

God's Calendar

When God created the universe He established a continuum of space, mass, and time – and He is Lord over all three. He has jurisdiction over space. He is sovereign over matter. And He is the author of time. Every second that ticks off the clock belongs to God, and we're responsible to God for how we use it. We're literally living on borrowed time.

God's Lordship over time was seen in the observance of holy days. Time belongs to God – and it is required of man to give back to God a portion of the time God has given to him. The Hebrews were called by God to set aside various feast days to celebrate God's goodness and blessing – special days of worship and rest.

In Leviticus 23:1-2 God prefaces all the feasts, *"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.'"*

The Hebrew word translated "feast" means "appointment". These were God's appointments with His people. God blocked out His calendar for them, and He expects His people to block out their calendar for Him.

Pull out your calendar, and set aside times you can spend with God – a weekly Sabbath – meaningful holiday celebrations – timely get-aways – spiritual retreats – an annual Bible con-

ference. God says to Moses, *"these are My feasts."* When God makes an appointment we'd better keep it!

Today we use the term "holidays" – the combination of two English words, "holy" and "days". But "holidays" were originally "holy days" – days marked holy, or set aside for the worship of God, and celebration of His works.

The problem with our Sabbaths and holidays are how we spend them. We go to Disney World, or Six Flags, or a ball game – and when we come home we're more exhausted than before we went. A trip to Six Flags is not exactly a holy convocation.

Or we take our Sabbaths, and do work of another sort – we labor in the yard, or toil over our car, or remodel the bathroom. We find other ways to stress out. Verse 3 tells us the Sabbath is to be set aside for "solemn", or serious rest. The Sabbath is not a day for inactivity – just do something that rejuvenates, rather than drains.

We as Gentile believers no longer celebrate the same feast days as the Old Testament Hebrews, nevertheless we can learn from the principles. We need to set aside weekly and annual intervals to rest, refresh and refocus spiritually.

The Year of Jubilee

The concept of a year of Jubilee is unparalleled in history. It

was uniquely Hebrew, but it was ingenious. Verse 10 describes its chief feature, all debts will be paid, and all properties will be returned.

When the Hebrews entered the promised land God portioned out the land to each of the twelve tribes. The land belonged to God, but He loaned a parcel to each family in Israel. Of course, from time to time land was sold or bought – when it was put up for collateral on loan, and a man couldn't pay his debts, the land would be lost. But the loss was never permanent – for in the year of Jubilee all land returned to its original occupant. That's why whenever a land transaction came down its value was determined by the number of years to the Jubilee.

Another practice in ancient Israel was slavery. People think of slavery as cruel, but not among the Jews. When a person couldn't pay his debts, instead of filing bankruptcy, he was allowed to work them off by becoming a slave to his creditor. But in the year of Jubilee his debts were canceled, and he became a free man.

Think of the practical impact of this law. In everyone's lifetime they would live through a

Jubilee. Their debts were canceled. It gave them a second chance.

If family land had been lost through a relative's slothfulness they were able to get it back, and begin again. It still paid to be industrious. A man was always able to better his financial position through hard work, but it also provided a way to even out some inequities, and restore to everyone a real opportunity to get ahead.

As clever a welfare system as the Jubilee was its real significance is prophetic. Think about it, the original and ultimate owner of this world is God. But God gave dominion over it to man. We in turn lost it to Satan. Three times in the Gospel of John, Satan is referred to as "the ruler of this world". But one day God will celebrate the Jubilee, and all the land will revert back to its original owner.

Today, Satan may control this earth, but it doesn't belong to Him. When Jesus returns, Satan will be evicted, and the world will return to its rightful owner. When Jesus returns all debts will be canceled, the slaves will be freed, and all property will return to its rightful owner. *Come quickly, Lord Jesus!*

THE FEASTS

In Exodus 12, on the eve of their exit from Egypt, God gave Moses directions for how to celebrate Passover. The festivities revolved around a meal...They ate bitter herbs reminding them of their years of Egyptian bondage. Roasted lamb recalled the lamb's blood that had been spread on the doorposts and thresholds of the house. Unleavened bread spoke of the faith of the Hebrews in God's promise. Their exodus the next morning wouldn't provide them time for the bread to rise.

The Passover is celebrated in the month of Nisan - the first month of a new year. It symbolized a new start for the nation.

Passover

Nisan 14 - March/April

Jesus was crucified on Nisan 14th, or Passover. In 1Corinthians 5:7 Paul writes, *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."* Jesus is our Passover lamb.

When His blood is spread on the doorposts and threshold of our hearts the judgment of God *passes over*, and we're delivered from our sin.

On the night of the Passover, just before He was crucified, Jesus gave new meaning to the age-old celebration. He took the unleavened bread and wine and called it *"My body, My blood"*. Jesus took a 1500 year old tradition and gave it a revolutionary new meaning. Today, you and I can have a new start in Christ.

