



The Yearly Feasts of the Ancient Hebrew Sanctuary

SPRING CEREMONIES -1st month

THE PASSOVER

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

THE WAVE SHEAF

THE FEAST OF HARVEST: PENTECOST

FALL CEREMONIES - 7th month

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The Feast Days

The sanctuary had a number of feast-days that surrounded its services during the year. The feasts were the holy days, or the holidays of the Hebrew people. And their feast days, or their sacred gatherings at the sanctuary, began in the spring at the beginning of their ceremonial year, which lasted for 7 months. There were three major gatherings for feasts.

Each feast represented something from the past, also the ceremonial year was an enacted prophecy, representing the history of this world and the plan of salvation as carried out by Jesus, the Messiah. SO each feast pointed back and forward as well.

The Feast Days

The whole system of the feasts extended symbolically from the death of Christ, His work in man's behalf, till the Redeemed are completely restored and entering heaven forever. It is a beautiful plan, and as you study these things out, you find that every part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, right up until the time in which we live where Jesus is soon to come.

The Passover: Looking Back



God was preparing to rescue the Children of Israel from Egypt, where they had been treated cruelly as slaves. He had sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh and tell him to "Let My people go!"

But Pharaoh would not listen to Moses at all, even when plagues had well nigh ruined the land of Egypt, he still said "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."

God spoke to Moses to tell the children of Israel to take a lamb from the flock. It was to be a male and have no blemish, and they were to bring it into live with them 4 days before the special night.

The Passover: Looking Back



God said that He was about to strike all the firstborn of Egypt in one night! The Israelites were to kill the lamb on the evening before this terrible night, and dip Hyssop in its blood, and mark their door posts and lintel with the blood of the lamb.

When the angel of death went through the Land of Egypt to do his terrible work, he would see the blood on the door and 'Pass-Over' the houses of the Israelites.

The Passover: Looking Back



While they were waiting, the Israelites were to roast the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were not to break any of its bones or leave any of the meat. Anything that was left was to be burned.

When the terrible plague struck Egypt, orders came from Pharaoh for the Israelites to leave Egypt, which they promptly did.



Just as that happened back then, it will happen that way in the future. We who accept Jesus as our sacrifice accept His blood in our behalf to redeem us from sin. And at the end of time when the 7 last plagues are being poured on the earth, God will look at that sign of redemption upon each one of His children and the scourge will pass over them and they cannot be harmed.

Egyptian bondage, in the Bible prophecy, represented slavery to sin.

The Passover: Looking Forward

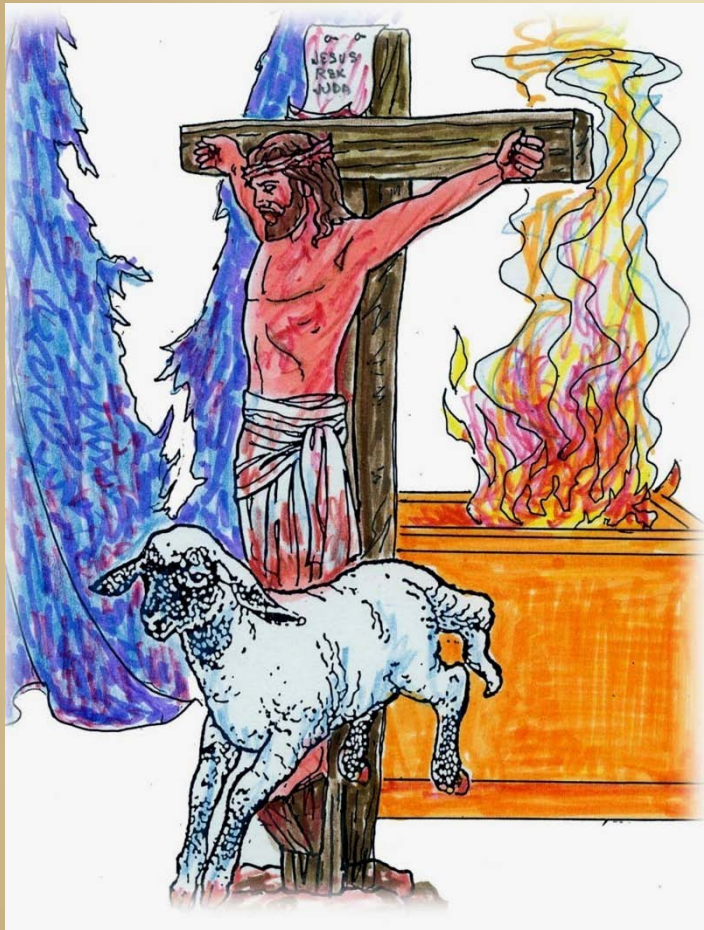


Jesus was the true 'Passover Lamb'. Four days before His death on the cross, when the Israelites were out in their fields getting their yearling to bring in for their sacrifice for the Passover feast, the Sanhedrin had met. They were meeting that very day, and there they decided to condemn Jesus to death; they set Him apart to die.

