

*Leviticus Chapters 16, 23, 25*  
*Ministry of the Priests and National Observances*

**Read Leviticus 23:1-2**

**Sabbath Day: Leviticus 23:3**

Sabbath, “to cease,” is a day of rest devoted to God. The Sabbath reminds people that God created perfection out of chaos.

Jesus invited all who would believe in him to enter into God’s Sabbath rest in him (Read Mt 11:28). In Christ, we cease from our works (self-righteousness) and gain salvation through faith by grace. Read Hebrews 4:9-11

**Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread: Exodus 12:1-14; Leviticus 23:5**

Two separate feasts that merged together, they celebrated the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the most significant event in Israel’s redemptive history. The people were required to assemble at the Tabernacle (later the temple) for this event. The event reminded Israel that they are a people of promise and that God alone rescued them and brought them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Leaven represents sin that must be purged from the holy nation and from each person.

**The Feast of First Fruits** (Leviticus 23:9-14) was celebrated during this festival and presented the first fruits from the Spring harvest to God. It was a special dedication to the Lord who owns all things and from whom all good things come.

Jesus fulfills all aspects of the Passover: sacrificial lamb, redeemer, deliverer, liberator and way into the Promised Land (salvation). Jesus also is the first fruits of the resurrected (Read 1 Corinthians 15:20).

**Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Shavuot): Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12**

Observed 50 days after the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it celebrated the first of the grain harvesting. It was to be a Sabbath time of joy and thanksgiving. The leavened loaves of bread and animal offerings provided food for the priests, and God’s instructions were mindful of the poor and needy, as Israel was to remember both with their abundance. This feast also commemorated the giving of the Law that occurred shortly after the Passover and exodus.

There were 50 days between Christ’s resurrection and Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers (Acts 2). Recall Lev. 23:11. At Passover, Christ was offered up to God as the wave sheaf without leaven (sin/evil). At Pentecost, the believers became the church offering to God as wave loaves of bread baked with leaven (imperfections/evil) met with grace.

**Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hoshanah): Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6**

A Sabbath day and a sacred assembly called with trumpet blasts to make offerings to the Lord. Marked the end of harvest. For Israel, God called them away from their work to a sacred assembly to worship him and remind them to whom they belonged. Today treated as the beginning of the calendar year.

Christians today are to listen for the trumpet call that will gather all believers together to worship God in his dwelling place, or in other words, to look for Christ’s return at the end of this age (1 Thess 4:16).

**Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): Leviticus 16; 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11**

Attention on the confession and forgiveness of sins. Attention was also on the high priest who alone brought the blood of the sacrifice to the Most Holy Place where God dwells. The solemn day of fasting and self-denial brought to mind the destructive nature of sin and the importance of contrition and repentance. In a sense, all of Israel entered the Most Holy Place in the form of the high priest on this day.

As only the high priest entered the Most Holy Place as a mediator for the people, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place as our mediator before God (Read 1 Tim 2:5). Unlike the earthly high priest who sprinkled blood of an animal and then exited the Most Holy Place, Jesus entered by his own blood and sat down at the Father's right hand after making permanent atonement (Read Heb 1:3). Like the goat of sacrifice, Jesus was took our sins away on the cross. Like the scapegoat, Jesus bore our sins, on the cross outside "the camp." He carried them away forever, as far as the East is from the West (Ps 103:12).

**Feast of Booths/Tabernacles (Sukkot): Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43; Numbers 29:12-34; Deut. 16:13-15**

It was an ingathering of the fruits of the labor of the field. It began five days after the Day of Atonement. The people were to live in booths for seven days in remembrance of God bringing them out of Egypt.

The booths remind Christians of our temporary residence on earth and that we will be gathered to our heavenly dwelling place.

**Sabbath Year: Leviticus 25:1-7**

Every seventh year the land had a Sabbath with no growing, reaping, pruning, etc. During the year, the people and animals had free reign to go and gather throughout the land. It reminded people that the land and all in it belonged to God and that they were dependent upon him. The Sabbath year is reminiscent of Eden.

Christians are to remember that every good gift comes from God and belongs to him.

**Year of Jubilee: Leviticus 25:8-55; 27:17-24; Numbers 36:4**

Announced on the 50<sup>th</sup> year (may have been for 49 days after the 49<sup>th</sup> year) during the Day of Atonement. Highlights: In this year, any enslavement of an Israelite ended, and all land transfers reverted to its original owners, signifying that all belonged to God, and preventing poverty from being hereditary. They were to rest from sowing and reaping, thus giving the land a year of rest, and depend on the blessing of God. It was a year of restoration and healing.

Jesus proclaimed the "Year of Jubilee" had arrived at the onset of his ministry. Read Luke 4:16-21.