Lev 23:15-21.

Lev 23:15 'And from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, you shall count for yourselves: seven completed Sabbaths.

Lev 23:16 'Until the morrow after the seventh Sabbath you count fifty days, then you shall bring a new grain offering to יהוה.

Lev 23:17 'Bring from your dwellings for a wave offering two loaves of bread, of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour they are, baked with leaven, first-fruits to יהוה.

Lev 23:18 'And besides the bread, you shall bring seven lambs a year old, perfect ones, and one young bull and two rams. They are a burnt offering to יהוה, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet fragrance to יהוה.

Lev 23:19 'And you shall offer one male goat as a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old, as a peace offering.

Lev 23:20 'And the priest shall wave them, besides the bread of the first-fruits, as a wave offering before יהוה, besides the two lambs. They are set-apart to יהוה for the priest.

Lev 23:21 'And on this same day you shall proclaim a set-apart gathering for yourselves, you do no servile work on it – a law forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

This festival concerns the harvest of the new grain offering. It is to be celebrated 50 days after Bikkurim. The items that Israel was to bring were TWO LEAVENED LOAVES of BREAD from each household. These loaves are again called a first fruits offering but this time it is for the second wheat harvest. Again Israel was to offer to YHWH lambs. This time 7 one year old lambs were to be offered. In addition one young bull and two rams were also to be offered. A sin offering and peace offering were part of this Shavuot festival also.

Once more we see that a gathering of Israel and a day of no work were part of this feast.-

ALL THESE FEASTS ARE CALLED THE SPRING FEASTS; They all involve the grain harvests in the spring of the year. The remaining feasts are often called THE AUTUMN FEASTS since they all occur in the autumn of the year.

THE AUTUMN FEASTS:

YOM TERUAH (The day of Blowing) or Feast of Trumpets.

We find the details of this feast given in Lev 23:24-25.

Lev 23:24 "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, saying, 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you have a rest, a remembrance of blowing of trumpets, a set-apart gathering.



Lev 23:25 'You do no servile work, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה.'

We see that this feast is only ONE day long. It is a day when Shofars are blown when Israel gathers together. It is again also a day where no work is done and an offering is given to YHWH.

YOM KIPPUR (The day of ATONEMENT)

Again a one day festival and the only day of the year that the High Priest of Israel was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the temple. We read about this feast in Lev 23:27-32.

Lev 23:27 "On the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a set-apart gathering for you. And you shall afflict your beings, and shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה."

Lev 23:28 "And you do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before יהוה your Elohim."

Lev 23:29 "For any being who is not afflicted on that same day, he shall be cut off from his people."

Lev 23:30 "And any being who does any work on that same day, that being I shall destroy from the midst of his people."

Lev 23:31 "You do no work – a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

Lev 23:32 'It is a Sabbath of rest to you, and you shall afflict your beings. On the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you observe your Sabbath.'

Notice that again it is called a Sabbath day but this is not the weekly Sabbath day. Yom Kippur is another day where no work is done. Israel is told to 'afflict your being'. The most common way of 'afflicting your being' has been to fast for the day going without food for this day.

Many more details about the activities of the High Priest of Israel who makes 'atonement' for the people to YHWH on this day is found in Lev chapter 16: It is this time only once a year that the high Priest is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies.

SUKKOT: (Feast of Tabernacles, or feast of Ingathering or Feast of Booths)

The Sukkot feast is 7 days long and is connected to the harvest of all other grains and fruits.

We read about how it should be celebrated in Lev 23:34-42.

Lev 23:34 "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, saying, 'On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Festival of Booths for seven days to יהוה."

Lev 23:35 'On the first day is a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.'

Lev 23:36 'For seven days you bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. On the eighth day there shall be a set-apart gathering for you, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. It is a closing festival, you do no servile work.'



Lev 23:39 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather in the fruit of the land, observe the festival of יהוה for seven days. On the first day is a rest, and on the eighth day a rest.

