

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

SESSION 1 | THE SABBATH FEAST

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FEASTS

Leviticus 23:1-2 gives the introduction to the passage of Levitical law concerning the feasts of Israel.

The term “feast” does not imply a banquet with lots of eating, but rather an observance of the Hebrew faith. The Hebrew word *מוֹעֵד* [mo’ed] is translated **feast** in Leviticus 23:2 (and 22 other times) and is often translated as *congregation or assembly or season*.

The prescribed feasts of Israel include weekly, annual, seventh-year, and fiftieth year feasts. We will call these “Biblical” feasts. In addition, there were adopted feasts of Israel for cultural and historical purposes. We will call these “Civic” feasts. Both Biblical and Civic feasts are found in Scripture, but one is prescribed and the other adopted. In addition, there are modern feasts of the State of Israel.

THE WEEKLY AND ANNUAL FEASTS

- The weekly Sabbath
- Passover / Unleavened Bread / First Fruits – Beginning the 14th day of the first month.
- Pentecost and the Feast of Weeks – The 50th day from First Fruits
- Trumpets – First day of the seventh month
- Atonement – Tenth day of the seventh month
- Tabernacles – Fifteenth day of the seventh month

THE SEVENTH AND FIFTY YEAR FEASTS

- The Sabbatic Year – Each seventh year after entering the Land.
- The Jubilee Year – the year after the seventh Sabbatic year.

THE CIVIC FEASTS

- Purim – 14th or 15th of the month of Adar (or Adar II).
- Hanukkah – 25th of Kislev
- Day of Mourning (Tish B’Av) – 9th of Ab
- Feast of Wood (Tu B’Av) – 15th of Ab

MODERN ISRAELI FEASTS

- Yom HaShoah—Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Yom Hazikaron—Memorial Day
- Yom Ha'atzmaut—Israel Independence Day
- Yom Yerushalayim—Jerusalem Day

THE WEEKLY SABBATH

- The Basic Instruction is found in Leviticus 23:3.
 - The day was to be a **sabbath of rest** in which **ye shall do no work**.

- The idea of **work** is different from man to man, requiring some definition.
 - The Jewish people defined the work especially as *work that creates*, since God rested from creation on the seventh day.
 - The Jewish people prepare in advance so that the Sabbath becomes a day of joy without work (rather than a day of sitting cold in the dark with no food).
- The Biblical insight and instruction concerning the Sabbath:
 - The seventh day was **blessed** and **sanctified** by God – Genesis 2:3.
 - The first observance of the Sabbath seen in the Scripture is Exodus 16:23-29. While it was possibly observed prior to this time (as some of the wording implies), the gathering of the Manna is the first instructional command we see concerning the day.
 - Exodus 20:8-11, the fourth commandment, is the longest of the commandments, containing instruction that prohibits any kind of work on the Sabbath.
 - In Exodus 31:12-17 the Sabbath was said to be a covenant with Israel and a sign for all her generations, and the penalty for non-observance was death (see Numbers 15:32-36).
 - A double burnt-offering was to be given by the priests each Sabbath – Numbers 28:9-10.
 - The Shewbread of the Temple was to be changed every Sabbath - Leviticus 24:5-9, 1 Chronicles 9:32.
- In the Scriptures, the Sabbath was never a “gathering” day for worship.

SABBATARIAN CONFUSION

- Groups that call themselves *Adventists* are concerned with activity which, they believe, will bring about the second *advent* of Jesus Christ.
 - Modern Adventists began with William Miller, a Baptist preacher, in the 1830’s, and were first known as *Millerites*.
 - Adventists groups include:
 - The Seventh Day Adventists (the largest group)
 - The Church of God
 - The Christadelphians
- Within Adventist groups, *seventh-day* Adventists (including those who go by that name as well as others) believe that Sabbath observance is required for ushering in the advent.
- Of all the seventh-day Adventist groups, none observe the Sabbath as prescribed in the Old Testament, thus it is nothing more than confused “virtue signaling” and not actual Sabbath observance.

MODERN JEWISH SABBATH OBSERVANCE

- “Modern” Judaism comes from the Second Temple Period and beyond. It is often called “Rabbinical” Judaism.
- The observance standards for many of the feasts, including Sabbath, are set by Rabbinical Judaism rather than directly from the Scripture.
- It is a mistake to equate Rabbinical practices with those of the Biblical days. Only do so when there is a direct Scripture reference. This is important when studying the feasts because it is often claimed that certain activities of feasts point prophetically to something in Christian doctrine, but these activities are based on tradition (Rabbinical Judaism) and not Scripture.
- Rabbinical Judaism has a list of 39 *Melechot* that define work that is or is not allowed. It takes a lifetime of study to become proficient at the 39 Melechot.