

# THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

(How The Feasts Affect Us Today In A Sacred Assembly)



## OH WHAT DAYS!

- ◆ Passover
- ◆ Unleavened Bread
- ◆ First Fruits
- ◆ Pentecost
- ◆ Trumpets
- ◆ Day of Atonement
- ◆ Tabernacles

*“These are the feasts of the Lord, even Holy Convocations (Sacred Assemblies)” (Lev. 23:4)*

Bill Kirk

# “FIRST PLACE IN HOLY CONVOCATION”

**Text:** Leviticus 23:1-4

**Subject:** The Sobering Affect When God Is Given First Place In Everything

## Introduction

(For 5 weeks we are looking at First Place Christians)

**Question:** What does Matthew 6:33 say?

**Answer:** “Seek first the Kingdom of God, and everything you will ever need will be given unto you”

#1. In message #1:

- ◆ How to give God the first part of every day.
- ◆ How to give God the first day of every week.
- ◆ How to give God the first tithe and offering of every increase.
- ◆ How to give God the first priority in every decision.
- ◆ How to give God the first response in every conviction.

#2. In message #2:

- ◆ The First Commandment – what it means to love the Lord with all you heart, soul, mind, and strength.

#3. In message #3:

- ◆ How God rewarded Elijah and the widow, when she put God first place in her life.

**Today – The Sobering Affect Upon Your Heart, (When God Is Given First Place)**

## **(Grasp The Setting Of Leviticus 23)**

1. Leviticus 23 is a calendar from God.
2. God gave Israel a calendar for a reason.
3. Their calendar covered two important aspects:
  - ◆ It summarized what God had done in the past.
  - ◆ It anticipated what God would do in the future.
4. The calendar includes seven feasts.
5. The feasts (or special days) are also called “Holy Convocations” 10 times.

**Question:** Why did God establish the Holy Convocations?

**Answer:** Because God knows the weakness of our human hearts:

- ◆ He knew we would stray at times.
- ◆ He knew we would get distracted.
- ◆ He knew we would be tempted to cool-off.
- ◆ He knew what would be best for us as well.

**Question:** So why the Sabbath Day and the seven annual feasts?

**Answer:** It was God making provision for regular times to be set aside.

## **(Set Aside For What?)**

- ◆ Time set aside for spiritual renewal.
- ◆ Holy convocations for sacred purposes.
- ◆ Solemn assemblies, sacred feasts days to renew intimate fellowship with God. (What we call revival services today)

**Question:** Why were the feast days so special?

**Answer:** Because they were ordained by God to:

- #1. Demonstrate loyal obedience to God.
- #2. Remember God's provision for every need.
- #3. Acknowledge God's ownership of everything we possess.
- #4. Offer sacrifice of our best to God.
- #5. Recognize the Holiness of God's nature.
- #6. Confess and repent of personal sin, (and)
- #7. Renew our fellowship with a loving Father.

**(In Fact:)**

- ◆ Many Old Testament revivals took place on these feast days.
- ◆ It was the Holy Spirit calling His people to "**Hurry Back**" to the Lord.

**Question:** Pastor, what about the New Testament?

**Answer:** Up until the time of Constantine, Jewish believers continued to celebrate the Jewish feasts:

- ◆ The Jerusalem Christians were primarily of Jewish ancestry.
- ◆ They continued to practice Jewish customs and laws.
- ◆ Their focus was now on the fulfillment of the feasts brought through Jesus.

**Question:** What happened in the early church during the Jewish feasts?

**Answer:** Two New Testament events took place in connection with the prescribed Jewish sacred assemblies. (Both events were of great importance).

#1. In Acts 2 – (The Feast of Pentecost)

- ◆ After Jesus ascended to heaven, the Jerusalem Christians began a prayer meeting.
- ◆ After praying for 10 days (on the day of Pentecost), God poured out His Spirit and the church was born and empowered.
- ◆ This outpouring of the Spirit occurred during the sacred assembly of the Feast of Pentecost.

#2. In Acts 12 – (The Feast of Unleavened Bread)

- ◆ King Herod began to persecute the church (and executed James).
- ◆ This pleased the Jews so Herod arrested Peter to execute him.
- ◆ Because it was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, (Passover Week) Herod put Peter into prison.
- ◆ He wanted to wait and try Peter after the Passover celebration ended.
- ◆ The last day of Passover was a day of sacred assembly.
- ◆ That evening, following the day of sacred assembly, the Christian Jews stayed together to pray for Peter.

