

Leviticus 23

“Holy Calendar – part two”

Introduction

- Tonight we continue our study in the book of Leviticus - The theme of Leviticus is Holiness.
 - The idea of holiness literally translated means “to be set apart” – different than the world around you.
 - And it serves as the theme and outline for the book of Leviticus.

The Book of Leviticus – Holiness unto the Lord

Holy Offerings – Leviticus 1-7

Holy Priesthood – Leviticus 8-10, 21-22

Holy People – Leviticus 11-15, 17-20, 26-27

Holy Calendar – Leviticus 16, 23-25

- The first week we looked at the five holy offerings that the priests would offer with the people.
 - Then we looked at the priests and what God required of them and how He prepared them for ministry and it applied to us as a Kingdom of Priests.
 - Then we overviewed a huge section of the Law where God was trying to get His people to think differently.
- To think differently about how they ate, how they cleaned themselves, how they viewed intimacy and life and death – God wanted His people to be different and distinct from the world around them.

And then last week we began to look at God’s Holy Calendar.

- God wanted to be involved in every part of their lives.
 - And so He set up times to meet with them.
 - One day out of every seven, as chapter 23 opens.

Also you will learn as you read chapter 24 and 25 that they also were to take every 7th year off.

- That would be amazing.
 - God said, I will provide for you triple the amount of harvest in the 6th year, and then you will take the seventh year and live off of what I provided the previous year and then you will sow again in the eighth year, but obviously, it takes time to grow, so you would eat of the triple harvest God would provide in the 6th year.

And what we realized from later Jewish History is the people ignored that for the 490 years they were in the land.

- You would think, they would take a year off, but they didn’t.
 - For 490 years they did not.
- And so, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, you guys owe me one year in seven – one out of every 7 for 490 years, you owe me – 70 years.

And how long was the Babylonian captivity – 70 years as God allowed the land to rest.

- Its almost like – you can pay me now or you can pay me later – we can do this the easy way or the hard way.
 - The Jews said, the hard way and suffered – how do you and I live???
- So one day in seven, spend with the Lord.
 - One year in seven – focus on the family, focus on your relationship with God.

And then we learn that every 50th year was something called the year of Jubilee.

- And it kind of a reset button for the nation.

- For all slaves were to go free.
- All the land that you had sold to another because of tuff times would go back to the original owner.

It was a time of great rejoicing and new beginnings.

- And really the year of Jubilee was a picture of Jesus Christ coming back to earth.
 - Where all the slaves of sin will finally be set free.
 - Where the land, the earth, will return to its original owner – God.
 - And it will be a time of great rejoicing.

And just thinking on that – as I was reading through chapter 25 and noticing how God is very specific, when you would sell your land, the value of the land was to be based on how close it was to the year of Jubilee.

- And that makes sense - if it was year 48, and in two years, I will get my land back, well then you wouldn't pay that much for it, as you would if it was the year after the Jubilee and you have 50 years to work that land and obtain fruit from it.

Well understand that I was just thinking – we all have such a hard time being possessed by our possessions.

- And how do we become free from that?
 - I think – when we put our possession up to the reality of how close we are to the year of Jubilee, the coming of Christ.

Just like the land in that time would loose value, as the year of Jubilee would approach, so my desire for things will be put in proper perspective when I remember – the Jubilee is coming – Jesus is coming.

- I was just talking to the friend from Texas and he was sharing with me how much his car was dominating his thought life and he knew it wasn't good, but he couldn't stop.
 - So I shared with him some of things were are going to talk about tonight – and by the end – we were just rejoicing together – Jesus is coming back – how silly to get so worked up over a car or a house.

It's dominating your mind and then – the Lord takes you to heaven – oh sorry Lord, what a fool.

- The year of Jubilee is coming for us church and realizes that puts our stuff in perspective.

Well anyway – that was your chapter 24-25 study, back to 23, God has one day in seven for them to be with Him, one year in seven.

- Well, they also had every 7th year off as well.
 - Every 50 years was the Year of Jubilee when all the slaves were to go free, when the Land returned to its original owner.
 - A time of great rejoicing.

But with in each year, God set up 7 Feasts, 7 times to meet with His people.

