

Exodus Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Eight: Sinai: Priesthood and Special Observances – Leviticus 16, 23, 25

The Great Feasts of Israel: Passover (also known as Feast of Unleavened Bread or Firstfruits). Read Leviticus 23:4-14.

- 1) Review Exodus 12:3-38 and read Deuteronomy 16:1-8 for further information about Passover.
 - a) Briefly summarize the Passover celebration (together with its Feast of Unleavened Bread), including what it commemorated. **The Passover celebration involved the sacrifice of a lamb, followed by an evening meal and seven successive days of eating unleavened bread. (The seven days following Passover are referred to as “The Feast of Unleavened Bread.”) Prior to the celebration, yeast was removed entirely from the homes. The Passover meal included the meat of the sacrificed animal and unleavened bread. The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorated Israel’s Exodus from Egypt. More specifically, it reminded them that God killed the firstborn sons of Egypt, “passing over” all those who slaughtered a lamb and placed its blood on their doorposts. Immediately after, Pharaoh released Israel from bondage. Deuteronomy 16:3 says the unleavened bread reminded them all the days of their lives that they left Egypt in haste.**
 - b) Reread Deuteronomy 16:3 and 12. Many people say that the Exodus of Israel from Egypt is *the* central event of the Old Testament. Can you suggest why that would be so? Why was it so important that Israel remember the sacrificial lamb and their departure from Egypt? See 1 Corinthians 5:7 and Galatians 5:1. **The Exodus was a symbol of what God does spiritually in the life of any person who trusts Him for salvation. By God’s grace, such a person leaves behind their old life of slavery to sin and journeys to the “Promised Land” (the Promised Land not only symbolizes our permanent home in heaven but also the abundant life that is currently ours in Christ). The Exodus symbolizes the central teaching of all Scripture: God intends to redeem His people from bondage through the sacrificial death of His Son, the Lamb of God. Before the Israelites could leave Egypt, God had to do a miraculous work to free them (just as He does in the sinner’s life). At the time of the first Passover (the Exodus), the lambs’ deaths meant the firstborn sons of Israel were spared.**
- 2) Consider that the celebration of Firstfruits fell during the time of the Passover/Unleavened Bread Feast, and from Leviticus 23 record the day on which Firstfruits was to be celebrated. Based on Matthew 26:17-19, 27:1, 28:1 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, what historic event later occurred on the very day of Firstfruits? **Firstfruits was celebrated on the first day after the Sabbath in Passover Week. Jesus was crucified during Passover. On the first day after the Sabbath, the day Firstfruits was to be celebrated (our Sunday), Jesus was raised from the dead.**
- 3) Why do you think God put it in our nature to enjoy and anticipate special days of celebration? **God put it in our nature to enjoy and anticipate special days of celebration because of their ability to restore us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The observation of special days also keeps us thankful for all God has done. Most importantly, special celebrations invite us to recognize our God-given longing for eternal joy! Heaven will be the fulfillment of all earthly celebrations.**

The Great Feasts of Israel: Pentecost (also known as Feast of Weeks or Harvest). Read Leviticus 23:15-22 and Deuteronomy 16:9-12.

- 4) How did the harvest celebration of Pentecost become known as the “Feast of Weeks” (see Leviticus 23:5-6, 11 and 15)? **Pentecost was to be held seven full weeks after the celebration of Firstfruits (Passover).**
- 5) Reread Leviticus 23:22. How were the Israelites to remember the poor, with regard to their harvest? **They were to leave the edges of their fields unharvested, so that the poor could glean from them.**

- 6) Read Acts 1:3-5 and 2:1-4 and Ephesians 1:13-14.
- What significant event occurred many years later on the day of Pentecost? **The arrival of the Holy Spirit to baptize and indwell all believers from that day forward (Christian Pentecost)**
 - Christ has moved every believer from a position of spiritual poverty to spiritual wealth (2 Corinthians 8:9). According to Ephesians 1:13-14, who has been given as a deposit to guarantee your full, future inheritance? **The Holy Spirit indwells every believer as a deposit of our future full inheritance.**
 - Read Proverbs 14:21, 31, Isaiah 61:1, and Jeremiah 22:16. Name a spiritually or physically impoverished person you could assist in some practical way this week. How will you do so? **Personal sharing**

The Great Feasts of Israel: Tabernacles (also known as Feast of Booths or Ingathering). Read Leviticus 23:33-44.

