

Hints on the Feasts of Jehovah

by John Nelson Darby

The feasts of Jehovah represent different aspects of God's relationship with His people, including rest, sacrifice, resurrection, and rejoicing in His blessings and promises.

Scripture: Leviticus 23:1

Topics: "Feasts of Jehovah", "Spiritual Significance of Worship"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the significance of the Feasts of Jehovah as outlined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, emphasizing their role in gathering the people around God for holy convocations. He discusses the distinct yet interconnected nature of the feasts, starting with the Sabbath as a symbol of rest, followed by the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which represent Christ's sacrifice and the removal of sin. Darby highlights the importance of the Feast of Pentecost, where the church is presented to God, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which signifies the fulfillment of God's promises. He also notes the spiritual implications of these feasts for both Israel and the church, encouraging believers to rejoice in their blessings while remembering their past bondage. Ultimately, Darby calls for a deeper understanding of these feasts as they relate to the Christian faith and the joy of salvation.

Transcript

The feasts of Jehovah are given full in Leviticus 23, and again the chief ones in Deuteronomy 16.

There are two different ways of viewing the seven feasts. We may take the Sabbath day by itself, and then begin again, reckoning the Passover and unleavened bread as two feasts, or we may reckon the Sabbath day first, without separating those two.

The idea of these feasts is the gathering of the people round Jehovah for some cause or other, a "holy convocation."

The first is the Sabbath; and it will be so when the true rest comes: God will have all His people round about Him.

Then follows the Passover, with the unleavened bread, together but still distinct; that is, along with the sacrifice of Christ, you have sin taken away practically. Really, in verse 5, the Passover stands by itself. First there is a certain definite act, and then seasons.

The Sabbath is the grand rest of all the people, but still it comes in as a holy convocation.

Then the Passover is the lamb slain, and its body eaten. After this, next, we come to the first-fruits. It is not said exactly when this was to be: - when the corn was ripe of course - but on the morrow after the Sabbath it was to be waved. This is Christ's resurrection; and here notably is no sin-offering.

Then they were to count fifty days, seven Sabbaths complete, and to offer a new meat-offering unto Jehovah, "two wave loaves baked with leaven"; for now we have, in fact, the church offered to God, but with leaven in the offering, so that it could not be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour.

The two loaves are an adequate witness, as I take it. The point here is the church; a witness which is presented, an offering to God with leaven, but then along with and because of this, one kid of the goats for a sin-offering. We find no such thing with the first-fruits which represented Christ, but here the leaven is met by the sin-offering. The selfsame day they proclaim a holy convocation.

In verse 22 is a gracious provision: when they reaped their harvest, they were to leave the gleanings for the poor. It is the heavenly calling (but not properly the church), because there are others who are called. This is Daniel's heavenly calling, which does not form properly the loaves of God. There are others, those who are killed by the beast; and if God did not take them up to heaven, where would they be? So the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to Christians, but may run over to others also. These things were to be done in Israel, although we (Christians) get all the good of them.

256 Pentecost happens in the space between the Passover and verse 24. For the blowing of the Trumpets we leap on to the seventh month, and then comes the first day of that holy month as the next appointed time.

First the Trumpets are blown and gather Israel; and then, on the tenth day of the same month, Israel enters into the day of Atonement. Not that we do not enter into it long before, but here it is for them. You have had the beginning of Israel again, so to speak, in the Trumpets and Atonement made, and then follows the feast of Tabernacles, from the fifteenth day of the month, seven days unto Jehovah. The first day is a holy convocation, and the eighth day a holy convocation, that is, an additional day. When the feast of Tabernacles on earth is come, we shall get the heavenly things too. It is a "solemn assembly" when God has a complete thing; that is an expression applied here only to the Tabernacles; it is once used in a peculiar manner of the Passover.

It comes after the harvest and after the vintage, that is, after God's separative judgment, and vengeance judgment or the treading the "winepress of the wrath of God." Then they shall take boughs of goodly trees, and dwell in booths seven days, bearing witness that they had been strangers but now are fully back in the land. That is for Israel to do. We come in between the Passover and the day of Atonement.

Why should the leaven be introduced at Pentecost? Because we are there. There is all the value of Christ and of His sacrifice too; but account of evil in us is taken and provided for by a sin-offering. It is not so where He is typified.

There are only three feasts mentioned in Deuteronomy; because then all the males were to be congregated before God.

The tone and spirit of these things is given in verse 7: "and thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, and thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents." And he tells them the way in which they are to do it in detail, here calling it a "solemn assembly." In verse 3 the unleavened

bread is called "bread of affliction," holiness in affliction, when you come to it by the sacrifice of Christ; in 1 Corinthians 5 it is called the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." It takes the character of self-judgment, and sorrow before God, and therefore, in that state, I have no fellowship with others; so I turn in the morning and go to my tent. You find bitter herbs as well in Exodus 12.

257 It is quite different when you come to Pentecost: "seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn, and thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand." Here I have the Holy Ghost and I am a free offerer and come up with my gift, and "according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee" - it is in the measure of my spirituality I can come with this offering; "and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that is among you." You must have grace going out to the poor and the needy, and then come with a freewill offering according as God hath blessed you."

The feast of Tabernacles goes farther, after "thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine, thou shalt rejoice in thy feast." Son, daughter, manservant, maidservant, stranger, fatherless, and widow, seven days keep a solemn feast unto Jehovah their God; "because Jehovah thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." It is not now, rejoice "according to" the measure, but He will bless you in everything, and so you are to rejoice and all with you. In the booths they were to say they had been strangers in the wilderness, but now they have got all God's promises.

We are in Pentecost, not merely on Passover ground; but we come when we have got in a certain sense into the land and "according as Jehovah hath blessed us"; and still in another sense we may say we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and so we can "surely rejoice." It is joy all the week long - seven days. It is real rejoicing all the time.

Mark another thing connected with Pentecost which struck me; as long as we are here, "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." In Tabernacles I do not remember that I was a bondman in Egypt; but here I am obliged to be watchful and obey, and remember that I was a thorough slave of sin and of everything else. And you do not here see the Passover character: the holiness is not "bread of affliction" to me, nor am I eating "bitter herbs." All that has its place and must be; I must enter in that way, and so I turn to go to my tent. I am a redeemed person (that is all holy and true), but I go off by myself to my tent. It recalls what I was saying about the difference of relationships - between living in a place, and saying, Thank God, I have got in and am saved. I must keep the Passover, or I cannot keep Tabernacles, nor yet Pentecost; but I do not call holiness "bread of affliction" now.

258 We might turn perhaps to chapter 26 for a little, though it be aside from the course of the Feasts. "And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it and dwellest therein" (there we are, in a certain sense, in spirit), "that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which thou shalt bring of thy land, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to place his name there, and thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and shalt say unto him, I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the country" - here I am in heavenly places - which Jehovah "sware unto our fathers for to give to us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt speak and say before Jehovah thy

God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father" (not I am - it was an old thing that was passed by and could not come back), "and he went down into Egypt, and was evil entreated, and Jehovah brought us forth, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey; and now behold I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me. And" - when he has recognized Jehovah, he can go and enjoy all the rest - "thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which Jehovah thy God hath given unto thee."

Then you have the character of holiness in it. "Thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandments, which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead." To eat in his mourning was profaning himself. And then follows not "bless me," but "bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us."

259 I connect this neither with Pentecost nor with Tabernacles for this is alone. It is the first of the first-fruits. It is not connected with the feast of weeks; but until they had offered the first of the first-fruits, they could not have anything according to God. We may say it is just the same spirit as our joy and remembrance at the Lord's table.

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