

Date : 25 June 2023

Theme : Understanding the journey of faith in Leviticus

Topic : Worshipping Jesus on appointed times

Passage : Leviticus 23 (NIV)

Key verse : Leviticus 23:2 - "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies"

Introduction:

Following the Lord's instruction to the Israelites about the Tabernacle (where to worship), the offerings (how to worship), the Lord has also appointed times of celebration (when to worship). The celebrations involves "sacred assemblies" which the people are to gather and cease from work, and present offerings for worship. All 8 of these are not just any other festivals; the Lord said "These are my appointed festivals", and each of them were individually instructed to be kept forever.

#	Leviticus 23	Celebration	Day	Duration	Kept Until	Sacred Assembly	Offering
1	v3	Sabbath of the Lord	Every 7 th Day	1 day	Forever Exodus 31:16	Yes	Burnt & grain. Numbers 28:9-10
2	v5	Festival of Passover	Month 1. Day 14	1 day	Forever Exodus 12:24	Yes	Burnt Deuteronomy 16:2
3	v6-8	*Festival of Unleavened bread	Month 1. Day 15	7 days	Forever Exodus 12:17	1 st & 7 th day	Burnt, grain & sin Numbers 28:19-22
4	v9-14	Offering of Firstfruits (Hebrew: "Resit")	Month 1. Day 16	1 day	Forever V14	-	Burnt & grain. Sheaf
5	v15-22	*Festival of Weeks (Harvest)	Month 1. Day 65 (Day 15 + 50 days)	1 day	Forever V21	Yes	Burnt, grain, sin & fellowship. Bread
6	v23-25	Festival of Trumpets	Month 7. Day 1	1 day	Forever Numbers 10:10	Yes	Burnt, Grain & Sin Numbers 29:2-5
7	v26-32	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Month 7. Day 10	1 day	Forever V31	Yes	Burnt, grain & sin Numbers 29:7-11
8	v33-43	*Festival of Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Month 7. Day 15	8 days	Forever V41	1 st & 8 th day	Burnt, grain & sin Numbers 29:13-16

These 8 appointed times show us when, how and why the Israelites celebrated and worshipped God. And God repeats the central reason for worship 21 times in Leviticus (42 times total in the Old Testament) – "I am the Lord your God". All 8 appointed times speak about Jesus, foreshadowing Jesus' first and second coming, showing why Jesus is worthy of our worship – He is indeed the Lord of all.

1. Sabbath of the Lord (v3)

- **Past event. Exodus 16:1-30**
 - God tested the Israelites whether they would obey Him as Lord
 - By requiring them to gather bread for 6 days, and rest on 7th day. There will be enough bread also for the 7th day.
- **How they celebrated**
 - Rested from work on the 7th day and gathered in sacred assembly. (Leviticus 23:3)
 - Kept the Sabbath even "in plowing time and in harvest", when they were busiest. (Exodus 34:21)
 - Sacrificed burnt and grain offering. (Numbers 28:9-10)
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - Jesus is the "Lord of the Sabbath" who made provision for his disciples when they were hungry on the Sabbath. (Luke 6:5)
- **How we celebrate**
 - Rest from work on Sunday and gather as a church to bring offering of worship to Jesus.

	Burnt Offering	Grain Offering
Body	Surrender <u>our time</u> to be present even when we are busiest. Sleeping, waking up and arriving early to prepare to meet God.	Give the best of <u>our worship</u> with our mouth, hands and legs, because it pleases God and be willing to feel uncomfortable.
Mind	Surrender <u>our thoughts</u> about other things	Give the best of <u>our mind</u> - to think what God thinks and wants - to listen and learn attentively during sermon
Heart	Surrender <u>our desires</u> of our personal needs and wants	Give the best of <u>our heart</u> and feelings to express our joy, gratitude and affection for God.