- And as we saw last week these were not just like American holiday.
 - Our holidays look back at some significant event.
 - Theirs did as well, but...
- The Hebrew word “convocations” which appears all through this chapter actually means “rehearsal”.
 - These Feasts, these appointed times, literally these pointing times were looking back to some significant even in Jewish History.
 - But it was also a “rehearsal” for something much greater that God was going to do in the future.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

- Celebrated on the 14th of Nisan, preparations would begin on the 10th of Nisan and you would bring a lamb without spot or blemish into your home for inspection, not a bone of its was to be broken, but on the 14th it would be killed for the sins of your family.
 - This feast looked back to when God freed Israel from Egypt – the death angel Passover.

But it looked forward; it was a rehearsal for something much greater.

- You see Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 9th of Nisan, He began to be questioned and examined by the priests on the 10th of Nisan – just like thousands of lambs were being inspected all over Jerusalem.
 - And then on the 14th of Nisan, a day we call Good Friday, Jesus was killed at the exact moment Passover lambs were being killed all over Jerusalem.
 - Passover looked forward to Jesus being crucified for our sin.
 - Jesus was killed on the Feast of Passover.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

- During the Passover meal, the Jews would feast on many things; one of them was unleavened bread, Matzah as we call it today.
 - And during the dinner, they would take three, not five, not seven, but three pieces of Matzah and they would put them in one bag.
 - And then they would pull out the middle piece and they would break it, and wrap it in linen and hide it away for a few days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- This middle piece of Matzah was called in Greek, the only Greek word in the whole Passover – “Afikoman”.

“Afikoman” only Greek word in the Seder Feast and it means - “I have come”.

- And the Moroccan Jews take the afikoman bread home with them, and their tradition says, if you encounter a storm at sea on the way home, you throw the afikoman into the water and it will calm the storm.

Now this feast looked back to when the Jews left Egypt in haste.

- They did not have time to bake bread with leaven.
 - So they ate unleavened bread.

But the feast of unleavened bread was a rehearsal for something much greater.

- You see why would they take the middle piece of Matzah, break it, wrap it in linen and hide it away.
 - Because the “Afikoman” bread was a picture of Jesus.
- The second part of the trinity, remember three pieces of Matzah in one bag – three in one.
 - The middle one, God the son, broken on the cross, wrapped in linen.
 - And then just like that bread, hidden away on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover.
- Wrapped in linen and buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

#3 - The Feast of First Fruits

- It was on the day after the Sabbath that followed Passover.
 - So you would have Passover, then there would be a Sabbath day, which is what day to the Jews? – Saturday
 - And the day after Saturday? – Sunday

- So on the Sunday that follows the Passover you would take the first fruits of your field and you would offer them to the Lord – saying Lord thank you for being faithful to me in the past and because of this, I believe you will be faithful again.

This Feast looked back to fact they were going to a good land, full of milk and honey.

- But this Feast was a rehearsal for something greater.
 - For on that Sunday that followed Passover, Jesus rose from the grave.
 - And as Paul points out in I Corinthians, Jesus is the first fruits of the Resurrection.
- Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead, never to die again.
 - He was the first, but He won't be the last.
 - Remember – God, this first fruit shows me that you have been faithful and it shows me you will be faithful in the future.
 - Jesus rose from the dead and it is evidence that someday when you and I breathed our last – we will rise again.
- Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover.
- He was wrapped in linen and buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- He rose from the grave on the Feast of First fruits.
 - Now these first three Feasts all happened in one 8-day period of time.
 - But the 4th Feast was 50 days later, 7 weeks plus a day.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

#3 - The Feast of First Fruits

#4 - The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks

- Pentecost means 50 days or Weeks because it was seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits.
 - The priests would take two loaves of bread, baked this time with leaven, which is a picture of sin in the Bible and offered them to the Lord.

This Feast looked back according to Jewish Tradition to the day Israel was born.

- According to Jewish tradition it was 50 days after the Jews left Egypt that they arrived at Mount Sinai.
 - And God gave them the Law, two tablets of stone and Israel was born.
 - Of course it wasn't the great day because when the law came down, the people were in sin, and that day 3,000 people died – Exodus 32:28.
- On this day, to this day, the Jews read the book of Ruth on the Feast of Pentecost.
 - They say the two loaves represent the two stone tablets of the law.
 - They say they read the book of Ruth because it is about a harvest and Pentecost is about a harvest.
 - But...