Lev 23:40 'And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of good trees, branches of palm trees, twigs of leafy trees, and willows of the stream, and shall rejoice before יהוה your Elohim for seven days.

Lev 23:41 'And you shall observe it as a festival to יהוה for seven days in the year – a law forever in your generations. Observe it in the seventh month.

Lev 23:42 'Dwell in booths for seven days; all who are native Yisra'elites dwell in booths,

Deu 16:13 "Perform the Festival of Booths for seven days after the ingathering from your threshing-floor and from your winepress,

Again we see that the first day is a day of rest when no work is done so it is called a Sabbath day. We also see that the day after the last day of the seven days of Sukkot is also a day of rest – another Sabbath day. Part of this festival involves the building of a booth (Hebrew Sukah) and to live in these for the seven days. Israel is also to take the branches of particular trees and use these to rejoice before YHWH during these seven days.

THE SABBATH DAY:

Many do not see that the Sabbath day is also a festival given to Israel as we see in Exodus 20:8-10.

Exo 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart.

Exo 20:9 "Six days you labour, and shall do all your work,

Exo 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath¹ of יהוה your Elohim. You do not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

As we have mentioned there are other Sabbaths, but this spoken of here is the weekly Sabbath.

In fact this weekly Sabbath is the most important feast given to Israel. Why is this so?

For a number of reasons:

First when we see the number of times that the Sabbath is mentioned when compared with all the other feasts we can see how important YHWH sees it for Israel. For example below are just a few times the Sabbath is mentioned.

Exo 16:29 "See, because יהוה has given you the Sabbath, therefore He is giving you bread for two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place, do not let anyone go out of his place on the seventh day."

Exo 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath¹ of יהוה your Elohim. You do not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. Footnote: ¹There are other Sabbaths, but this is the weekly Sabbath.



Exo 31:13 “And you, speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, ‘My Sabbaths you are to guard, by all means, for it is a sign¹ between Me and you throughout your generations, to know that I, יהוה, am setting you apart. Footnote: ¹The only sign of יהוה setting us apart, the only sign of the everlasting covenant, is His Sabbaths, one of them being the seventh day Sabbath. This is repeated in Ezek. 20:12 & 20.

Exo 31:16 ‘And the children of Yisra’el shall guard the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant.

Secondly in Hebrew when something is important or needs to be emphasized it is repeated more than once. This is why Yahshua often said verily, verily meaning that what he was about to say was very important. If this is so then the Sabbath must be the most important because it is repeated more often than all the other feasts. The Sabbath is celebrated every week while the other feasts are celebrated only once a year.

OTHER FEASTS OF ISRAEL:

There are several other festivals that many Netzarim congregations keep. These are not recorded in the Torah but are mentioned elsewhere in scripture. These feasts are:

1. Purim (feast of lots) – (in the book of Esther).
2. Festival of Lights or Feast of Dedication (Heb Hannukah) - in the book of 2 Maccabees.

Scripture does tell us that Yahshua Messiah kept the feast of Hannukah in John

Joh 10:22 *At that time the Hānukkāh came to be in Yerushalayim, and it was winter.*

Joh 10:23 And יהושע was walking in the Set-apart Place, in the porch of Shelomoh. (scriptures 1998)

Joh 10:22 *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.*

Joh 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. (KJV)

(Note the books of Maccabees are among several books in what is called the Apocrypha. You may need to get hold of a bible which contains these apocryphal books to find out about Hannukah).

The books of Macabees record the history of the Jewish people in the land of Israel during the time that this land was occupied by the Greek empire after Alexander the Great's death. They show how YHWH was still watching over the Jewish people during these years.

A later article will look at each action & offering of these feasts to find out what these mean. For now we need to understand that EVERY ONE OF THESE FEASTS ARE ABOUT THE MESSIAH OF ISRAEL. Indeed if the life of someone claiming to be the Messiah of Israel does not match the events we are given of these festivals then that person cannot be the Messiah!!



We will also see that every one of these feasts show in picture form what will happen to Israel in the future and the final outcome for those who are part of Israel.

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