

The Feasts of the Lord: Shadows of Things to Come

These (festivals) are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. —Colossians 2:17

In 1446 B.C., God delivered the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt. This was a picture of His plan to enable all people to be delivered from slavery to sin and freed to live life forever in His presence.

That plan would be fulfilled in the two advents (comings) of Jesus. The first advent began with Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and culminated with His crucifixion on the feast of Passover, burial during the feast of Unleavened Bread and resurrection on the feast of Firstfruits. Jesus ascended to heaven 40 days after the resurrection, and on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Holy Spirit descended to live inside Jesus' followers as a promise of His return for His Bride (the Church) at His second advent, still in our future.

Jesus will very likely return for His Bride on Trumpets. After that will come a time of judgment, foreshadowed by the Day of Atonement, and then Jesus will return with His Bride (the Church) to fulfill the feast of Tabernacles during His 1000 year reign on earth during the Millennium.

The first four feasts were fulfilled more than 1400 years after God revealed them to Moses on Mt. Sinai. During those 1400 years, each family of Jews celebrated the feasts again and again, "rehearsing" what would happen when Messiah (Jesus) came. Because the first four feasts were fulfilled, we can have confidence that the last three feasts will be fulfilled as foreshadowed. It has now been more than 3400 years since God's plan was revealed to Moses. The feasts are the oldest, continuously-celebrated holidays in the world. They reveal God's plans and promises to all of us.

At Mt. Sinai, God made a covenant with Israel, by which Israel became the "wife" of Jehovah (God the Father). Moses was the intermediary, a shadow of the Savior to come, Jesus Christ, who would take the Church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, as His bride.

Leviticus 23 gives an overview of all the feasts. The spring feasts were connected to the grain harvest and were at the time of the early rains. The fall feasts were connected to the fruit harvest and were at the time of the latter rains. "Rain" comes down from heaven, like Jesus: "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us.... As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." (Hosea 6:3)

For more: <http://www.SusanCAnthony.com/Resources/Feasts/feasts.html>

Passover foreshadowed the crucifixion. The last plague in Egypt was the death of the firstborn. The Israelites were told to slay a lamb on the 14th of Nissan (the day Jesus was later crucified) and apply the blood to the lintels and doorposts of their homes. They were promised, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” (Exodus 12:13) No one died in the houses where the blood of a lamb was on the doorposts. The fulfillment of this feast was the Crucifixion, when Christ, our Passover lamb, was sacrificed (1Cor. 5:7).

Unleavened Bread foreshadowed Jesus’ sinless perfection. Leaven is a symbol of sin. Leaven puffs up, like pride. Christ broke unleavened bread at the Last Supper (Passover meal) and told us it symbolized His body.

Firstfruits celebrated the first of the grain harvest. No one could eat from the harvest until after this festival. Jesus was resurrected on Firstfruits. “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor. 15:20).

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) took place 50 days after Firstfruits. Traditionally, the law was given to Moses on this day. Nearly 1500 years later, the Holy Spirit descended and the Church began. Two leavened (sinful) loaves were waved before God. One represented Israel (the wife of Jehovah) and the other represented the Church (the bride of Christ).

Trumpets was the first of the fall feasts. It occurs in September or October. Many people believe Jesus may have been born on Trumpets. The feast foreshadows a time in the future when “The trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” (1Cor.15:52) This is called the “rapture” or “catching up” of the Church (see 1 Thess. 4).

The Day of Atonement was the most solemn ceremony. It was the only day of the year the High Priest could go behind the veil into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Coming into God’s presence without blood meant death (see Lev. 10). Jesus, as true High Priest, took His own blood behind the curtain of the true Tabernacle to make atonement for sin. When Jesus died, the heavy veil in front of the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom (Mark 15:38). We can now approach God “by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body.” (Hebrews 10:20) The Day of Atonement foreshadows a solemn time of judgment when everyone will be required to give account to God for every sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that “ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” The penalty for sin is death, but Jesus has provided us with His blood to make atonement.

Tabernacles (Booths) foreshadows a future time when Jesus will return to reign as King on earth. All Israel went up to Jerusalem every fall to celebrate the fruit harvest. They lived in booths for seven days.