This Feast looked back to the birth of the nation of Israel, but it was a rehearsal for something much greater.

- For 50 days after Jesus rose from the grave on the Feast of Passover:
 - The disciples were huddled in the upper room.
 - And that day – the Spirit of God came down.
 - And the church was born.
- God took two loaves, not representing the Law, there is no leaven in the law, the Law is perfect, but you know what isn't – you and me – so God takes, two sinful groups, the Gentiles and the Jews:
 - And made them something new – the church.
 - The church was born.

- The book of Ruth is about a Gentile introduced to God by a Jew.
 - As is the story of the church – we have been grafted in and we are glad to be part.

So Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover.

- Buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- Rose from the grave on the Feast of First Fruits.
- The church was born on the Feast of Pentecost.
 - Anybody think these days might be important?

Well we move on

- Those first 4 feasts happen in the spring, then Pentecost, 50 days later.
 - Then in the fall a few months after Pentecost, there were three more Feasts on the Jewish calendar.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

#3 - The Feast of First Fruits

#4 - The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks

#5 – The Feast of Trumpets – Leviticus 23:23-25

- The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of the New Year in the nation of Israel.
 - Now if you are paying attention, some will say, wait a second, I thought God told Israel back in Exodus that Passover was the start of a new year.
 - That is also true!

You see in Israel they have a Civil Calendar, and a Religious Calendar.

- Now they use the same months and days, but the religious year starts with Passover, the civil year starts with the feast of Trumpets.
 - The down side to this, is sometimes when you are talking about counting months in the Bible, you first have to ask yourself what type of year are they talking about.
 - But the upside is a New Year was always right around the corner.

God knows how we as human are – we are always looking for a time to start over with the Lord to get things right.

- It is why – New Year's Day resolutions are so popular.
 - Oh we have a new year – this is the year, I will get healthy, I will stop smoking, I will spend more time with my family.
 - It is usually at a new year, we are ready for that.
- And I think God organizes His calendar so there is always a new year, right around the corner.
 - Of course it is maturity is to realize that God has says, every morning my mercy is new, that at repentance the slate is washed clean – don't wait for Jan 1 or June 1st – you get right now, and have new beginning right now with the Lord – He is as into it as you are!!!!

The feast of Trumpets marked the Civil New Year, but in what they would do, I find interesting implications for the future.

- In Numbers chapter 10 we have much more information concerning the trumpets that were blown on the Feast of Trumpets.

Numbers 10 God tells them to make 2, now note that 2.

- Not 4, not 6, not even 7, but two silver trumpets.
 - And these two silver trumpets were to be blown in the nation of Israel for 3 purposes.

Reasons to blow the 2 Trumpets

#1 – To gather the people together

#2 – To let them know it was time to move

#3 – To signal the start of a war

- So in other words – when the people were to be gathered, when it was time to move or when it was time for war – you would blow these two trumpets.

Now with this picture in mind – what did The Feasts of trumpets look back to?

- Well Jewish scholars again speak of the significant time when God from Mount Sinai spoke with a voice of a trumpet – Exodus 19:19.

“And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.” – Exodus 19:19

- The trumpet of God – blowing to declare a special time in the life of His people.
 - And the people would gather, blow these two trumpets and remember when God was calling them to follow Him.

That was what this Feast looked back to, but what is it a rehearsal of?

- Well this idea of God blowing a trumpet appears again in the scriptures in I Corinthians chapter 15.

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” – I Corinthians 15:51-52

- In I Corinthians 15 Paul the apostle begins to teach about something we call the rapture of the church.
 - Oh the rapture – I have heard about this before – this is when you crazy believe that God is just going to take you from the planet, sounds kind of fishy to me.
 - Are there any other verses about the rapture?
 - Yes – I Thessalonians chapter 4...

