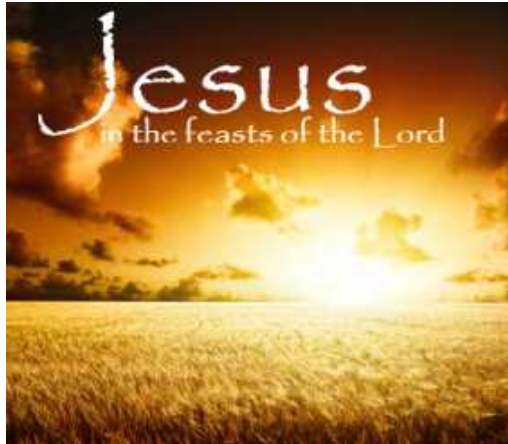


# The Feasts of the Lord: An Introduction and Overview

By I. Gordon

(To access links placed in red within the text, please view this study at: [www.jesusplusnothing.com](http://www.jesusplusnothing.com))  
<http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/FeastsIntroduction.htm>

## Introduction



This is the introduction to the introduction to the Feasts of the Lord... if that makes sense! So let me ask you a question as we begin: When is the last time you did a study on the Feasts of the Lord? When is the last time you heard a sermon on them or read a book about them? For the majority of Christians I think it is fair to say that some common answers could well include the words 'long time', 'never' or 'what feasts?' If you are a student of Bible prophecy then the answer could, or should, be different. I think all Christians will have heard something about the feasts for, at the very least, all Christians should be familiar with the terms Passover and Pentecost (which of course are two of the feasts).

Let me just say right from the start here that the feasts which God gave to the nation of Israel are incredible in their truth about Jesus and for their prophetic revelation concerning God's plan to redeem and retake this planet. I thought I had a good understanding of the feasts before I did a recent study on them... but I was wrong! My understanding was very limited compared to what I discovered! So whether you think you know the feasts well and hardly at all, I can honestly say that this is a very important topic to study once again. It is one that will only become all the more important as we edge closer to the return of Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of these feasts.

Now, this is simply an overview and introduction to the series. Following this I will do a separate study on each of the seven feasts. But let's start with a series of questions to get the grey matter firing (or maybe misfiring as the case may be!)

## Questions, questions, questions...

Let's start with some general questions and then I'll give the answers. For the sake of not crushing your confidence too early, we'll start off pretty easy and leave some tougher ones for later.

1. What nation or people were the feasts given to?
2. In the Bible, who came up with the idea of having feasts?
3. In the Bible, when was the first mention of any of the feasts?
4. How many feasts were there?
5. Can you name all the feasts in order?
6. In terms of the timing of these feasts, are they split in any way?
7. What is the spiritual purpose in giving the feasts?
8. What does the split timing of the feasts teach us about the Messiah's work of redemption?
9. Are believers told to keep the feasts today?
10. What should we focus on as we study these feasts?

That will be enough questions for now. Have you given it some thought?<sup>1</sup> Now for the answers!

## **Some answers to questions you may not have been asking...**

In giving these answers, I will also try to add a few related thoughts where appropriate.

### ***1. What nation or people were the feasts given to?***

Leviticus 23:1-2 The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, (2) "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD'S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--My appointed times are these...

The feasts were given to the nation of Israel, as part of their law, to be celebrated each year.

They were not given to any other nation nor were they given to the Church. But we can learn a great deal from them as we shall see.

### ***2. In the Bible, who came up with the idea of having feasts?***

From the above scripture we can see that they came from God. Moses wrote them down and instructed the sons of Israel as directed by God. With God, things are precise and perfect and as we shall see, so is the fulfillment of these feasts!

### ***3. In the Bible, when was the first mention of any of the feasts?***

The first mention is when Israel as a nation was preparing to leave Egypt in the Exodus. This is where God first taught about the 'Passover' and 'Unleavened Bread' as mentioned in Exodus 12. After that the full instruction for all the feasts were given by God to Moses when the law was given at Sinai.

### ***4. How many feasts were there?***

As mentioned earlier, what God does is perfect so you won't go far wrong if you say it must be God's perfect number, seven! The nation of Israel had other feasts that became part of the culture throughout their history (such as Purim, the feast of Lots, celebrating the victory won in the book of Esther) but there are seven specifically given by God to Moses as indicated in Leviticus chapter 23.

**5. Can you name all the feasts in order? (And if that is too easy for you do it in Hebrew!)**

In English followed by the Hebrew names in brackets:

Passover (Pesach), Unleavened Bread (Hag Hamatzot), Firstfruits (Hag HaBikkurim), Pentecost or Weeks (Shavuot), Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), Atonement (Yom Kippur), and Tabernacles (Succoth).

**6. In terms of the timing of these feasts, are they split in any way?**

The feasts are split into two groups that can be summarised as the spring and autumn (fall) feasts. The four spring feasts are Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. The autumn feasts are Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles. There is a gap of roughly four months in between the last of the spring feasts (Pentecost) and the first of the autumn feasts (Trumpets).