**Question:** What happened?

**Answer:** God intervened, prayer was answered and Peter was delivered from prison.

- ◆ And, Peter lived to provide strong leadership for the early church (Acts 12)

**Question:** Pastor, what's all this have to do with me?

**Answer:** There is a message for us all in every feast (the sacred assemblies)

**(It's A Message Only For Those...)**

- #1... Who want God to have first place in daily life.
- #2... Who want to experience personal and corporate spiritual renewal.
- #3... Who want to be brought back into intimate closeness with the Lord.
- #4... Who want to have a fresh encounter with God.
- #5... Who want to possess power over sin and great joy of heart.
- #6... Who want God's presence and glory to be manifested greatly among us, (and)
- #7... Who want to see multitudes converted for the glory of God here at First Assembly.

**Question:** How many of you would like to experience what God intends for us to experience?

**Question:** And how many of you are willing to hear what the Spirit is saying to your own heart?

**(Leviticus 23 Is Specific:)**

- ◆ (Verses 1-3) list the first “Feast” or “Appointed Time” to meet the Lord.
- ◆ It’s the weekly Sabbath (which wasn’t one of the 7 annual feasts).
- ◆ The Sabbath (or the Lord’s day) was given as a gift from God to us.

**Question:** Why do we honor the Lord’s day?

**Answer:** The Lord’s Day was given to...

- #1. Provide rest and refreshment for God’s people.
  - #2. Provide a day where we would acknowledge that all of our time is God’s, (and
  - #3. Provide a witness that we belong to the Lord (other’s might ignore God and do their own pleasures, but First Place believers, know that the Lord’s Day is a sign between God and His covenant people).
- ◆ Today is God’s “Appointed Time” to refresh us, remind us and use us (corporately) to tell the world , That Jesus Saves!

**(Now The Annual Sacred Assemblies To Affect Us)**

**#1. The Feast Of Passover (Vs. 4 , 5)**

- ◆ The Feast of Passover is the yearly feast of Israel to commemorate deliverance from the death angel in Egypt. (Exodus 12)
- ◆ For 400 years the Jewish people had lived in Egypt.
- ◆ Then, God brought them back to their land He had promised.
- ◆ In Exodus 12, the innocent lamb died for the firstborn (because blood was applied to the door).
- ◆ The lamb typified Jesus, (The Lamb of God).
- ◆ He shed His blood on the cross for sinners.
- ◆ Jesus became our Passover Lamb and was sacrificed for us.
- ◆ (I Corinthians 5:7) “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”.

**(And Believers Who Give God First Place)**

- #1. Honor the Lord’s Day and receive rest.
- #2. Because of our Passover, we remember Calvary (and it affects us deeply).
  - ◆ We remember what it costs to be saved.
  - ◆ We remember what it cost to be forgiven.
  - ◆ We remember what it cost to be justified.

**#2. The Feast Of Unleavened Bread (Vs. 6-8)**

- ◆ For 7 days following Passover, the Jews ate only unleavened bread.
- ◆ They cleansed (carefully cleansed) all the yeast out of their homes. (Exodus 12:15-20)
- ◆ Leaven in scripture is a picture of sin.
- ◆ The ancient rabbis believed that leaven represented the evil impulses of the heart.
- ◆ Jesus said (in Matthew 16:6), “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees”.
- ◆ (Paul said (in Galatians 5:9), “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”. **(In Other Words)**
- ◆ Leaven rapidly permeates the dough.
- ◆ It contaminates it, sours it, ferments it, and swells it to many times its normal size, without changing its weight.
- ◆ This illustrates the process of sin.

- #1. To put away and cleanse us from sin after salvation.
- #2. First the Passover (Salvation), but then sanctification.

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ First place believers are adamant about repentance.
- ◆ We allow God to purge out the “Old Leaven” of our un-converted days and former life.

**#3. The Feast Of First Fruits (Vs. 9-14)**

- ◆ First fruits marked the beginning of the cereal grain harvests in Israel.
- ◆ The day after the Sabbath that followed Passover (which was the first day of the week),
- ◆ Was when the priest took the first sheaf of barley from the field and waved it before the Lord.

**Question:** Why wave the barley before the Lord in the Temple?

**Answer:** The first fruits offering before the Lord, was to acknowledge God’s ownership over all the rest.

- ◆ It was a token that the first and the best belonged to God.
- ◆ It was also an expression of thanks to God for supplying the daily bread. **(In Fact)**
- ◆ The Jews were not allowed to eat of the harvest until the first fruits were given to the Lord (v. 14), a picture of Matthew 6:33) **(In Other Words)**
- ◆ First place believers know that the first and best part of our lives, belong to the Lord.