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” – I Thessalonians 4:15-17

- Paul was telling the church in Thessalonica, not everyone is going to die
 - But there will be a generation of Christian who are alive when Jesus comes back to the earth.
 - And we don't get forgotten, we will be caught up with those being resurrected; we will be caught up with them in the clouds.
- People say – the word rapture never appears in the Bible.
 - Neither does the Word Bible by the way.
 - But listen – concerning the rapture that is true, in your English Bible.
 - The Word there caught up – harpzo in the Greek, rapturous in the Latin – so it is in the Latin Bible.
- There is coming a time when those who are alive at the coming of Christ.
 - If you are dead – God will resurrect you from the dead.
 - And if you are alive – you will be caught up, raptured into the clouds and then we will forever be with the Lord.

Now Paul in I Thessalonians gives us more insight into this trump that will sound at the rapture – He calls it the last trump, the trump of God.

There are only two trumps of God in the Bible.

- Not 4, not 10, not even 7.
 - Only two, how many – 2 trumps of God.
 - This is so important for you to know.

Because some folks will say, oh Pastor Jason, it is so obvious, I don't know why you don't see it.

- Paul says the Rapture happens at the Last Trump.
 - And in Revelation chapter 8 and 9 there are the seven trumpet judgments.
 - And after the last trump sounds in the book of Revelation – well then that is timing of the rapture.
 - Meaning – to those that believe that – the church will go through part of the Tribulation period.
 - So buy your guns and your beans bunker down.

But here is the problem.

- In Revelation chapter 8 and 9, those are angels blowing the trumpet for judgment.
 - I Thessalonians says the Rapture is the last Trump of God.
- There are how many trumps of God?
 - Two, not four, not 10, not seven.
 - Two.
- There is the first trump of God – blown at the foot of Mount Sinai.
 - That is the first trump.
 - And then there is the last trump of God – blown at the rapture of the church.
 - Only two trumps.
- The first trump, the last trump and then there is Donald Trump, but he doesn't count.
 - Two trumps of God.

And back to the Feast of Trumpets, how many trumpets did they fashion and blow – 2????

And why would they blow these two trumpets?

Reasons to blow the 2 Trumpets

#1 – To gather the people together

#2 – To let them know it was time to move

#3 – To signal the start of a war

- And what happens at the rapture?
 - God gathers His people.
 - Its time for us to move from this fallen world to heaven.
 - And, remember its signals the start of war.
- For sometime shortly after the rapture of the church, the Great Tribulation will begin.
 - The final showdown between God and Satan and the sinful men that follow Him.
 - Which leads me to the next Feast.

Wait – hold on - before we go there, let me ask a question some of you are wondering?

- If I am hearing you right?
 - Passover – looked forward to Jesus' crucifixion.
 - And He was crucified on Passover – right?
- Feast of Unleavened bread – looked forward to Jesus' burial.
 - And He was buried on the Feast of Unleavened bread.
 - Yes He was – correct?
- The Feast of First fruits looked forward to Jesus' resurrection and He was resurrection on the actual feast of first fruits.
 - Yes.

- The feast of Pentecost looked forward to the birth of the church.
 - And if I read my bible correctly didn't the church start on exactly the feast of Passover.
 - Yes it did.

So are you saying that if the Feast of Trumpets looks forward to the rapture of the church? – Yes I believe so.

- Then are you saying – that you know the day that we will be raptured?
 - Totally – you tube it, face book it, that is what I want to be known as – the guy who declares that day that the Bible says, no one knows the day or the hour.

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” – Matthew 24:36

- It is always a mistake to say – I know the day of the rapture, because no one does.
 - But something to consider that I found fascinating.
 - If you look at titles for this Jewish Feast in Judaism today, they are amazing.
 - This feast is called...

Different Names for the Feast of the Trumpets

#1 – The Day of the Awakening blast

#2 – The Opening of the Gates

#3 – The Wedding of the Messiah

#4 – The Feast you don't know the day or the hour

- The day of the awaking blast, the day the gates are opened, the wedding of the Messiah, these are Jewish names.
 - And of course don't miss the last one.
 - The Feast you don't know the day or the hour.

Now why in the world would the Jewish people call one of their feasts that? – Are they trying to prove Matthew 24:36 – no way.

- But understand that the Feast of Trumpets is always on the first day of the seventh month.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, meaning the days are always changing, based on when the full moon hits.

- And beyond that depending on where you are in the world, the full moon varies a couple of day from one to another.
 - So every since the very beginning of Judaism this Feast was celebrated on different days, depending on where you were in the world, you just waited for the full month of the seventh month.

