



# Festivals and Feasts of Israel and the Bible



Jewish months and our equivalent

Spring			Summer		
<i>Nisan</i> 1	<i>Iyyar</i> 2	<i>Sivan</i> 3	<i>Tammuz</i> 4	<i>Av</i> 5	<i>Elul</i> 6
ניסן	אייר	סיון	תמוז	אב	אלול
Mar/Apr	Apr/May	May/Jun	Jun/Jul	Jul/Aug	Aug/Sept
<b>Pesach (15)</b> Matzah (16-22) Bikurim (18) HaShoah (27)	Ha'atmaut (5) HaZikaron (14) Lag B'Omer (18) Yerushalayim (28)	<b>Shavu'ot (6)</b>	Fast of Tammuz (17) Three weeks of Sorrow	Tish'a B'Av (9) Tu B'Av (15)	Selichot repentance
Fall			Winter		
<i>Tishri</i> 7	<i>Cheshvan</i> 8	<i>Kislev</i> 9	<i>Tevet</i> 10	<i>Shevat</i> 11	<i>Adar</i> 12/13
תשרי	חשוון	כסלו	שבט	שבט	אדר
Sept/Oct	Oct/Nov	Nov/Dec	Dec/Jan	Jan/Feb	Feb/Mar
Rosh Hashanah (1) Fast Gedaliah (3) Yom Kippur (10) <b>Sukkot (15-22)</b> Simchat Torah (22)		Chanukah (25) to Tevet (4)	Asarah B'Tevet (10)	Tu B'Shevat (15)	Fast Ester (13) Purim (14) Adar II leap year

Chart of Festivals and Feasts

JEWISH FEASTS AND FESTIVALS			
NAME	MONTH: DATE	REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
Passover	Nisan (Mar./Apr.): 14-21	Exod 12:2-20; Lev 23:5	Commemorates God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Nisan (Mar./Apr.): 15-21	Lev 23:6-8	Commemorates God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Includes a Day of Firstfruits for the barley harvest.
Feast of Weeks, or Harvest (Pentecost)	Sivan (May/June): 6 (seven weeks after Passover)	Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15-21	Commemorates the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. Includes a Day of Firstfruits for the wheat harvest.
Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 1	Lev 23:23-25 Num 29:1-6	Day of the blowing of the trumpets to signal the beginning of the civil new year.
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 10	Lev 23:26-33; Exod 30:10	On this day the high priest makes atonement for the nation's sin. Also a day of fasting.
Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 15-21	Lev 23:33-43; Num 29:12-39; Deut 16:13	Commemorates the forty years of wilderness wandering.
Feast of Dedication, or Festival of Lights (Hanukkah)	Kislev (Nov./Dec.): 25-30; and Tebeth (Dec./Jan.): 1-2	John 10:22	Commemorates the purification of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C.
Feast of Purim, or Esther	Adar (Feb./Mar.): 14	Esth 9	Commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people in the days of Esther.



## PESACH Passover

Passover holds the distinction of the first of all memorial acts God instructed the children of Israel to observe. It commemorates God's great deliverance of Israel out of bondage to Egypt. The word PESACH means Pass Over. The meal eaten at this celebration is the seder. The Lord sent Moses to lead the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. At first Pharaoh would not let Israel go. But after nine plagues the Lord said the firstborn son of every household would die unless the doorpost and frame of the house was covered in the blood of a perfect lamb. That night the Destroyer sent by God passed over the houses with the lamb's blood but brought death to the firstborn son of all the others including Pharaoh's.

This story appears in Exodus chapters 2 through 13. The ceremony is spoken of in Exodus 13:3-10...

***"And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year."***

It is commanded in Leviticus 23:5-8...

***"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover"***

And, in Numbers 28:16-25...

