

The Feasts

Leviticus 23

INTRODUCTION

- THIS IS ABOUT **HOLINESS**... being set apart for God's purposes, distinct from the pagan world His people live in
 - **In the past few weeks we've looked at God's wrath poured out on sin and how wrath is part of God's righteousness (for if sin were not punished God would not be just and holy). In that we saw that God's wrath for the sin of those who believe was poured out on Christ in a satisfying way.**
 - **Last week, we focused on the holiness (in life and conduct) of the priests and how Jesus Christ is the perfect High Priest forever because He lived the perfect life, died the perfect death, was raised again and because He is alive both His sacrifice and mediation for sinful man is good FOREVER.**
 - **TODAY, we will see that in light of God's holiness and his holy requirements for His people, God is gracious to establish a calendar for His people that will remind them of His salvation so they are both protected and progressing as God's holy people.**
 - **Essentially, today's message is God's idea of time management for the church. God wants us to order our time & calendar around His redemptive work so that we would be a faithful habitation for our God.**

The Centrality of the Sabbath

* Each one of these sections deserves a week's worth of exposition and observation, but we also trust there's a reason for the brief descriptions in this collection.

* I believe it is to help us see, obey and treasure what the Lord has prescribed in the ordering of our days, to order our lives around holy living to be a dwelling place for our Holy God.

A) The Sabbath is for God

- a. The weekly Sabbath is for rest in God (Saturdays)
- b. Remembrance of Creation (ideas of re-creation)

- c. The principle of Sabbath is at play in each of the feasts / festivals

B) The Sabbath is for the community to center on God

- a. First, this is not about legalistic attendance of church, which says I earn points with God for being at church
- b. This is about obedience and the evidence of being God's people
- c. Ultimately, the Sabbath was to have the people acknowledge God's sovereign rule over time and, therefore, their lives
- d. This, leading to an understanding of the feasts, was to help keep Israel distinct from the nations (holy)

The Importance of the Seasons

A) Passover

- a. Exodus 12-13
- b. March / April (Easter)
- c. Commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt
- d. Emphasis on God's salvation
- e. Became a pilgrimage celebration until AD 70 with the destruction of the Temple and returned to the home

B) Feast of Firstfruits

- a. Exodus 12:14-20
- b. March / April (Easter)
- c. Emphasis on dedication to the Lord

C) Feast of Weeks

- a. Also the Harvest Feast
- b. Spring: 50 days after Passover period
- c. Emphasis on dedication to the Lord (provision / person)
- d. NT it is Pentecost (50 days after the wave offering)
 - i. Day after the Sabbath of Passover
 - ii. 50 days later - Pentecost
 - iii. Consider what all is to happen during this time and how that relates to Pentecost

D) Feast of Trumpets

- a. Would begin the sacred seventh month with trumpet blasts - calling the people to observation
- b. Fall: Late September (1st of 7th month)
- c. Emphasis on a solemn assembly (not some rally, but serious about what's to come)
- d. Later, this becomes Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year's day)

E) **The Day of Atonement**

- a. Lev.16
- b. Fall: September / October (10th of 7th month)
- c. Emphasis on redemption

F) **Feast of Booths**

- a. Fall: October (15th-22nd of 7th month)
- b. Emphasis on the joyful remembrance of the wilderness experience and God's guidance
- c. Predominantly a celebration (lavish decorations to celebrate the promise land deliverance)
- d. Practical use of the booths was to house workers of the field
- e. Lost & Found (**Neh.8**)
 - i. Interesting that this experience produced sorrow / repentance (families, not housing for workers)
 - ii. Purpose of the remembrance: train the generations (**Lev.23:43**)

The Satisfaction of Christ in Community

A) **Holy Convocations**

- a. **Holy** - set aside for God (33x the following)
 - i. Lord spoke
 - ii. Of the Lord
 - iii. To the Lord
 - iv. Before the Lord
 - v. I AM THE LORD...your God
- b. **Convocations** - This is for the congregation, the community of believers with a strong emphasis on proclamation
 - i. Together, for God
 - ii. Together, reminding corporately of God's work in creation, deliverance, guidance, and redemption
 - iii. This togetherness for the Jewish people finds its fulfillment in the "spiritual Israel" the church

B) **Christ-Centered Community**

- a. This is the emphasis in **Hebrews 10-13**. After showing how Christ has fulfilled the law and offerings, the writer of Hebrews shows us how to live in community as a holy dwelling for God.
- b. Begins in **Hebrews 10:23-25**
- c. How do we do this? **Heb. 10:19-22**
- d. This is how we are designed to live and what we are designed to live around

EXHORTATIONS...

- God created time (stopped it once)
 - This is the weekly reminder, that He is CREATOR
 - When we forget that He is Creator we begin to worship creation (**Ps. 106 / Rom.1**)
 - Even the Atheistic Evolutionist dates the evolving of man by "BC" - Christ's death altered our perception of time, whether we acknowledge Him or not
 - The God who is infinite, stepped into time
 - **Romans 5:6-8**
- God can redeem the time. The very things that the Jewish calendar remember are redemptive acts of God. He can forgive you for not ordering your life around Him. There is time...NOW! Trust the Creator of time with your time and He will make all things perfect in time!
- I think that balance and priorities are two enemies of Biblical time management. I believe it's about CENTRALITY....it's about TREASURE
 - Understand the need for re-creation (not vegging)
 - What are we teaching the next generation? THERE IS A STRONG INDICATOR HERE THAT HOW WE ORDER OUR TIME, AND WHAT WE ORDER THAT TIME AROUND IS WHAT WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO TREASURE
- **Ephesians 5:15-21**