**#4. The Feast Of Pentecost (Vs. 15-21)**

- ◆ Also called the “Feast of Weeks” because it was celebrated 7 weeks after the first fruits.
- ◆ The word “Pentecost” means “Fiftieth”, and the feast was held 7 weeks after first fruits on the Lord’s day.
- ◆ This feast commemorated the end of the harvest.
- ◆ The priest would wave two loaves of bread before the Lord.
- ◆ It was to acknowledge the good hand of God for His bountiful supply.

**Question:** What’s the New Testament significance?

**Answer:** It was on this day of Pentecost, (in Acts) when Jesus’ disciples received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- ◆ It’s God speaking to us today of renewal.
- ◆ It’s God calling us today to be Pentecostal.
- ◆ It’s God wanting us to be saturated and full of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ It’s a sacred gathering today, and God wants to pour His Spirit out on all flesh!!!

**#5. The Feast Of Trumpets (Vs. 23:25)**

- ◆ The Feast of Trumpets was held on the first day of the seventh month.
- ◆ It ushered in the new civil year (Rosh Hashanah “The head of the year”)
- ◆ The priests blew silver trumpets to announce this new year.
- ◆ The Jews used this first day of their new year for prayer and meditation.
- ◆ The Jews were seeking to make a new beginning with the Lord.

**Question:** What’s the application now?

**Answer:** That God gives His people opportunities for new beginnings.

- ◆ God is a God of new **beginnings!**
- ◆ God is a God of new **opportunities!**
- ◆ God is a God of new **starts!**

**(And We Would Be Foolish to Waste Them)**

**#6. The Day Of Atonement (Vs. 26-32)**

- ◆ This is Israel’s most holy day – Yom Kippur.
- ◆ The tenth day of the seventh month.

- ◆ The blood of two goats was taken by the high priest.
- ◆ One goat was slain, and one was released into the wilderness symbolically.
- ◆ The releasing of the one goat symbolized the sins of the people being carried away; never to be heard from again.
- ◆ Blood was taken by the priest into the Holy of Holies.
- ◆ The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

**Question:** Why this Day of Atonement?

**Answer:** #1. To cleanse the high priest and his family.

#2. To cleanse the people of Israel.

#3. To cleanse the tabernacle.

- ◆ The people were to do no work on this day.
- ◆ It reminds us all, that forgiveness is all by grace, (the free gifts of God ), not of works.
- ◆ It reminds us all, that forgiveness is in Jesus.
- ◆ It reminds us all, that Jesus is our Scapegoat.
- ◆ It reminds us all, that we are cleansed only by the Blood of God's Spotless Lamb – Jesus!

#7. **The Feast Of Tabernacles (Vs. 33-43)**

- ◆ The final feast given to Israel by the Lord.
- ◆ It's the most joyful of all 7 feasts.
- ◆ A week long celebration of offering 199 animal sacrifices.
- ◆ The Israelites used leafy branches to make booths to live in.
- ◆ It was a time (for 8 days) to rejoice and thank God for His care during the long years in the wilderness.

...A time to Thank God for His **Faithfulness**.

...A time to Thank God for His **Provision**.

...A time to Thank God for the **Opportunity** to not appear before the Lord empty-handed.

- ◆ This was the most festive and joyful of all the festivals. (Why?)
- ◆ Because the people were aware of this one fact: If God was faithful during all those past years in the wilderness...
- ◆ ... Surely He will show Himself strong in our future.

What is a **First Place Believer**? (One who seeks **First** the Kingdom of God)

- ◆ **The Sabbath** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Refreshment** and Rest.
- ◆ **The Passover** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Remembrance** of our Passover Lamb.
- ◆ **Unleavened Bread** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Repentance** of every known sin.
- ◆ **First Fruits** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Relinquishing** over to God our best.
- ◆ **Pentecost** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Renewal** and being baptized in the Holy Spirit (and continually filled).
- ◆ **Trumpets** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Returning** to the God of New Beginnings.
- ◆ **Day of Atonement** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Removal** of all guilt once and for all.
- ◆ **Feast of Tabernacles** – 1<sup>st</sup> place in **Rejoicing** because of God's great care for us all through the journey!!!

**AMEN!!**

Bill Kirk, Pastor