- According to Leviticus 23:40-43, how did this feast get its name (what did it commemorate)? (The Hebrew word *Sukkot* [Succoth] is alternately translated “tabernacle,” “booth,” or “tent”, indicating a shelter in which to dwell.) **The Feast of Tabernacles reminded Israel of the time when they left Egypt and began living in tents (booths/tabernacles). During the week-long feast, the Israelites were to build and live in makeshift shelters (23:40).**
- What recurring complaint did the Israelites have once they left Egypt, a hardship they may have associated with their years of tent-dwelling (see Exodus 15:24 and 17:1)? Read John 7:2, 14, and 37-38. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the day of the Sacred Assembly, what invitation did Jesus give? **On more than one occasion during their tent-dwelling days, the Israelites complained that they lacked water. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the day of the Sacred Assembly, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:37, 38).**
- The Israelites lived in tents as they journeyed from the land of their enslavement to the Land of Promise. The Feast of Tabernacles called Israel to seven days of rejoicing, in gratitude for their present comforts and position, in light of the hardships of their past (specifically, their journey from Egypt). What present comfort do you enjoy that has not always been available to you? What could you do today to thank God and celebrate your present situation? **Personal sharing**

Periods of Rest: Sabbath Day, Sabbath Year, and Year of Jubilee. Read Leviticus 23:3 and 25:1-54.

- According to Genesis 2:2-3 and Leviticus 23:3, what was the basis for observing the Sabbath Day? **The basis for observing the Sabbath Day was that following the six days of Creation, God Himself rested. In so doing, He established for us a precedent of weekly rest. We are to follow His example.**
- Read Leviticus 25:1-7, 20-21 and Deuteronomy 15:1, 2 and 12, and explain what took place in the Sabbath Year (every seventh year)? Then read Leviticus 25:8-13, 27:24 and tell what else took place in the Year of Jubilee (every fiftieth year)? **For six consecutive years, the Israelites sowed seed and reaped a harvest. In the seventh year, they were to allow the land to lay fallow. In the year the land rested, they were to eat whatever it yielded on its own. Deuteronomy 15 tells us that every seventh year, debts were also to be cancelled and slaves were to be set free. In the Year of Jubilee (every fiftieth year), not only were debts cancelled, slaves freed, and the land allowed to lie fallow, all land was returned to its original owners.**
- What do you think God intended to teach His people by giving these Sabbath requirements? How would keeping them require faith? With what resource does God want you to trust Him right now? **Keeping the Sabbath requirements took faith: by setting aside their care and upkeep, in some cases even *releasing* resources altogether, the Israelites had to trust God to provide for them. By following His example in resting, God teaches His people to be holy as He is holy. By requiring obedience of us in this area, we are also reminded that everything we have belongs to Him. Our resources are only entrusted to our care. They do not actually belong to us, and thus, we must not hold on to them too tightly. Personal sharing**

Holy Days: Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement. Read Leviticus 16 and 23:23-32.

- 13)** When was the Feast of Trumpets to be held, according to Leviticus 23:24? Which other celebrations were held in that same month (Leviticus 16:29-30 with 23:26, and 23:33)? What might the significance of this month be, in light of your study in questions 10-12? **The Sabbath Day was the seventh day of the week. The Sabbath Year was every seventh year. From the information about the Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement (as well as the Feast of Tabernacles), we discover that the seventh month of every year was also special. The Feast of Trumpets was to be held on the first day of the seventh month. The Day of Atonement was the tenth day of the seventh month, and the Feast of Tabernacles began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The number seven is significant in the Bible, representing completeness or perfection. (Interestingly, the seventh month on Israel’s religious calendar was actually the *first* month on its civil calendar.) Every seventh day, every seventh year, and in the seventh month in each year, the Jews were required to rest and celebrate, acknowledging, thanking, and praising God.**
- 14)** From Lesson 5, Question 5, recall the definition of atonement. **Atonement means to “cover over” (or make amends) by satisfactorily paying for a wrong.**
- a)** For what or whom was atonement made on the very important Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16:6 and 15-22, 24, 30, 34)? **The High Priest offered sacrifices first for his own sin, then for the sins of the entire community. However, the primary focus of atonement might actually have been the Tabernacle itself, which was desecrated by the people’s sin.**
 - b)** According to Leviticus 16:20-22, what was to be done by the person offering the sacrifice, with regard to the laying on of hands? **The High Priest placed their hands on the head of the animal and confessed the sins of the entire community. (Normally, the individual worshiper did this for himself.)**
 - c)** Read Psalm 103:12. How did the scapegoat symbolize what God offers us in Christ? **The sending away of the scapegoat (into the desert) symbolizes Christ carrying away our sins. Psalm 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”**
- 15)** Glance back at what you discovered about the relationship of the Day of Atonement (a time of fasting and repentance) to the highly celebratory Feast of Tabernacles (Question 13). Read Psalm 126:5. What present sorrows will you trust the Lord to turn into causes for celebration (in *His* time and in *His* way)? **Personal sharing**