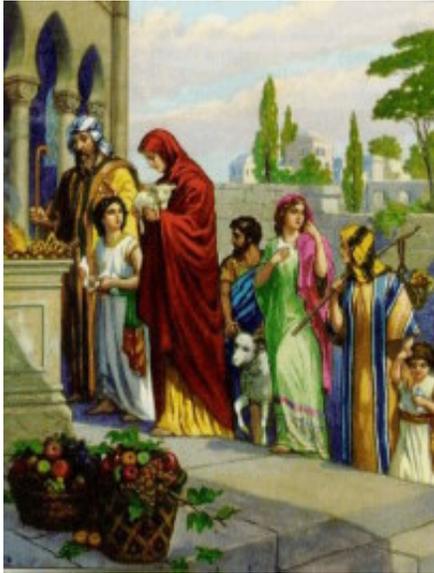


LESSON 3



SPECIAL DAYS, SABBATHS, AND FEASTS

Scripture Texts: Leviticus 23:1-21; 34, 39, 42-43

The Lord used four series of types to present spiritual truths to Israel. They were: **1.** historical events, **2.** lives of men, **3.** tabernacle worship, and **4.** special days and times. We have studied some events, such as the crossing of the Red Sea. We have seen how Pharaoh and Moses are types. We have learned the meaning of the tabernacle and some of the worship. Today we look at the meanings of the special days—the sabbaths and feasts.

There were many sabbaths—the weekly one, the sabbath year (Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-18), jubilee year (Leviticus 25:8-22), and those connected with all the feasts. There were three main feasts of the year as named in our paragraph headings. The sabbaths and feasts together are a type of the entire Christian life.

MEMORY VERSE: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

—Matthew 11:28

The Weekly Sabbath

Leviticus 23:1-3 The seventh day is the sabbath of rest. Sabbath means "rest." **Ye shall do no work therein.** The command to keep the day holy was one of the Ten Commandments. Not even a fire was to be lit (Exodus 35:3). There was to be **an holy convocation**—a called assembly, probably for reading the Law and general worship. To disregard the law of the sabbath and do any work met disapproval from God. Those who did were stoned to death. There is no sin too small to escape God's notice. The sabbath coincides with the soul rest from sin, which Jesus would bring (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:9-11). This is a type of salvation.

The Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23:4-8 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover when the lamb was killed and the supper eaten. Then followed seven days of eating nothing with leaven. Since leaven is a type of sin, unleavened bread typified freedom from sin. The first and last of the seven days were sabbaths when no work was to be done, and a convocation was held. Burnt offerings were made each day—a type of praying in the Spirit. This feast commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

The word *atonement* means reconciliation, satisfaction for an injury or offense. The Day of Atonement was a time of afflicting their souls, fasting and mourning. It pointed forward to Jesus Christ who, on the Cross, made the perfect atonement for us (Romans 5:11). As the blood of the first passover lamb sprinkled on the doorposts saved from physical death, so now the blood of Christ, our Passover Lamb, applied to our hearts by faith, saved from spiritual death (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).

Pentecost, Feast of Firstfruits

Leviticus 23:9-21 . . . ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits . . . to be accepted for you. Here again, we are reminded that God will accept nothing short of first place. The sheaf was to be the very first grain cut. None was eaten or used in any way until the Lord had His offering. It was to be waved before the Lord **on the morrow after the sabbath**—the sabbath following the passover. Fifty days later on **the morrow after the seventh sabbath** was to be a sabbath and a holy convocation. Then a further offering of firstfruits was to be made in the form of two loaves of bread. Animal sacrifices were burned. This feast of harvest, or firstfruits, or weeks, or Pentecost (meaning the fiftieth day) commemorated the giving of the Law, which began fifty days after Israel left Egypt. It points forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14), fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead. It is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the law of God is written in the heart.

As the feast was entered into by the offering of firstfruits, first the sheaf at passover time—an offering to God for their sins—then the loaves representing the complete harvest on the feast day, so we offer ourselves completely to God at the time of Holy Spirit baptism. Immediately the life begins to bear some fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit moves in to live and take control. This begins a daily growth into God's many graces. The life then bears more and more spiritual fruit unto God.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:34, 39, 42, 43 The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles. This feast was held after all the harvest was gathered in and the labor of it was finished. For seven days the people lived in booths made of tree branches. Burnt offerings were made each day. This feast commemorated the time when Israel stayed in temporary lodgings after being delivered from slavery and while journeying to a permanent home. It pointed forward to the pilgrim life of saints who have been freed from sin's slavery and are but temporary dwellers on the earth while traveling to Heaven (1 Peter 2:11).

Wandering Israel looked forward to rest and peace and a permanent home in Canaan. We look forward to the rest and joy of Heaven, the eternal homeland of the soul. As the feast came when the labor of harvest was over and the fruits gathered in, so Heaven comes when the saint's earthly labors and warfare are over and his life's fruitage is complete. In this lesson is pictured the complete cycle of the saint's life in Christ. It begins in rebirth and cleansing from sin, continues in fruitfulness, and is crowned by entrance into Heaven.

Present Status of Sabbaths and Feasts

We are not to keep these special seasons now. They are only types. A type is to remain in force or to be carried on in its visible form only until the antitype becomes a reality. What need is there of the less when we have the greater? Now that Christ has come and given us spiritual rest and life, and made us fruit bearers by giving us His Spirit, and has set us on the way to Heaven, what need have we of the mere types of these things? We need no shadow when we have the substance (Colossians 2:14-17; Galatians 4:9-11).

JUST A THOUGHT

"No autumn fruit without spring blossoms."

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