***"On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the LORD. And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. And you shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year."***

***"Be sure they are without blemish. Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah you shall offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; you shall offer one-tenth of an ephah for each of the seven lambs; also one goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you."***

***"You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering. In this manner you shall offer the food of the offering made by fire daily for seven days, as a sweet aroma to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work."***

Passover defines a redemption in clear and concise ways. It is an annual holy day commemorating God's deliverance of Israel from bondage to Egypt. Yet it is also a prophetic picture of God's plan for redemption of the whole world. In preparation for Passover Jewish people are to remove anything with leaven (or yeast) from their house. This reminds them of the rush their ancestors were in when they prepared to leave Egypt on that night long ago. The house is thoroughly cleaned so that no fragment of leavened product remained. At sundown on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan a special ceremony is held called 'Bedikat Chametz'. This means 'search for leaven'. Since the house had already been cleaned of fragments, the leader of the seder purposely hides bits of cookie and breads all over the cleaned house and instructs the other family members to scout out and search for them.

The seder meal is an important part of the celebration of this festival. Seder means 'order'. And it is based on the directives of Exodus 12. The meal consists of matzah (unleavened bread), and bitter herbs. It may also include green vegetables, a roasted egg an apple or a nut mixture.

**NOTE:** Two other feasts have been incorporated into the Passover Celebration in modern times. The Feast of Unleaven Bread or Hag HaMatzot celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan and Firstfruits or Reishit celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nisan were originally separate from Pesach. However since they are celebrated within the same week, they were combined.



***The Feast of Unleavened Bread*** is found in Leviticus 23:6-8...

***"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it."***

**Firstfruits** is found in Leviticus 23:9-14...

***"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD.'"***



***"Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."***

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Pesach is clear from the ceremony. The Jewish people who waited for their redemption from Egypt had to wait with their belongings in their hands and shoes on their feet ready to leave at a moment's notice. They could perhaps hear the screams of the mothers and their firstborn sons outside of their blood stained doors. It is a ceremony that is repeated to reinforce the divine providence and love God provides for His people. After 400 years of hard slavery, in one night the entire nation of Israel was set free.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** Jesus held a seder on the night of the Passover just prior to His crucifixion known widely as the "Last Supper". This is found in Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-38 and John 13:1-2. Unleavened bread, bitter herbs and wine was served. Jesus may have recited Exodus chapters 12 and 13 after this meal. During this time Jesus makes mention of the fact that this will be the last time He shares a seder with His disciples until the time He returns to earth as King.

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** Passover celebration has several aspects that point to our Savior. Of course first of all, Jesus IS the Passover lamb. His blood on the door post of our heart keeps the angel of death from us and grants us life, eternal life. As Christians we never have to sacrifice any lamb again. The work of our salvation has already been completed on the cross. Second, we should always be ready to depart to go to that promised land called heaven.

What other ways does the Passover celebration tell of our salvation in Christ?



SHAVUOT

### **The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)**

The Feast of Weeks occurs 50 days after the last day of Passover. It is often called Pentecost for this reason since this word means fifty or fiftieth. Some also call this celebration the Feast of the Harvest and Latter Firstfruits. It is the time to offer a grain offering to the Lord. This usually came in the form of wheat or any other new grain that had been harvested. It shows thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest. Often called 'Matan Torah' (the Giving of the Law), it is tied to the Ten Commandments because it is believed God gave Moses these commandments at this time. The Book of Ruth is often read during this celebration.

This Feast is detailed in Leviticus 23:15-22

***"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.' "***

An offering is made on this day according to Number 28:26-31...

***"Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. You shall present a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; also one kid of the goats, to make atonement for you. Be sure they are without blemish. You shall present them with their drink offerings, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering."***

The Feast of Weeks is celebrated to commemorate the giving of the Law of Moses. On the holy day called Yom HaBikkurim (the Day of Firstfruits), the first part of the harvest of barley were brought in and waved before the Lord. Fifty days later, the later part of this harvest which was normally of wheat were offered to the Lord on another holy day, which is known by two names. The Jewish people know it as Shavu'ot, which means 'weeks' because it occurs weeks after Passover. Greek speaking Jews and many Christians called this day Pentecost because this feast occurs 50 days after the first day of Firstfruits (Yom HaBikkurim). Shavu'ot is designated as a time of thanksgiving for the early harvest.

