



The Sanctuary — The Spring Feasts, Part 2

Firstfruits (Wave Sheaf), Feast of Weeks (Wave Loaves)

Six annual feasts (*SDA BC*):

- (1) Passover (Num 28:16)
- (2) Feast of Unleavened Bread (Num 28:17);
- (3) Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26; Acts 2:1)
- (4) Feast of Trumpets (Num 29:1)
- (5) Day of Atonement (Num 29:7)
- (6) Feast of Ingathering or Feast of Tabernacles (Ex 23:16; Lev 23:34; Num 29:12)

With these six feasts were seven days of holy convocations:

The first and last days of Feast of Unleavened Bread (Num 28:18, 25)

Pentecost (Num 28:26)

The day of blowing of the trumpets (Num 29:1)

The Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27–32; Num 29:7)

The first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:34–36)

No servile work

- Lev 23:7 — Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Lev 23:21 — Firstfruits
- Lev 23:25 — Blowing of Trumpets
- Lev 23:35 — Feast of Tabernacles
- Can mean labor or work, labor of a servant or slave, labor or service of captives or subjects, in the service of God (like a doorkeeper, service of Levites)
- Gen 30:26; 1 Chr 28:19; 2 Chr 12:8; Ex 1:14; 1 Chr 27:26; 2 Chr 35:15

No work

- *Lev 23:28–31 — Day of Atonement*

Sabbath of Rest

- Lev 23:3, 32 — Literally “a sabbath of sabbath observance.” Our translation fails to convey the full force of the original Hebrew, which is variously translated a “sabbath of deep rest,” “a sabbath of complete rest,” “a perfect sabbath,” “a sabbath of solemn rest.” (*SDA BC*)
- Ex 31:15 — Literally “rest of restfulness.” This expression implies complete rest from all secular concerns (Ex 35:2; Lev 23:3; Isa 58:13). (*Ibid.*)

Passover

The fourteenth day of the first month (Abib) at
even. (Ex 12:1–14)

A summary of the Passover lends emphasis to the great central truths of Christianity. The Passover is symbolic of the death of Christ. As the Passover lamb died, so Christ died. The blood of the lamb delivered Israel of old from the destroying angel. The blood of Christ now reconciles all who come to Him in faith. (Ibid.)

The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ. Says Paul: “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:7. The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: “Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first fruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God. (*GC 399.2*)

These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, “the first fruits of them that slept,” a sample of all the resurrected just, whose “vile body” shall be changed, and “fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Verse 20; Philippians 3:21. (*GC 399.3*)

The Passover promoted fellowship. The eating of the Passover lamb brought families and neighbors together. It was a communal meal typifying deliverance, and deliverance called for consecration. All sin must be put aside. No leaven was to remain in the house. Every corner must be examined for traces of it. Nothing less than complete “holiness to the Lord” would be accepted (see Ps 29:2; 96:9). The Passover was a most solemn occasion. (Ibid.)

All this, and more, the Passover meant to Israel of old. The Lord's Supper should mean no less to us today. There is grave danger that we forget, or fail to appreciate, the wonderful blessings God has in store for those who worthily partake of the ordinances of the Lord's house. We would do well to study the Passover as given to Israel, that we may appreciate the more Him who is our real Passover Lamb, and whose death is commemorated in the communion service. (Ibid.)

Unleavened Bread

This feast was to last seven days. The first and last days of the feast were days of holy convocation in which no servile work was to be done. On the seven days two bullocks were offered, one ram, and seven lambs for a burnt offering, with their accompanying cereal offerings, and one goat for a sin offering (Num 28:19–24). This feast is also recorded in Lev 23:6–8.

In the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus are recorded the feasts and holy convocations which the Lord commanded His people to observe. There are seven in all. (Andreasen)

1 — Passover

2 — Unleavened Bread

3 — Firstfruits (Wave Sheaf)

4 — Pentecost (Wave Loaves)

5 — Feast of Trumpets

6 — Day of Atonement

7 — Feast of Tabernacles

The first major festival period in the Jewish calendar year is the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which commences with Passover. The festival commemorates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, when the angel of death *passed over* the homes of those who put the blood on their doorposts. The Gospels record three occasions when Jesus celebrated Passover (Luke 2:41–43, John 2:13–23, Matt 26:17–20). (Keith Augustus Burton, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, 2014, 2nd quarter, p. 16)

Fifty days after Passover came the feast of Shavuot, often referred to by its Greek name, Pentecost. There is no record in the Gospels that Jesus celebrated Pentecost. However, before His ascension He counseled His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4–5). This event occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). (Ibid.)