- Does Sabbath still apply for us today?
 - It is in the 10 commandments. All 10 are still applicable today. (Exodus 20:1-17)
 - It is a sign and covenant between God and His people forever (Exodus 31:16-17)
 - The Lord God kept it (Exodus 20:11). Jesus kept it (Mark 1:21), the apostles kept it (Acts 13:14)
 - In the New Testament, Hebrews 10:25 instructs us not to be in a habit of not meeting together.
- Benefits of keeping the Sabbath. The Lord provides:
 - Our sabbath - Blessed (Exodus 20:11) and refreshed (Exodus 23:12)
Exodus 16:29 (NKJV) "See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath"
 - Our sustenance as He did for the Israelites and His disciples.
 - Our sanctification when we come to Him (Exodus 31:13)
- Read: Isaiah 58:13-14

2. Festival of Passover (Exodus 12)

- **Past event**
 - The Lord delivered the Israelites after 430 years of slavery in Egypt, with the 10th and final plague on all the firstborn in Egypt.
 - The Israelites escaped the plague as the Lord provided the solution – they had to sacrifice a lamb and smeared its blood on the door, so that the Lord will pass over their house and not bring death to all who are firstborn.
- **How they celebrated**
 - Month 1, Day 10. Prepare a lamb of 1 year old without blemish.
 - Month 1, Day 14. Sacrifice the lamb at 6pm, take the blood and put over the door frame.
 - They celebrated, sang, played music, offered peace offerings and confessed their sins. (2 Chronicles 30:21-22)
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - Jesus is our Passover lamb who died and buried at the exact day and time, and substituted for us from sin's penalty of eternal death. (1 Corinthians 5:7).
 - Only through the shedding of his blood that our sins can be forgiven. (Hebrews 9:22)
- **How we celebrate**
 - We worship Jesus – "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29)

3. Festival of Unleavened Bread

- **Past event**
 - Following the Passover, the Israelites had to leave Egypt hurriedly and had no time to bake bread, thus they ate bread without leaven. (Exodus 12:39)
- **How they celebrated**
 - Month 1, Day 15. They ate unleavened bread for 7 days. (v6)
 - They held sacred assembly before God on the 1st and 7th day (v7-8)
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - Jesus is the unleavened bread who is without sin (leaven symbolizes sin). (1 Corinthians 5:7)
 - Jesus is the bread of life who came down from heaven to give eternal life to all men. (John 6:33)
 - Jesus when having the last Passover with his disciples, he said that the bread represents his body broken for them, the cup represents his blood shed for their forgiveness, and when they take it, to remember Jesus' suffering and death. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
- **How we celebrate**
 - We partake the communion with reverence - breaking bread, drinking the cup, remembering Jesus' suffering and death as substitution for our sins. (1 Corinthians 11:27-34)

4. Offering of Firstfruits (Hebrew: "Resit")

- **Past event**
 - After the Israelites took possession of the land, they planted crops and reaped the first harvest (firstfruits) and sacrificed the first offering of grain to the Lord. (v10)
- **How they celebrated**
 - Month 1 day 3, they sacrificed burnt and grain offerings to Lord (Leviticus 23)
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - Jesus became the firstfruit by rising from the dead. He is the first to enter heaven who opens the way for his faithful people to enter too. (1 Corinthians 15:20).

- **How we celebrate**
 - We celebrate Jesus' Resurrection Sunday as a church, inviting pre-believers and intercede for them to believe in Jesus.
 - God gave His first and best to us— His only Son Jesus. We also offer our first and our best to the Lord – our time, money and dedication.

5. Festival of Weeks (Harvest)

- **Past event**
 - 7 weeks (50 days) after the Offering of Firstfruits, the Israelites celebrated the Festival of Weeks for the harvest received.
- **How they celebrated**
 - Rejoice and give a freewill offering to the Lord as He had blessed. (Deuteronomy 16:10)
 - Remember they were slaves in Egypt, God set them free, blessed them with the promised land and being fruitful. (Deuteronomy 16:12)
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - The Holy Spirit was given to the disciples on the Feast of Weeks (Day of Pentecost. 50 days after Jesus' resurrection). (Acts 2:1-4)
 - Jesus' is the one who baptizes his disciples with the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11)
 - The church was born, first harvest of 3000 souls, and the Lord continued to add to their number daily. (Acts 2:47)
- **How we celebrate**
 - Holy Spirit empowers us to be His witness and have spiritual harvest. (Acts 1:8)
 - Therefore we need to acknowledge and thank the Holy Spirit for being given to us. And work with the Holy Spirit to the harvesting of souls.