The Passover: Looking Forward



They determined that they would take Him and offer him up that weekend which was going to be the Passover weekend. If they were only reading their own prophecies, they would have realized that they were actually fulfilling them. By their evil intentions, they had set Jesus aside the same time the Passover lamb was to be set aside.



Jesus was crucified on the day that the Passover Lamb was to be slain. He died at 3 PM, the exact time the Passover Lamb was about to be killed. At His death cry, a mighty earthquake struck the city of Jerusalem and split the rock on which the temple was built. The 'Rock of Ages' had been 'cleft' for us.

Jesus was put to death in the exact moment in time specified 1500 years before. Every year when the Passover lamb was offered, it was always offered at exactly the same time of day, at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. At that very moment, while the priests were reaching that knife to slice the throat of the Passover lamb in the sanctuary, they had Christ out on a cross and were putting Him to death outside the city.



Here they were literally putting the true Lamb of God to death, and they didn't recognize their own prophecies, and He was fulfilling them. But as Jesus died, He lifted His head toward heaven and He cried, "Into Thy hands I commit My spirit, IT IS FINISHED!" and it was exactly 3:00 o'clock when that happened.



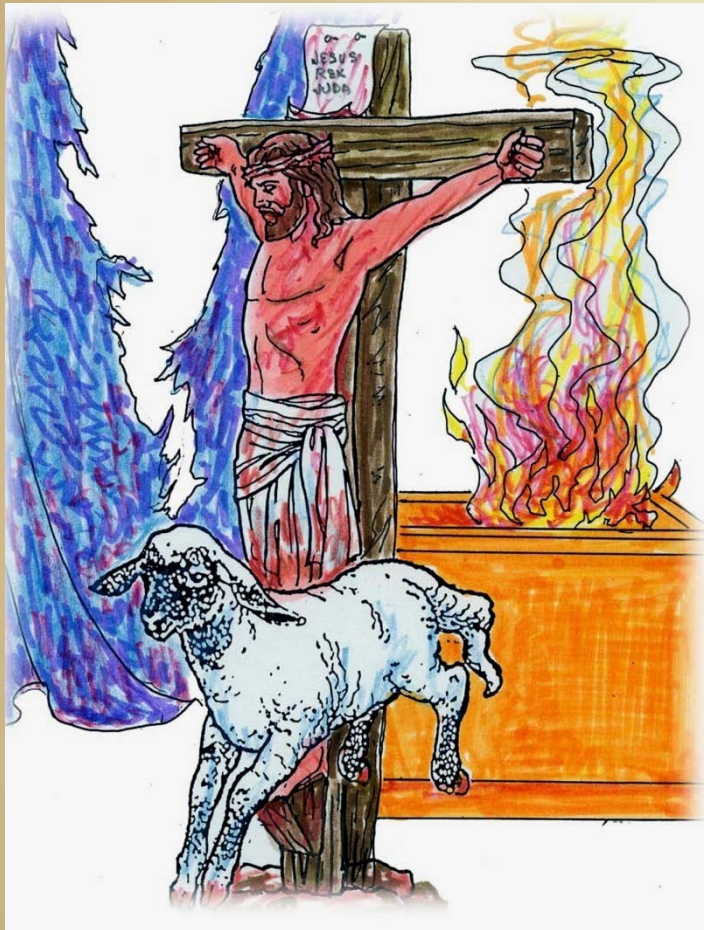
No Bone of Him was Broken—When the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of the ones on the cross—Jesus was already dead—so they break not His bones. Instead they pierced him with a spear. The Passover Lamb was always pierced with a spit to roast it.



At that moment the Priests were about to put the lamb in the sanctuary to death, and a tremendous earthquake took place, the only one that has been recorded in Palestine. There was no fault through that area, there was no earthquake fault through that area until that day.

It could be heard coming from a distance. It was a tremendous roar, a rumbling sound, and it ripped right through Jerusalem, right through the center of the Temple and out the other side, and right through the middle of the Mountain of Olives where Jesus often spent His time in prayer with God.