**PURPOSE:** God's faithfulness providing the early barley increases faith for an abundant harvest throughout the season. In the eye of the Jew, thanking God for the firstfruits gives God reason to bless the whole season to the last of the harvest.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** The main reference here is to the Day of Pentecost detailed in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. However in some ways Jesus foretold of His fulfillment of this Feast prior to His crucifixion. In John 12:23-24 Jesus says, ***"The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."*** Here our Lord is speaking of Himself as the grain of wheat who would die for the sins of the world. Wheat was milled to a fine powder to be made into bread. The Jews considered bread to be indicative of righteousness. In John 6:33 Jesus says, ***"For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*** He is the firstfruit offering the Father received once and for all. The Day of Pentecost marks the day the Father gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit in return... this Spirit is our blessing for the offering.

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** The giving of the Holy Spirit in His fullness and the baptism of the Holy Spirit marks a new way for mankind to connect to God in ways not heard of prior to this. Now God comes to live inside of the believer and work through him/her. As the Feast of Weeks commemorates the giving of the Law of Moses, so the Day of Pentecost marks the giving of the One who fulfilled this law, Jesus Christ.

How has the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life changed you?

## ROSH HASHANAH



### The Feast of Shofars (trumpets) or New Year

The Feast of Trumpets marks the beginning of the New Year for Israel. It occurs on the first day of Yom Kippur. Jewish tradition holds that God writes every person's words, deeds and thoughts in the Book of Life which He examines on this day. It is observed on the first of TISHRI. Tishri is the seventh month of the Jewish calendar year. This is in late September or early October in our calendars.

This Feast is detailed in Leviticus 23:23-25...

***"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'"***

An offering is made on this day according to Numbers 29:1-6...

***“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. Their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.”***

Rosh HaShanana is considered the New Year, yet it is not called this in the bible. The Feast of Trumpets is the first feast of the fall before all the other significant ones that follow. The sages of ancient Israel considered it the mark of the new spiritual year. Originally this feast was called Yom Teruah, or the Day of Sounding/Festival of Trumpets. The ancient Hebrews changed it to Rosh HaShanana, which means Head of the Year because of this. During the ten days that follow this feast known as the Ten Days of Repentance the shofar is blown 100 times in Jewish synagogues.

**PURPOSE:** It is generally referred to as a time of repentance and regathering. Since autumn is when most of the Jewish feasts occur which corresponds to harvest time, Rosh HaShanana is considered the time to repent to be prepared for what is to come. The Torah called for a sin offering for this very reason. The ancient Jewish leaders stressed that this day was of utmost importance.



The **shofar** made from a ram's horns sounded in synagogues to alert Israel of an impending event, in the case of Rosh HaShanana, repentance. To begin the day the shofar is sounded with four different notes... a blast (tekia), several broken notes (shevarim), an alarm (teruah) and one final long blast (tekia gedolah). In this observance there is a somber mood in the music, the words recited and the sounds. Many today spend the day near a body of water such as a lake or stream prior to going to the synagogue.

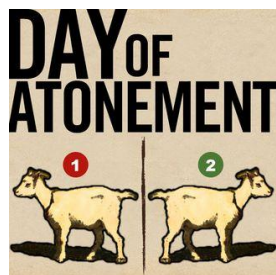
This is taken from Micah 7:18 and 19 where it says ***“Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.”*** To illustrate this it is traditional for the participants to throw breadcrumbs or pebbles into the water and then rejoice in God's promise of forgiveness.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** In Matthew 24 Jesus is describing the events that precede His second coming. In verse 31 Jesus says, ***“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*** This is a direct reference to this feast as it is a regathering the angels will be assigned with. Here the words used to speak of the ‘great sound’ are commonly translated from Greek to Hebrew by the word ‘teruah’ or alarm. It is further detailed in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13 where it says, ***“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”***

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** The Feast of Trumpets teaches us about rest in the Lord. It relates directly to spiritual warfare. In this, it is our God who fights the battle for it is His after all.

How does this feast compare with the repentance of those in the church today?

In what ways could be more observant of this warfare and allow God to fight the battle for us?



YOM KIPPUR

## The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement is the day the high priest makes atonement for sin. The word ‘atonement’ means reconciliation between God and mankind.