Now that to me is crazy.

- That there is a Jewish Feast that looks like it points to the rapture, which we know, no one knows the day or the hour.
 - But they actually call this feast, the feast the no one can figure out exactly when it starts because its different depending on where you are in the world - its amazing to me.

Now again – I think the wrong response to this is to only be looking for Jesus in early September.

- First of all, Jesus may come for you at any moment, I have seen the way some of you drive, it is grace, and He hasn't come for you yet.
 - But also, it wouldn't surprise me a bit, if Jesus comes for His church on, I don't know Christmas morning – when no one is thinking about the rapture.
- And all these scholars and pastors who were so sure it was tied into The Feast of Trumpets, God says, when we get to heaven, well here is what you were missing and see. – Oh.

We don't know the day or the hour, but it wouldn't surprise me a bit if the coming of Jesus for His church was somehow tied into the Feast of Trumpets.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

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#4 - The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks

#5 – The Feast of Trumpets

#6 – The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 23:26-32

- The Day of Atonement is the High Holy Day for the Jewish people.
 - It is the only Jewish holiday that is not a feast – in other words, it was not for eating and rejoicing.
 - It was repentance and introspection.
- The Day didn't look or celebrate any event in their history, it was a day to remember you sin and deal with it.

It was on this day that the High Priest would go into the very presence of the Lord in the Holy of Holies in the day of the temple.

- And after many sacrifices for his own sin, the high priest brought a lamb to be offering for the nation.
 - The blood of the lamb would be sprinkled on the mercy seat, the lid that covered the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.
 - And then the priest would emerge from behind the veil.
- And the people of Israel would be gathered outside, watching and waiting with baited breath.
 - Would the sacrifice be expected? Are our sins covered for another year?
 - Yom Kippur – Yom – day Kippur – meaning Covering.

And when the priests emerged he would declare to the people – forgiven!!!! – And the people would cheer.

Also on that day we learn from Leviticus 16 that the priests would take two goats.

- One would be sacrificed for sin.
 - The other, the priest would lay their hands on the goat, the scapegoat and transferring the sins of the people to this goat.
 - And then the goat would be lead out into the wilderness, never to be sin again.
- Again it was a picture how God viewed atoned for sin – forgiven and forgotten.

Now obviously there are many pictures of Jesus in the things they would do on the Day of Atonement.

- The blood on the Mercy seat, the mercy seat between two angels.
 - What a picture of Jesus as they killed him and they laid him in a tomb, but on Sunday two angels sat there on the seat, his blood stained garments between them.
 - Jesus emerged saying to us – Forgiven.
- And the picture of the two goats.
 - Jesus had paid for our sin with His blood – our sin is forgiven.
 - And Jesus had cast our sin away – as far as the East is from the West – our sins are forgotten.

That is so cool to think on for a moment.

- We know our sin is forgiven.
 - If you have let Jesus deal with your heart, you know your sin is forgiven.
 - Happy is the man whose sins are forgiven.
- But sometimes I picture God with my list – forgiven, covered, but also a disappointment.

- Oh there is Jason – the man who is guilty of...
- You don't think I will actually start listing things tonight – but we all have a list.
- I sometimes picture God just bummed at my list.

But the truth is.

- Our sins are not just forgiven.
 - They are forgotten.
 - I come to the Lord all bummed – oh last week when I...
- And if I could hear the heart of the Lord it would be – what sin?
 - Your sin is forgiven, and I have sovereignly chosen to forget it.

Some see this as a green light to sin.

- But please understand friends.
 - Our sin, even if forgiven and forgotten by God will have real consequences in our lives.
 - It is why God tells us to run from sin in the first place.
- But realizing how God loves me, it doesn't make me want to sin more; it makes me want to be everything He wants me to be.
 - I have told you before, I will never forget when one of my kids were younger – it was just one of those days where they were being naughty, but I was also naughty, I was impatient and it was bed time and they were not going to sleep and I'm sure I yelled a time or two – Go to sleep.
 - And then I heard a little voice say – Daddy, oh I'm telling you, "I love you Daddy".
 - My heart just melted – here am I all frustrated and in the flesh and my kid just says, I love you Dad – it was unearned love.
 - But what it did in my heart was not – oh you love me even though I being a jerk, well good, get ready for more jerkiness – no way – there was repentance in my heart and a desire to be the best dad I could be.