**7. What is the spiritual purpose in giving the feasts?**

At a natural level each of the feasts celebrated some aspect of Jewish history. But God has given them for a far greater reason than that. God has given these feasts to foretell in advance the work of His Son, Jesus Christ, in specific relation to His death, resurrection and return. Simply put, these feasts are amazing! They are absolutely specific even giving the exact days of the year in which these events will occur. They are God's calendar for the order and details of the most significant events in the history of the world!

**8. What does the split timing of the feasts teach us about the Messiah's work of redemption?**

This is a fascinating aspect of the feasts. As mentioned there are four feasts in the spring and three in the autumn with a four month gap in between. This separation signifies the two comings of Jesus Christ. All of the spring feasts were fulfilled EXACTLY in Jesus' first coming 2000 years ago. These feasts deal with the death and resurrection of Christ as well as the sending of the Holy Spirit. This has all been fulfilled. The later autumn feasts all deal with the events at the end of the age including the rapture and resurrection, the second coming of Christ and the long awaited Messianic Kingdom on earth. Combined these feasts speak of the total work of Christ to redeem mankind and this planet. And it is all laid out in advance!

**9. Are believers in Christ told to keep the feasts today?**

This is also an interesting question. The church is not under any law to outwardly keep the feasts as the nation of Israel was told to do. In fact there are verses of warning when believers go back under these and other aspects of the law in an attempt to win favour and righteousness with God. This is what the Galatian church tried to do and note Paul's concern and disappointment with them:

Galatians 4:9-11 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? (10) You observe days and months and seasons and years. (11) I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

To those at Colossae Paul wrote:

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with

regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. (17) These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

So we are not under any legal obligation to keep the feasts (festivals) because they were a shadow of the reality that is in Christ. But as 'shadows' or 'types' we can certainly learn from them for God has hidden many important truths within them. It should also be noted that there is a spiritual way in which we still keep these feasts and this spiritual / personal aspect will also be explored as we continue with our studies. It was this spiritual (not natural / outward) that Paul spoke about when he wrote:

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. (8) Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

### **10. What should we focus on as we study these feasts?**

We read above that the feasts / festivals were 'shadows' of the reality that is in Christ. So this is what we should focus on - the reality in Christ. We are not trying to learn so that we have more knowledge for knowledge sake. We are trying to learn more about Jesus Christ and our life in Him. Studying all the minute details that the Jews did outwardly at these feasts is only helpful to the extent that it can be applied to one of the following aspects:

- 1) The Messianic significance: This is the work of Jesus Christ at His first coming as well as what He will do leading up to His return and kingdom rule.
- 2) The personal significance: This is the spiritual outworking of the truth of these feasts into our lives today. These two points combined are summed up in that term 'the reality that is in Christ'. That will be our focus.

## **So what exactly is a feast then?**

*Leviticus 23:2 Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.'*

There are two important words that we need to concentrate on in this passage that will help answer what exactly a feast is. The first is 'feast' and the second is 'assemblies' (or 'convocations' in some other versions.) If you are like me, when you hear 'feast' you think 'food'... and possibly/hopefully lots of it. But that isn't what this word means. The Hebrew word is "mo'ed" which means 'an appointment, that is, a fixed time or season; specifically a festival'. The second interesting word is 'assemblies' or 'convocations'. The Hebrew word used is "miqra" which means 'something called out, that is, a public meeting.' But it also has the thought of 'a rehearsal'. **So God was setting up a 'fixed time' during the year when the nation of Israel would be 'called out' to gather together, every year, to 'rehearse' future coming events.** God would get them to rehearse this year after year after year... And whatever it is that they had to rehearse for centuries on end it must be important!

So let me ask you: If you had all the events of mankind's history to choose from, which seven events would you choose as the most important to celebrate each year?<sup>2</sup> What we find is that each of the feasts find their fulfilment in the life of the Messiah Jesus and God's plan to redeem this world! Specifically, the feasts center in on the Messiah's death, burial and resurrection, the