For the seven days following the Passover the Hebrews ate only unleavened bread. Leaven is a type of sin, so following their deliverance from Egypt they were to spend seven days ridding themselves of what represented sin.

Guys, when Jesus delivers us He takes us just as we are,

Unleavened Bread

Nisan 15-21 - March/April

and right where we're at. Leaven in your life doesn't stop Jesus from forgiving you, and setting you free, and making you His child - but once you're His you'll want to get rid of the

leaven. A believer isn't sinless, but he or she will sin less and less and less.

On the day after the Sabbath - following the Passover - the priest brought the initial yield of the barley harvest and offered it to God. This was the people's way of saying thanks to God for providing their needs. This is what we do when we tithe our income. We give back to God the firstfruits of what He's given to us.

And the priest made his offering in an interesting way... elsewhere it's called a *"wave offering"* or *"heave offering"*. He waved a bundle up and down, then side to side - a vertical and horizontal motion - in essence, drawing the cross. The

Firstfruits

Nisan 17 - March/April

wave offering was a picture of Jesus... but even more so at the Feast of Firstfruits...

Understand, Jesus was resurrected on the day following the Sabbath, after the Passover - or on the day of Firstfruits. This is why 1 Corinthians 15:23 calls Jesus the *"firstfruits"* of the resurrection. Jesus was the initial yield of God's resurrection harvest. He was the first to overcome death, and inherit an incorruptible body.

Leviticus 23:16, *"Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD."* The Greek word for *"fifty"* is *"Pentecost"*, which is why this Feast is called *"Pentecost"* in the New Testament.

This feast celebrated the end of the spring harvest. This time the priest brought two loaves of grain to the Lord - and unlike at Passover, the loaves were baked with leaven. Jewish tradition says the giving of the Law to Moses occurred 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits, so its anniversary was also celebrated at Pentecost.

Weeks (Pentecost)

Sivan 6 - May/June

It's interesting, in the same year Jesus fulfilled the Passover, and Feast of Firstfruits - He also fulfilled the symbolism in the Feast of Weeks.

It was at Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church, and a harvest of souls begun. On that day God, the Lawgiver, began to write His law in the hearts of men. And two loaves were presented to God - Jews and Gentiles. Unleavened loaves, in fact - God accepted them even though stained with sin.

OF ISRAEL

Today the Jews call the Feast of Trumpets, "*Rosh Hashanah*" or "*the head of the year*". Before their exodus from Egypt the Jewish year began in Tishri, and for civil purposes they maintained that distinction. Nisan was the first month of the year for religious purposes. Tishri was the first month for secular purposes.

On the Feast of Trumpets the priest sounded his shophar, or ram's horn, and the blast called the workers out of the fields up to the Tabernacle, for a holy convocation. The Feast of Trumpets marked the end of the fall harvest.

It's interesting, if the spring feasts were all prophetic of the first coming of Christ, is it possible that the fall feasts speak of His second coming?...

During the summer months there are no feasts. And prophetically that may be where we are now. God is working with the Church, not Israel – for the Hebrews it's summer - but

On this day the sacrifices and rituals we discussed in chapter 16 took place. This was the one day of the year the High Priest could enter the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle, where the glory of God was visibly manifested.

It was there he sprinkled blood on the lid of the Ark, or mercyseat. When he exited he laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat, and confessed the sins of the people. Then the goat was led off into the wilderness. It never returned. It was all a vivid demonstration that God had not only forgiven, but forgotten their sin. Hey, what God forgives, He forgets!

The Day of Atonement is referred to by the Jews as "*Yom Kippur*". In Hebrew "*Yom*" means "*day*", and "*Kippur*" means "*covering or atonement*" – this was the day the sin of the nation Israel was covered for another year. The individual Hebrews observed the day in a serious, somber fashion. This was a day of confession and repentance.

Jesus is the fulfillment of this feast. In 1 John 2:2 He's called our "*propitiation*", or "*mercyseat*". He is also the scapegoat.

This was a fun feast. Verse 40 commands the Hebrews, "*you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.*" For a week the people lived outdoors in tents. The Feast of Tabernacles was a celebration of God's provision in the wilderness. God provided them manna in the morning, and quail at night. For 40 years their sandals never wore out. God gave them victory over their enemies. He even brought water from the rock, and quenched the thirst of the people.

Trumpets Tishri 1 - September/October

the Scripture is clear, at the end of the year, He'll return to Israel and accomplish His purposes. And how will God's end times work begin... with a trumpet blast. 1 Thessalonians

4:16 tells us a trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will rise... the last days begins with the rapture of the Church.