And when I hear God say to my heart...

- I love you Jason.
 - I have forgiven your sin and I have chosen not to even remember it.
 - I don't say – well good, get ready for more things to forget.
- My heart repents and says – Lord, make me into your image and make me Holy.

We learn so much about God from the Day of Atonement.

- But understand in my opinion, this day didn't point to the crucifixion of Christ.
 - For Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover.

But this was a day of national mourning, a day of great sadness.

- And because of that, in my opinion, the Day of Atonement looks forward to the Great Tribulation.
 - A time of national sorrow of the nation of Israel.

Oh we don't have time to dig into it tonight.

- But the tribulation period is a seven-year period still to come on planet earth.
 - We know it is seven years because of Daniel chapter 9; it's the last seven-year period of Daniel 490 year prophecy.

It called in other places in Scripture – the Time of Jacob's trouble.

- The reason it is given that name is because the purpose of the great tribulation is for God to pour out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world.
 - And secondly – to call Israel back to Him.

Zechariah chapter 13 says some very disturbing and yet wonderful things.

"And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is

tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" – Zechariah 13:8-9

- The Great Tribulation will be a time of great sorrow for the nation of Israel for almost 9 million people.
 - That means if it happens soon – 6 million Jews are going to die.
 - For Zechariah seems to indicate that 2/3 of the nation will die.
 - And for someone like me who loves the Jewish people – I do – it breaks my heart to say that.

But the good news in all of that tragedy is the rest of Israel will be saved.

- 1/3 – 3 million Jewish people if it started happening soon would be refined in the fire.
 - They will realize Jesus was the Messiah, they will turn to Him and in that day as Paul the apostle says in Romans chapter 11:25.

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved...” – Romans 11:25-26

- Some people, actually many Christians believe God is done with Israel, but Paul the Apostle says, no way.
 - God is working with a new group, made of Jews and Gentiles – two sinful loaves, He is making into the church.
 - Waiting for the fullness of the Gentiles to come into the church.

What does that mean?

- There are a number of people who will believe, and God is waiting for that number to be full.
 - You wonder why hasn't Jesus come back for us yet?
 - Well – listen I want to be in heaven too – but if Jesus came back 5 years ago – how many of you would be left out.
 - 5 year ago, 10 years ago – those were scary times for some of us.

But someday that last Gentile will get saved.

- And if you are in this church, if you are just resisting God you are keeping us from heaven.
 - Listen; when you do give in and we get to heaven, I won't be proud the last believer was in our church.
 - You are going need new bodies when we are done with you – for making us wait!
- When that last hold out comes in.
 - Feast of Trumpets – maybe, the church will be raptured, we will be in heaven.
 - And the Great Tribulation will begin.

A tragic time for many in the world and especially Israel, but 1/3 of Israel will make it through their national time of morning and they will be saved and then....

- The Greatest of all feasts when it came to joy and rejoicing, the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feasts of the Lord

#1 - The Feast of Passover

#2 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

#3 - The Feast of First Fruits

#4 - The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks

#5 – The Feast of Trumpets

#6 – The Day of Atonement

#7 – The Feast of Tabernacles – Leviticus 23:33-44

- The Final Feast of the year, that took place 5 days after the Day of Atonement.
 - That was the Greatest Feast of the Year.

- The Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned more times in scripture than any other feast, even Passover.

It was a feast of Great joy, a great time of celebration.

- And I love that because it followed a time of great repentance.
 - Joy always follows repentance.

Sometimes people are down and depressed and they don't know what to do.

- And of course the world would tell you to take a vacation, to buy yourself something nice or get on some medication.
 - And don't misunderstand what I just said, sometime people need some medication to deal with a real medical problem.
- But the world's answers to being down and depressed don't really help unless it is a real medical condition that you have.
 - Many times – we are bummed, we are down, and we are depressed, because something is not right in our relationship with God.
 - And if that is the case, no amount of vacation, or toys, or relationships, or drugs, prescription or otherwise can change how we feel.

The only answer if something is wrong in our relationship with God is to fix our relationship with God – and that comes through repentance.