It also can mean a covering. A good way to remember the meaning is to say the word as ‘at one with’. This day is the most solemn of all days to the Jew. It occurs ten days after Rosh HaShanana and completes the days of repentance. The priest would sacrifice animals according to the Law of Moses to atone for the sins of the people. It is observed on the tenth of Tishri. This is in late September or early October in our calendars.

In this modern time Yom Kippur is a day of fasting where no work is done. Many Jewish people spend the day at the synagogue praying for forgiveness of their sins. During this time the Book of Jonah is read to remind the people of God’s forgiveness and mercy.

Immediately afterwards a meal is eaten called a break-fast meal (breakfast).

This day is detailed in Leviticus 23:26-32...

***“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.”***



***"For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbath."***

A offering is made on this day according to Numbers 29:7-11...

***"On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD as a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the sin offering for atonement, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings."***

Yom Kippur has long been held to be the most holy day by the Jewish people. Once a year the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies in the temple to make atonement for Israel. The entire 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Leviticus goes into considerable detail about this ceremony. It centers around the sacrifice of two goats. One is called the ***Chatat*** and was to be slain as a blood sacrifice to cover the sins of all of Israel. The other goat was the ***Az'arel***, or scapegoat. It was brought before the priest where he would lay his hands on the head of the goat as he confessed the sins of the people. Instead of slaying this goat, he was set free in the wilderness symbolizing the 'taking away' of the sins of Israel from before God.

What had been started with Rosh HaShanana by repenting of their sins personally, culminated nine days later with atonement and regeneration. Since 70 AD this ceremony has not been able to be completed because the Jewish temple was destroyed by the Roman Empire. First century rabbinical priests decided to replace the sacrifice with substitutional prayer... one for repentance and another for charity. One day when the Jewish temple will be rebuilt this sacrifice will once again commence.

**PURPOSE:** The original purpose of this day was to requalify the people of Israel to come before their God. The God of Jacob will have no one with sin stand before Him. This day reacquainted God with His people. But God Himself said in Isaiah 1:11, ***"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats."***

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** The reference here seems obvious. The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were shadows of the sacrifice Jesus made of Himself. He was slaughtered as the ***Chatat*** was and it was done outside of the walls of Jerusalem as the ***Az'arel*** was set free outside the camp.

This is best described in Hebrews 10:1-6 where it says, ***“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME. IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAD NO PLEASURE.”***

#### CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:

Shouldn't the church be joyful that they don't have to year after year come with blood to pay for their sin?

How can we be reminded of this?



*SUKKOT*

#### **The Feast of the Tabernacles or Booths**

The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the forty years of wandering the nation of Israel was made to do because of their disobedience to God in taking the promised land. It is a week-long celebration of the fall harvest and a time to build booths made of sticks and branches. The Feast of Tabernacles occurs on the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of Tishri. These temporary structures are to remind the people of God's providential care during that forty year period. The people of Israel continue to celebrate this today by dwelling in temporary structures for eight days with the roof covered by four special plant leaves; the citron, myrtle, palm and willow.

This feast is detailed in Leviticus 22:26-23:44...

***“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.”***

***“These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD. Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.’ So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.”***

An offering is made according to Numbers 29:12-35...

***“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish.”***

***“Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering. 'On the second day present twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings. On the third day present eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering. On the fourth day present ten bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering. On the fifth day present nine bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.”***

***"On the sixth day present eight bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering. 'On the seventh day present seven bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering. 'On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work."***

This feast is the last of three celebrated in the month of Tishri. It is widely believed that the first colonists of America who were avid students of the bible, based the very first Thanksgiving on Sukkot. The Feast of Tabernacles is also known as the Time of Rejoicing (Z'man Simchatenu). The people of Israel did not rejoice they had to wander the wilderness, but that they didn't wander alone for their God went with them.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose was two-fold. It was to celebrate the harvest which symbolized God's great providence to His people. And, it was a memorial in the booths to the wandering of Israel for forty years.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** John 7:37-39 speaks of the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles... "On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ***"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*** But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified." This last day is referred to as 'Hoshana Rabbah' which means '**great salvation**'. It seems fitting that Jesus would cry this out at this moment.

