

Abounding Grace Christian Church

Seeing Christ in the Old Testament: A Study of the Types of Christ – Part 14

I. Seeing Christ in the Book of Leviticus (continued).

A. **The Sabbath and the Seven Feasts of Israel – Leviticus 23:1-44.** This chapter begins by mentioning the Sabbath and then describes seven annual feasts that the people of Israel were commanded to observe and celebrate.

1. **The Sabbath – Originally found in Genesis 2:2 where God is said to have rested on the seventh day after six days of creation.**

a. The Hebrew word, **Shabbat** means; “**the seventh day of the week, known in many cultures as ‘Saturday,’ an important day dedicated to rest and worship**”¹

b. Sam Nadler writes:

“This day was established before the giving of the Law. After creation God ceased from His labors and rested on the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3). The root word in Hebrew for Shabbat is *yashav*, meaning to rest, or to sit down. Yet it was not as though He said, ‘I will take a little break and get back to work first thing next week.’ No, His work was done; it was to be Sabbath rest from that point onward. However, through disobedience to God, man lost his true rest in Him... What, then, is Sabbath really about? **SHABBAT IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP.** In a sense, when God finished creating the world He then created rest. In fact, it may help to know that the word “Shabbat” is related to the word *shevet*– to dwell and abide. The Scripture describes it as a time when God would enjoy and actually dwell with His creation...(Genesis 3:8-9)”²

c. The Sabbath commanded and observed by Israel was “...**a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ**” (cf. Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 4:9-11). In the New Covenant the idea isn't that there is no Sabbath, but that every day is a day of Sabbath rest in the finished work of God. Every day should be a day of cultivating a relationship with the Lord. In addition, since the shadow of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus, we are free to gather together for corporate fellowship on any day. Jesus said;

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (See also Hebrews 4)

d. The tradition of the church meeting on Sunday morning comes from the fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the “**first day of the week**” (Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1). It seems the early church met regularly on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2).

e. Jesus made it clear that the Sabbath was made to serve man, not for man to serve the Sabbath – **Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:27.**

2. **The Four Spring Feasts.**

a. **Passover – Leviticus 23:4-5.**

1) The account of the first Passover is told in **Exodus 12**. When Israel were slaves in Egypt, God sent a series of plagues upon Egypt to convince Pharaoh to set the Hebrews free and allow them to go to Canaan. When the plagues did not convince Pharaoh, God sent one final plague: the death of the firstborn in every household across the land of Egypt. The people of Israel were spared if they followed God's command to sacrifice a lamb and apply its blood to the top and sides of the doorway to their home. In **part 6** of this series, we mentioned that the word “**passover**” doesn't necessarily mean ‘**to pass over**’ per se but rather ‘**to defend, protect.**’ The Lord will protectively cover the houses of the Israelites and will not suffer the destroyer to enter (**Exodus 12:23b**)

¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

² Sam Nadler, *Messiah in the Feasts of Israel*, (Charlotte, NC: Word of Messiah Ministries, 2011),

- 2) In the New Testament, Jesus is clearly identified as our Passover lamb (**I Corinthians 5:7**). The death of Jesus was at Passover (**John 18:28**). He is the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**), Who takes away the sin of the world. Messianic Jew, Zola Levitt wrote:

“Back to the meaning of Passover; it is surely the feast of salvation. On this day, because of the blood of the lamb (“without blemish, a male ...” Exodus 12:5) the Hebrew nation was delivered from bondage. Clearly, in both Testaments, the blood of the Lamb delivers from slavery—the Jew from Egypt, the Christian from sin.”³

- 3) The Passover Feast was in the first, or beginning of months for Israel. Kevin J. Conner makes an important point:

“This Feast was therefore the foundation of their experience in God. The very fact that it took place in the first month, the beginning of months, showed that God had more in mind for them in the months that lay ahead. This is seen in the subsequent Feasts. So for the believer in Christ, receiving Christ as the Lamb of God is but the beginning of one’s experience in God. It is the first, the foundation experience. There is more to follow. New Birth is the beginning of New Covenant relationship (John 3:5; II Corinthians 5:17**). No believer should stop at this Feast, but move on to the others also.”**⁴

b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread – Leviticus 23:6-8. (Exodus 12:14-17).

- 1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread was originally established at the first Passover. In some ways it could be considered the second part of Passover, starting the day after Passover and lasting for seven days. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was so much a part of Passover that the names of Passover and Unleavened Bread were used interchangeably or almost synonymously (**Luke 22:1**).
- 2) To understand this, it’s important to know what “leaven” is in the Bible. In the literal sense, “Leaven” is defined as; **“Small portion of fermented dough used to ferment other dough and often symbolizing a corruptive influence.”**⁵ Leaven also has a symbolic meaning. Kevin Conner writes:

“Almost without exception leaven in Scripture is used to symbolize that which is evil, either in doctrine or practice. Both Old and New Testaments set this forth...Thus the literal leaven pointed to the spiritual leaven.”⁶

- 3) Before the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread, all of the leaven had to be removed from the house. This was symbolic of the people cleaning out sin in their lives. Regarding the New Testament believer, Edward Chumney writes;

“Spiritually, the believers in the Messiah *Yeshua* are the house of G-d (Hebrews 3:6; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19). Leaven (sin) is to be cleaned out of our house, which is our body (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:15-18).”⁷

- 4) The Apostle Paul in dealing with immorality in the Corinthian Church wrote:

“Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” - I Corinthians 5:6-8.

“Paul’s message is simple and direct. For believers who have, by faith accepted the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb upon Calvary, Passover is past history. The deliverance by Messiah, the true Passover Lamb, has already been experienced in their lives. They are now living in the Feast of Unleavened Bread where purity and separation from leaven are required.”⁸

³ Zola Levitt, *The Seven Feasts of Israel*, (Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt Ministries, 1978)

⁴ Kevin J. Conner, *The Feasts of Israel*, (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1980), 16-17.

⁵ Barbara J. Bruce, “Leaven,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1022.

⁶ Conner, 25.

⁷ Edward Chumney, *The Seven Festivals of the Messiah*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1994), 50.

⁸ Kevin Howard and Marin Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, (Orlando, FL: Zion’s Hope, Inc, 1997), 70-71