- Lord search my heart – for most of us that takes about two seconds, because we know the issue, we know the problem - And then – Lord forgive me, change me – restore unto me the joy of my salvation.

Joy follows repentance.

- We see that in our own lives and we see that in the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - The Greatest season of national joy followed the great time of national repentance.

To celebrate this feast, you were to make a tent out of Palm branches to live in for seven days.

- And you and your family would camp outside at night looking up at the stars.
 - And the reason was this feast looked back at the Wilderness wonderings of Israel.
- And when the kids would ask – why are we doing this? Why are we sleeping in a tent when we have a perfectly good house to sleep in?
 - Oh because son, for 40 years our ancestors sleep in the wilderness and God took care of them and provided for them.

It looked back to Gods gracious provision in the wilderness and it looked forward to when Messiah would come and lead them into the ultimate promise land.

- A land free from Roman oppression, a land ruler by God's man, the Messiah.

You would see this thanking God for His past provision and looking forward to the coming of Messiah in their daily celebrations in the temple during this feast.

- The people are all camping outside.
 - And every day, a procession of priests would walk down to the pool of Siloam there in Jerusalem.
- And they would get a pitcher of water and bring it back to the temple courtyard, with hundreds of thousands of people watching – they would dump the water out – thanking God for providing water and food in the wilderness.

But on the final day of the Feast, the priest would go down to the pool of Siloam and go through the motions of getting water in a pitcher, but they wouldn't really do it.

- They would bring an empty pitcher back to the temple courtyard and dump out an empty pitcher.

- And they would read various verses that spoke about the coming of the Messiah.
- And hundreds of thousands of people would sit in silence – and the prayer of every heart was – Lord, you were faithful to take care of us in the past, now be faithful to us again by sending the Messiah to lead us to the promise land – we are thirsting for this Lord.

And by the way, we learn from John 7:37, if you want to look in your Bibles, John tells us it was the last day of the Great Feast, it was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

- And hundreds of thousands of people were gathered around in silence as the priests dumped out that empty pitcher, everyone in their hearts thinking – Lord we need the Messiah, we are thirsty for him.
 - And at that exact moment – Jesus cries out, hundreds of thousands of silent people, and Jesus cries out – “If any man thirsts, let Him come to me”.

Let him come to Me – I am the one you are waiting for, I am the Messiah.

- The Feast of Tabernacles looked forward to the coming of Messiah.
 - Now some Bible scholars believe that Jesus not only will come back to the earth on the Feast of Tabernacles, but He showed up on earth the first time on the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - I mentioned that last week, and I have gotten so many questions, so let me explain.

Most serious Bible college students understand that Jesus most likely was not born on December 25th.

- Reason number one is because the shepherds were outside in their fields when the angels appeared to them announcing the Birth of Christ – Luke 2:28.
 - Shepherds don’t watch their flocks at night outside around Jerusalem – it can snow there on occasion, it is cold.
- But if the Bible authors said to us in our culture, an angel came to some baseball players while they were playing a game – well we would know it could not be winter because baseball season is April to October.
 - I use that illustration to find a way to work into our message that the Dodgers begin their playoff run tomorrow.
 - We would catch that in our culture or at least some of the sports people would.
- So in ancient culture – when Luke says, the shepherds were outside watching their sheep at night, anyone would understand – it wasn’t winter.

Another issue is the birth of John the Baptist.

- John the Baptist was the son of a priest who served in the temple, if you remember the story.
 - An angel comes to him and says he and his barren old wife are going to have a baby – and he does not believe the angel and God strikes John the Baptist’s dad with muteness until John is born.
- Now why this is important is that Luke 1:5 tells us when John the Baptist’s dad was serving in the temple and received this announcement from the Lord - it was in the Abijah division.

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.” – Luke 1:5

- The priests were divided up into divisions and each served two weeks in the temple.
 - The Abijah division we learn from careful scholarship was the 8th cycle in the month of June.

So Zechariah in June was promised he would have a son – later that month he goes home and his wife becomes pregnant in late June and 9 months later is the month of March, late March.

- You say so what – Late March is the time of the Passover, our first Feast.
 - For you Bible students, remember at the Passover meal, the Orthodox Jews set out an open chair waiting for Elijah, who was suppose to come before Messiah, so they are waiting for Elijah to come.
 - At the end of the meal, the children would go to the door and look for Elijah.
- Well – Jesus was asked in Matthew 17, why do they say Elijah must come before Messiah and Jesus said, if you can receive this, “Elijah has come, John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah”.