Remember the Feast of Trumpets – the priest blows the shophar to call the workers out the fields. The harvest is over. It sounds like the rapture. In the year 2000 Rosh Hashanah occurs on September 30th. No man knows the day or the hour, but I always go through Rosh Hashanah with a little extra anticipation.

Day of Atonement Tishri 10 - September/October

Confess your sin, and trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior and God will not only forgive your sin, but He'll forget it once and for all.

God wanted the Jews to use the day to cultivate a heart of repen-

tance. It was a day to humble themselves. It was a reminder of their need for a sacrifice. But over the years the Jews did just the opposite. They use the day's rituals as a substitute for a sacrifice. They believe all their fasting and afflicting is itself payment for their sin. They'll even use the day to remind God of their good works. How tragic. As we learned in 17:11, "*it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*"

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest came out of the Holy of Holies and appeared to the people to let them know the sacrifice had been accepted. This is what happens when Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation. The High Priest leaves the Holy of Holies and shows Himself to the nation.

Tabernacles Tishri 15-22 - September/October

The Feast of Tabernacles is prophetic of the Kingdom Age, where God will supernaturally provide for His people just as He did in the wilderness. The Millennial Kingdom will be a period of

great rejoicing. In fact, Zechariah 14:16 teaches us that during Christ's thousand year reign all the nations will come up to Jerusalem once a year to worship the King and keep what feast?... the Feast of Tabernacles.

Bible Scan - Leviticus 23-27

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org

Calvary Chapel Announcements - October 31, 1999

Crossroads Fellowship - Single Adults 30-something and over - at the home of David & Denise Brown

Appreciation Luncheon for all Worship team members and their spouses - Sunday, November 7

Horizons - Fellowship for Young Adults - November 12 at 7:30 - at the home of Steve Lee

Please pray for our fact-finding trip to Haiti. Sandy and Kevin will be gone November 15-19.

Newcomers Reception - Sunday, November 21 - after both morning services.

For more info on all the Calvary Chapel activities pick up a *Communicator* in the foyer

Next Bible Scan - November 7 - Numbers 1-14

"...these are My feasts." - Leviticus 23:2

Bible Scan Memory Verse

Devotion Box - God's Will

In Leviticus 24:1-16 Moses runs into a situation not covered by the letter of the Law. A man blasphemes the holy name of God, what's the appropriate penalty? Verse 12 says *"they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them."* Here's an issue not covered in the *Word of God*, so Moses seeks the *mind of God*.

This is good wisdom. *He wanted to know. He withdrew to know. He waited to know.* Want, withdraw, and wait – and God will let you know. I surmise that Moses put more trust in God's ability to speak than in his own ability to hear. God wants you to know His will more than you do. He'll lead and guide if you'll be open!

Devotion Box - Trusting God with your Six?

Here's the hurdle to get over if you're going to observe a Sabbath day - or for the Jews, a Sabbath year – do you trust God to do more in six days, than you can do in seven? This is also the hurdle when it comes to the tithe of our money - do we trust God to do more with 90%, than we can do with 100%? Both boil down to a question of faith. How strong is your faith? How much do you really trust the Lord?

Devotion Box - God's Forgiveness

When the Moravian missionaries tried to witness to the Alaskan Eskimos they were unable to come up with a word for forgiveness. They had to invent a word. They came up with *"Is-shu-majie-cho-junk-anner-elk-milk"*, which means *"not being able to think about it anymore."* What a beautiful word for forgiveness. In Jeremiah 31:34 the Lord says, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."* What God forgives, He forgets!

Devotion Box - Sabbath or Bust

There's a saying I heard years ago that's stuck with me, and saved me from bouts with burn out, *"the bow that is always bent ceases to shoot straight."* If you never relax the string - if you keep a constant tension on the bow it'll eventually warp, and lose its effectiveness. The same is true of the human psyche. Our bodies and minds and spirits need frequent intervals of rest and rejuvenation in order to operate at optimum levels.

It's now been proven medically a night's sleep alone doesn't meet man's need for rest. During the day our body breathes in 30 ounces of oxygen, but exhales 31 ounces. We end up 1 ounce short. At night we breathe back more oxygen than we use, but not enough to make up for what we lost. We breathe back 5/6th of an ounce - but each day we end up 1/6th short. The *night's rest* does not replenish the *day's work*. By the time six days elapse we're 6/6th, or a full ounce short. If we work the next day we'll never recover, but if we take the seventh day off we save the ounce of oxygen we need to balance our system, and catch ourselves up.

This is why Jesus said in Mark 2:27, *"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."* Not only the Sabbath, but all the Levitical feasts were wonderful gifts from God. They were intended by God for man's benefit. Guys, the setting aside one day a week as a Sabbath rest is not only God's idea - it's a good idea, too. Haven't we figured out by now that all God's ideas are also good ideas? For the health of yourself and family make keeping a Sabbath a priority. Hey, it's Sabbath or bust, literally...