It ripped that 18 foot curtain that was as thick as a man's hand, from top to bottom as it tore through the temple, and it cracked the rock that was underneath the Most Holy Place.



The priest, with upraised hand to slay the Lamb, was terrified as heavy curtain as thick as a man's hand, that covered the holy place from the gaze of the people, was torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand. No human power could have torn that heavy curtain! The knife dropped from his nerveless hand and the lamb sprang free and escaped in the confusion.

Type had met anti-type! The Lamb of God had died for the sins of the world. No longer would the offering of lambs on the earthly altars have any meaning.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread Looking Back:



They were to eat bread made without yeast (which was a symbol of sin), the roasted lamb (which represented Jesus) and bitter herbs to represent repentance for sin. Grape juice was to be unfermented.

Now after the Passover lamb, was offered as a sacrifice, it was to be eaten that evening, while the plague was passing over, it was to be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Why unleavened bread? Most bread you eat has leaven or yeast in it. And that yeast grows in there and causes it to swell and permeates the whole bread. With no leaven, the bread just stays kind of hard.

That leaven represents sin in our lives and how it permeates our whole life. But they were to have all of the leaven out of the bread symbolizing that now that they had eaten the Passover lamb, now that they were under the blood of the sacrifice and protected, they had no sin in their lives any longer and that they were about to be freed from the bondage of sin forever.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread Looking Forward:



The feast of unleavened bread occurred while Jesus slept in the tomb. He had paid the price for sin, now man could, if he chose to accept the provision for salvation, be forever free of the bondage of sin.

That Sabbath was a high day, that means the ceremonial Sabbath was falling upon the Sabbath of the law, the seventh day of the week. And as Jesus rested at the end of creation week, so now at the end of His week of restoring man and dying as a sacrifice, Jesus rested again. Once as the Creator He rested, now as the Re-Creator, the Restorer, He rested in the grave on the sacred Sabbath day sealing forever the fact that the Sabbath is the day of rest. Jesus fulfilled that day of rest.

The Wave Sheaf



The Priest was to go early on the next day and pick some early ripened heads of barley to make a sheaf. Then he took it in before the Lord in the Temple and waved it before the Lord.

The Wave Sheaf

LOOKING BACK:

And the next day Israel went out of Egypt, away from the cruel slavery, they were freed and they went out into the wilderness to offer themselves before God. That was represented by the wave sheaf.

LOOKING FORWARD:

The next morning Jesus, in a resurrected body, the body that would give man eternal life, was ascending to heaven to present Himself as the Wave Sheaf. He ascended to His Father at the same time that the priest was offering up the wave sheaf, and He perfectly fulfilled it. Christ gave absolute evidence that He was the God that was fulfilling the plan of salvation in every particular.

The Feast of Harvest: Pentecost



This feast was called the Pentecost and it took place 50 days later, 49 days, it took place on the 50th day. This was the time of the harvest of the grain. But before the grain could be harvested, the 'first fruits' were to be gathered and some special loaves prepared and offered before the Lord.

Looking Back:

Now let's look again at the first feasts. Passover as we pointed out commemorated the day that the Israelites offered the lamb and put that blood on the doorposts, and then went into their homes, and under the protection of that blood, they ate the body of that lamb and unleavened bread that night.

Then they were released the next day to go out and worship God represented by the wave sheaf. 50 days later they were before Sinai and received God's law, the great Pentecost, when they were offering themselves before God as the first fruits of his work of redeeming mankind.

Looking Back:

Now Pentecost was actually the time that the children of Israel had left Israel, wandering through the deserts, guided by God, they came to the plain of Sinai, and there beneath that mountain God spoke the law to them.

On that day they made a covenant relationship with God. And it represented the fruit of God's work, of bringing them out of Egypt was now before him in the wilderness, and this was the great Pentecost.

Looking Forward:

When Jesus died, there was a mighty earthquake and some of the graves were opened. When He arose from the dead, early on the first day, before dawn, some people were raised with him. The Bible says they went into Jerusalem and told people about the resurrection of Jesus! (Matthew 27:52,53.)

When Jesus ascended to Heaven after 40 days, these resurrected ones went with him. They were the first fruits of the great harvest of souls that Jesus' blood would redeem from the earth.

Looking Forward:



Ten days later Jesus had presented them before His Heavenly Father and started upon His work in the heavenly Sanctuary and as a signal to His people on earth, a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit was sent to them and through the Spirit filled preaching of the Apostles, over 3,000 came into the early Christian church in one day! First Fruits were indeed presented, both in heaven and also on earth as the 'Christian' church was born.