6. Festival of Trumpets.

- **Past event.**
 - The Israelites left Egypt and arrived at Mount Sinai. Before the Lord came down to meet with them, there was thunder, lightning, earthquake, fire and smoke in the mountain and very loud trumpet blast. Trumpet is the announcement of the arrival of the King. (Exodus 19)
 - Then the King, gave the 10 commandments of His Kingdom, to His redeemed people.
- **How they celebrated**
 - Their sacred assembly was commemorated with trumpet blasts (v24)
- **To be fulfilment by Jesus**
 - At Jesus' second coming, He will be coming as King and Judge. Coming in the clouds, riding on white horse with his army of angels. There will be a great trumpet call of God to gather his faithful believers from all nations (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Matthew 24:30-31)
- **How we celebrate**
 - We'll worship Jesus as our King, expect His second coming and not be caught unaware. (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6)
 - We'll seek to serve Jesus' kingdom purpose and be right in His eyes. (Matthew 6:33)

7. Day of Atonement. (Yom Kippur. Yom = "Day". Kippur = "Atonement")

- **Past event**
 - Israelites were instructed to humble themselves before God by fasting, repentance and make atonement for their sins every year, on the tenth day of the seventh month. (v27)
- **How they celebrated (Leviticus 16)**
 - They were to make atonement for their sins by preparing 2 goats and casting lots for one to be the scapegoat. The high priest would then lay both hands over its head, confessed all the sins of the people, thus transferred their sins on the scapegoat. Then they sent the goat into the wilderness.
- **Fulfilment by Jesus**
 - Jesus fulfilled as the scapegoat, who carried the sins of all humanity, and died outside the city of Jerusalem.
 - When Jesus came the first time, He sacrificed Himself to save us from all our sins. At His second coming, He is coming to save us from our sufferings and persecutions. (Hebrews 9:28)
- **How we celebrate**
 - We take time to confess and repent of our sins and thank Jesus for willingly to be our scapegoat to atone for our sins.
 - BC also fast and pray from July 1st to August 9th, together with Love Singapore network of churches.

8. Festival of Tabernacles. (Sukkot = “booth” or “tent”)

- **Past event**
 - Israelites lived in tents for 40 years in the wilderness and the Lord dwelled with them at the Tabernacle. (v43)
- **How they celebrated**
 - On month 7, day 15, they made and stayed in temporary tents for 7 days. (v42)
 - Remembered that the Lord delivered their early forefathers and made them lived in tents with the Lord tabernacled (dwelled) among them. (v43)
 - Present offerings for 7 days.
 - Rejoice because the Lord will bless in all their produce and work. (Deuteronomy 16:15)
 - They held sacred assembly on the 1st and 8th day. (v35-36)
 - Every 7 years, they are to teach the law during the festival of Tabernacles so people will fear the Lord and carefully observe them. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)
- **Fulfillment by Jesus**
 - In Jesus' first coming, Jesus tabernacled (dwelt) with us (John 1:14).
 - We celebrate Jesus' birth during Christmas, inviting people to come. Like the shepherd who go out announcing the arrival of the Messiah. (Luke 2:17-18)
 - After Jesus' second coming, Jesus will again tabernacle (dwell) with his people. (Revelation 21:3)
- **How we celebrate**
 - We recognize that Jesus dwells with us when we gather as a church. (Matthew 18:20)
 - We need to have the right attitude towards Jesus – He is the Lord our God. We must not be like the 1st generation Israelites who sinned and failed to enter the promised land. (1 Corinthians 10:5)

Application

1. Consider what kind of Lord is Jesus in the 8 celebrations? Is He worthy of worship?
2. How can I change in my attitude regarding my worship every day including Sunday? For eg.
 - Put away all distractions at Sunday service. E.g. phones and tablets
 - Setting aside time for my bible and prayer
3. 1st July is the start of fast and prayer for 40 days. What important issues will I list out to bring before the Lord?