“He (John) will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” – Luke 1:7

- John the Baptist comes in the Spirit and power of Elijah.

Most scholars believe John the Baptist was born at Passover.

- Now in Luke chapter 2, Mary, the mother of Jesus is told you are going to have a baby, and your cousin is with child for 6 months.
 - So John the Baptist, who was born in late March, is sixth months older than Jesus who was born in late December.
 - Not April or May, June, July, August or September.
 - Late September.

There is one more indication of this and that comes from John chapter 1.

- We don’t know Jesus’ birth date.
 - Nor do I imagine His disciples Jesus saying – guess what tomorrow is??? – Whistle the birthday song.
- But we do know, men are not inclined to walk around and say, hey next week’s my birthday, but ladies, they remember, they remember their own, they certainly remember their kids birthdays.
 - Well if you remember John, not John the Baptist, but John the apostle took care of Jesus’s Mom since the time after the cross – and John says something about the birth of Christ that no other Biblical authors include – John 1...

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” – John 1:14

- John tells us the Word became flesh and “dwelt” among us.
 - The word “dwelt” there is literally “tabernacle” –the same title for the Feast we are learning about.
 - Jesus tabernacle among us.

Could John be giving us an indication that, it seems Jesus was born in late September, which part, well that is when the Feast of Tabernacles was, a Feast that looked forward to the coming of Messiah, sounds like something God would do.

- The Feast of Tabernacles this year was September 25th – that is why I made a reference to my wife and Jesus having the same birthday.
 - But could it be that as the nation slept in tents in Jerusalem saying this looks back to the time when God was with us in the wilderness, that five miles away in Bethlehem, literally, Emanuel – God with us – that He was with them again.
- Could it be that on the Feast they were looking for the Messiah, the Messiah actually showed up?
 - Could be? – You are ruining Christmas for me.
 - Why do we celebrate Christmas on December 25th then – well that is whole other study we don’t have time for tonight.

- But don't lose all hope.

Because if this is all true, and that is a big "if", if Jesus was born in late September, 9 months before was late December – which means the story in Luke 1 where the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary – it would be late December.

- The Holy Spirit came upon Mary around the date we now celebrate Christmas.
 - Happy Immaculate Conception day!
 - Happy Incarnation day!
 - Still many reasons to celebrate!

It may be or it not that Jesus came the first time on the Feast of Tabernacles, but I'm pretty sure that when He comes again, it will be on this Feast.

It will be a time a great joy.

- A time that follows the mourning of the Tribulation period.
 - A time where the Jews are looking for Messiah and He shows up to rule and reign over them for 1,000 years.

I thought you said you believe Jesus is coming back on the Feast of Trumpets.

- For the church – the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth are two different events.
 - The Rapture – He comes in the clouds, we meet Him in the air.
 - The second coming...

“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west.” – Zechariah 14:4.

- I believe people will be able to explain away the Rapture.
 - But when Jesus sets His foot on the Mount of Olives and it splits in two, there will be no unbelievers on that day.
 - It will be clear – God has come to dwell among us, to tabernacle among us.
- And by the way, for that Millennium, that 1,000 year reign of Christ...
 - Every year the people are required, just like the Jews were required in ancient times, to come to the city of Jerusalem.
 - The world comes and celebrates the second coming of Christ on what Feast every year.

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” – Zechariah 14:16

The Feast of Tabernacles

- That feast is a time when we will look back to when God tabernacled, dwelt among us.
 - Maybe true the first time He came.
 - Definitely I believe it will be true of the second time He comes to earth.

The Feasts of the Lord

Jesus died on - The Feast of Passover

He was buried on - The Feast of Unleavened Bread

He rose from the dead - The Feast of First Fruits

The Church was born - The Feast of Pentecost

Possible the Church is raptured - Feast of Trumpets

The Tribulation begins tied into The Day of Atonement

The Second coming tied into The Feast of Tabernacles

- Awesome!
 - Next week we begin the journey through the wilderness in the book of Numbers.
 - Experiencing God in the wilderness – something all of us need to hear and see.