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** How is the Feast of Tabernacles and its Jewish meaning similar to the wandering we have done prior to finding Jesus?

In what ways can you commemorate this feast during the fall months as you anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus?





## HANUKKAH

### The Feast of Dedication

The Feast of Dedication celebrates the Maccabees' victory over the Greeks and the rededication of the temple in 165 B.C.. It is celebrated for eight days from the 25<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month Kislev to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month of Tevet. This is roughly the end of November to the beginning of December in our calendar.

This occurred after king Antiochus Epiphanes defiled it by sacrificing a pig on the altar and pouring the blood on the scripture scrolls. The Maccabees' miracle victory is recorded in books found in the Catholic bible called 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees. This is found also in a collection of books commonly called the Apocrypha, which means non-authenticated books. These books tell the story of the Maccabees, a small band of Jewish fighters who liberated Israel from the Syrian Greeks who occupied it. The Maccabees — led by the five sons of the priest Mattathias, especially Judah — waged a three-year campaign that ended in the cleansing and rededication of the Temple. After this cleansing, the supply of oil to light the eternal flame (the symbol of God's presence) was only for one day. The miracle God provided was that this oil burned for eight days, long enough for more oil to be purified. Modern day Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah as a Festival of Lights where a nine candle menorah, or candlestick is lit, one candle each day. During this nine day time period the family eat Latkes (potato cakes) and donuts fried in oil. The oil is a reminder of the miracle of the oil.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this feast is of commemorate the dedication of the Temple of that time. Most Jewish people look forward to the day when they will once again dedicate the Temple once the location of the original one can be verified. Hanukkah will be celebrated then with new energies.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** There is no indirect or direct reference to this feast in the New Testament since the commemoration of it didn't begin until after 600 A.D.

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** Since we know the people of Israel will one day rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and will no doubt celebrate this feast as they relight the eternal flame once again, we can look forward to this event and know what the implications of it are.

How is this eternal flame like the Holy Spirit in you?

What are your beliefs about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?



## The Feast of Lots

Purim marks the deliverance of the Jews through Queen Ester in Persia. Ester was her Persian name and it means 'star'. Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, which means 'myrtle'. This feast is a celebration that recalls the plot of Haman to kill all the Jews living within King Xerxes' kingdom. Ester's cousin Mordecai uncovered the plot and warned Ester, who then told the king. The king had Haman executed on the gallows he had built to execute Mordecai on.

The 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar are then designated as days of feasting. This according to Ester 9:18-32... ***"But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwall'd towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another. And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor."***

***"So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to consume them and destroy them; but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which Haman had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them, the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time, that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants. Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim."***

***“And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting. So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.”***

Purim is celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Adar in most cities in Israel except those surrounded by walls. It is celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Adar in walled cities. In Jewish leap years when there is an extra month of Adar, Purim is always celebrated during this second month.

**PURPOSE:** The word purim means lot and refers to the lot Haman cast to decide the day for the destruction of the Jews. Purim is a happy and noisy celebration where the scroll of Ester is read loudly in the synagogue. Whenever the name of Haman is mentioned everyone boos and stomps their feet shaking noise makers called ‘groggers’. Whenever the name Mordecai is mentioned everyone cheers and claps. Hamastashen are three cornered cookies that symbolize Haman’s hat.

**NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE:** Most agree the unnamed feast Jesus attended mentioned in John chapter 5 is most likely the Feast of Purim. In this story Jesus took the occasion to heal a man who laid by the Pool of Bethesda. This man could not walk and had laid by this pool in hopes he could go into it when the water stirred. There was the belief that if you were the first on in the pool after it stirred, you would be healed. But Jesus showed the man He was the true healer. He set this man free from his crippling life somewhat like Ester set the Jews free from a sentence of death.

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:** The Jewish people have been in the news most all of our lifetime. It appears that some people have a dislike for God’s chosen people.

What experiences with Jewish people have you had?

What does knowing you are Jewish by adoption into God’s family mean to you?