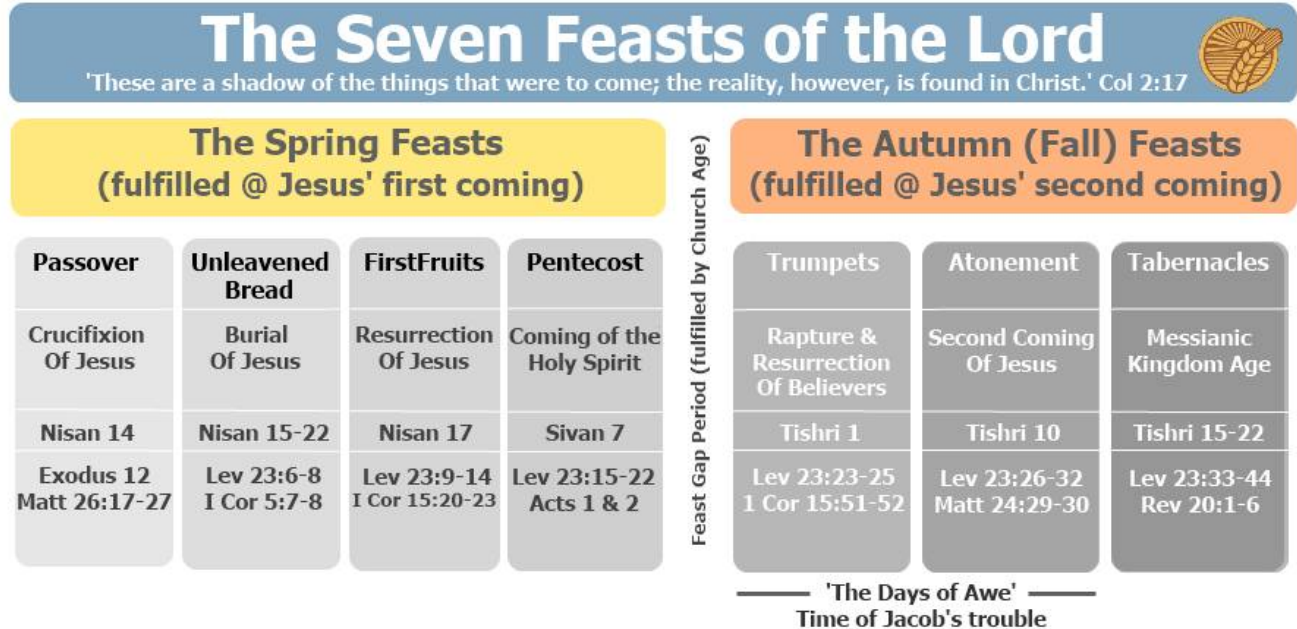
Holy Spirit's indwelling, the rapture and resurrection of believers, the second coming of Christ and finally the coming Messianic Kingdom. Great stuff! Let's have a look at a brief overview of what is taught in each feast.

## Overview of the feasts

Each of the feasts has a historical, Messianic and personal significance associated with them. This is displayed in the following table:

Feast / Date	Historical Significance	Messianic Significance	Personal Significance
Passover Nisan 14	Freedom from the slavery of Egypt. Lamb slain and blood applied	Jesus' death as the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world	Redemption: Our deliverance from this world into the family of God through faith in the Son of God
Unleavened Bread Nisan 15-22	Exodus in haste from Egypt	Jesus' sinless life and his burial	Sanctification: Our walk with God – being free from the leaven of sin that corrupts
Firstfruits Day after Sabbath following Passover	Firstfruits of the harvest. Celebrates the crossing of the Red Sea	Jesus' resurrection from the dead as the firstfruits of the New Creation	Consecration: Living in newness of life as a New Creation in Christ and offering ourselves back to Him.
Pentecost 50 days after firstfruits	Remembering the giving of the law (Torah) on Sinai	The coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers	Dependence: Walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and following the law of the spirit of life
Trumpets Tishri 1-2	Jewish New Year. Celebrates the creation of the world	The rapture and resurrection of believers Crowning of King Jesus	Watchful/Warfare: Living in view of His imminent return. Being watchful and ready.
Day of Atonement Tishri 10	Holiest Day and national forgiveness	The second coming of Christ in power. National day of atonement and forgiveness for Israel.	Repentance: Before the Lord and yielding ourselves up to Him.
Tabernacles Tishri 15-22	Celebration in coming into the Promised Land.	The 1000 year Messianic Kingdom on Earth.	Rest: Living in the rest and joy that is in Christ in our daily lives today

Or, to display it a little differently, here is a chart that shows the order, separation and prophetic significance of each feast.



## Conclusion

So as we move forward with these studies we will examine what we can learn from:

- The Biblical account of the feasts
- Aspects of the Jewish observance of each feast
- The Messianic / prophetic significance of the feasts
- The personal spiritual reality of each feast today

Now it should be said nice and clearly that I am by no means an expert in this. It seems the more you study this topic the more it opens and reveals new revelation! So I have definitely 'not arrived' and nor will I. I am simply learning about these highly significant Jewish feasts and trying to pass on some of the interesting little 'nuggets'. I have very much enjoyed studying this topic and have been amazed at what God has hidden in 'the feasts of the Lord'!

Finally I want to mention a couple of books that have helped in this topic which I will be quoting from occasionally.

- *The Seven Festivals of the Messiah* – Edward Chumney (this is a very detailed book which will be very useful if you want to study this topic in a lot more detail.)
- *Unlocking the secrets of the Feasts* – Michael Norton (a smaller, quicker read but with some interesting information)

- *After the Rapture* – Jerry L. Dart (a very comprehensive book on Bible prophecy/end times in general but includes useful information on the ‘days of awe’ between the feast of Trumpets and the day of Atonement.)
  - I have also read smaller pamphlets on the Feasts by Jewish believers Arnold Fructenbaum and Zola Levitt which were useful.
- 

1. I really would like you to give these some thought before moving on. It is much better if you think for yourself than just read someone else's thoughts on the matter. Well... actually, since when did I get what I want? Ok... nothing to see here... move on! [↪](#)
2. I should add a rule that you are not allowed to list your own birth. Otherwise everyone would include the same answer, and, to be fair, you already celebrate that each and every year!
3. V the same answer, and, to be fair, you already celebrate that each and every year! [↪](#)