The final festivals in the Jewish calendar were the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The Day of Atonement signifies the day on which sin was cleansed from the camp and the people were *at one* with God. Booths commemorates the time when Israel had to live in tents in the wilderness.

The biblical feasts all met their fulfillment in Christ.
(Ibid.)

SDA BC on Lev 23

- 1 — Passover
- 2 — Unleavened Bread
- 3 — Pentecost
- 4 — Feast of Trumpets
- 5 — Day of Atonement
- 6 — Feast of Tabernacles

2014 Adult SS Bible Study Guide

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Jewish Website

- 1 — Passover
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The Sheaf of Firstfruits

Lev 23:10–14

The presentation of the first fruits was a part of the celebration of the days of **unleavened bread**. The presentation took place on the “morrow after the sabbath,” the 16th of Abib (Lev 23:11). This day was neither a “holy convocation” nor a “sabbath.” But an important work was nevertheless done on that day. On the 14th day of Abib a certain portion of a field of barley was marked off to be cut down in preparation for the presentation on the 16th. Three select men cut the barley in the presence of witnesses, having already tied the sheaves together before cutting them.

(SDA BC)

After being cut the sheaves were all tied together into one large sheaf and presented before the Lord as a “sheaf of the firstfruits.” In addition, a perfect male lamb, a cereal offering mingled with oil, and a drink offering were presented to God (vs. 12, 13). Not until this was done could Israel make use of the fruits of the field for themselves. This ceremony pointed to “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor 15:23).
(Ibid.)

The Passover is also symbolic of the resurrection, as typified in the wave sheaf. The lamb died on the evening of the 14th day of Abib. On the 16th, the “morrow after the sabbath,” the first fruits, previously cut, were presented before the Lord. Christ died Friday afternoon and rested in the grave over the Sabbath (Luke 23:53–56). On the morrow after the Sabbath (Luke 24:1) Christ “the firstfruits” (1 Cor 15:20) was raised from the grave, and presented Himself before His heavenly Father (John 20:17). (Ibid.)

Feast of Weeks or Pentecost

Lev 23:15–22

Lev 23:15— That is, seven weeks.

Fifty days. This feast came on the 50th day after the presentation of the wave sheaf on the 16th of Abib, that is, on the 6th day of the third month—late in May or early in June. It was known as the “feast of weeks,” or “firstfruits” (Ex 34:22). In NT times it was known as “Pentecost,” from a Greek word meaning “fifty.” (*SDA BC*)

Pentecost (wave loaves) came at the end of the harvest of wheat. At the wave sheaf it was barley.

Pentecost is symbolic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As the wave loaves were offered fifty days after the wave sheaf was presented, so there were just fifty days between the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost.

As the **wave sheaf** was presented at the beginning of the harvest, before any of the new yield might be used, so Pentecost marked the end of the harvest season, though some grain might remain to be harvested in the higher mountains. At this time it was not a sheaf that was presented, but two **wave loaves** of fine flour, baked with leaven, together with seven lambs, a bullock, and two rams (Lev 23:17, 18). These were accompanied by a goat for a sin offering and two lambs for a peace offering (v. 19). (Ibid.)

In the Passover it was directed that no leaven was to be eaten or found. The wave sheaf represents “Christ the firstfruits” (1 Cor 15:20, 23). He is the bread without leaven, or sin, and is the firstfruits of all the righteous who will be resurrected. The wave loaves, however, have leaven, a symbol of man’s sinfulness, but the bread is also the firstfruits unto the LORD (Lev 23:17). Man, combined with the righteousness of Christ is accepted before the LORD. (Lev 23:17–20)

Pentecost symbolizes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As the wave loaves were offered 50 days after the wave sheaf was presented, so there were just 50 days between the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). Forty of these days Christ spent on earth instructing and helping His disciples (Acts 1:3). Then He ascended, and for 10 days the 11 disciples continued in prayer and supplication until “the day of Pentecost was fully come.” With Pentecost came the fullness of the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4). (Ibid.)

These ten days were important ones for the church on earth. They were also important in heaven. When Christ “ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Eph 4:8). Those who had been raised at Christ’s death and had come “out of the graves after his resurrection” ascended with Him to heaven, and were then presented before the Father a kind of first fruits of the resurrection (Matt 27:52, 53). (Ibid.)