

HOLIDAY	ALSO KNOWN AS	DATE OBSERVED	SCRIPTURE BASIS	GENERAL INFORMATION
<b>PASSOVER</b>  <b>and</b>  <b>UNLEAVENED BREAD</b>	<b>Pesach</b>	<b>14 NISAN</b> (MARCH OR APRIL)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:4, 5</b> <i>Exodus</i> <b>12:1-4</b>	<b>Passover and Unleavened Bread: Commemorates God's Deliverance of Israel Out of Egypt</b> <i>Pesach</i> (PAY-sahk) means to "pass over." The Passover meal, seder (SAY der), commemorates the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The Lord sent Moses to lead the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. When first confronted by Moses, Pharaoh refused to let the people go. After sending nine plagues, the Lord said the firstborn males of every house would die unless the doorframe of that house was covered with the blood of a perfect lamb. That night, the Lord "passed over" the homes with blood on the doorframes. The tenth plague brought death to the firstborn sons of Egypt, even taking the life of Pharaoh's own son. Finally, Pharaoh let the children of Israel go. Passover was to be a lasting ordinance for generations to come. In Leviticus, the Lord said that on the fourteenth day of the first month (of the religious new year) the Lord's Passover was to begin at twilight.
	<b>Hag HaMatzot</b>	<b>15-21 NISAN</b> (MARCH OR APRIL)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:6-8</b> <i>Exodus</i> <b>12:15-20</b>	In Leviticus 23, <i>Hag HaMatzot</i> (Hawg Hah MAHT zot) or <i>Hag HaMatzah</i> , also known as the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," is mentioned as a separate feast on the fifteenth day of the same month as Passover. Today, however, the feasts of Pesach, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits have all been incorporated into the celebration of Passover, and reference to <i>Passover</i> means all three feasts. Passover is celebrated for eight days, Nisan 14-21. The Lord said that for seven days the children of Israel must eat unleavened bread. This bread, made in a hurry without yeast, represents how the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste. In Scripture, leaven also represents sin. Orthodox Jews believe that not only is eating bread with leaven unlawful during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but even having leaven present in one's house or apartment is forbidden. Today, cleansing the house before Passover is often a symbolic search to remove any hypocrisy or wickedness. Unleavened Bread is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord." (Deut. 16:16)
<b>FIRSTFRUITS</b>	<b>Yom HaBikkurim</b>	<b>16 NISAN</b> (MARCH OR APRIL)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:9-14</b>	<b>Firstfruits: Offerings are Given for the Spring Barley Harvest</b> On <i>Yom HaBikkurim</i> (Yome Hah-Bee-koo-REEM) people offered the first ripe sheaf (firstfruits) of barley to the Lord as an act of dedicating the harvest to him. On Passover, a marked sheaf of grain was bundled and left standing in the field. On the next day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, the sheaf was cut and prepared for the offering on the third day. On this third day, Yom HaBikkurim, the priest waved the sheaf before the Lord. Counting the days ( <i>omer</i> ) then begins and continues until the day after the seventh Sabbath, the 50th day, which is called <i>Shavuot</i> or Pentecost (the next feast on the calendar). Jewish people rarely celebrate Yom HaBikkurim today, but it has great significance for followers of Jesus as the most important day of the year, the day of Jesus' resurrection.
<b>FEAST OF WEEKS OR PENTECOST</b>	<b>Shavuot</b>	<b>6 SIVAN</b> (MAY OR JUNE)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:15-22</b>	<b>Feasts of Weeks: Offerings are Given and Commemorates Giving of the Law</b> Fifty days after Passover, <i>Shavuot</i> (Sha-voo-OTE) is celebrated. Also known as Pentecost, Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, and the Latter Firstfruits, it is the time to present an offering of new grain of the summer wheat harvest to the Lord. It shows joy and thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest. Often called <i>Matan Torah</i> (giving of the Law), it is tied to the Ten Commandments because it is believed God gave Moses the Ten Commandments at this time. Historically, children receive treats for memorizing Scripture at Shavuot. The book of Ruth is often read to celebrate the holiday. Pentecost is a popular day for Jewish Confirmation. Shavuot is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord." (Deuteronomy 16:16)
<b>FEAST OF TRUMPETS OR NEW YEAR</b>	<b>Rosh HaShanah</b>	<b>1 TISHRI</b> (SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:23-25</b>	<b>Feast of Trumpets: The Beginning of the Civil New Year</b> <i>Rosh HaShanah</i> (Rosh Ha-SHA-nah), the Ten Days of Repentance that follow it, and Yom Kippur make up the High Holy Days. Jewish tradition says that God writes every person's words, deeds, and thoughts in the Book of Life, which he opens and examines on this day. If good deeds outnumber sinful ones for the year, that person's name will be inscribed in the book for another year on Yom Kippur. So during Rosh HaShanah and the Ten Days of Repentance, people can repent of their sins and do good deeds to increase their chances of being inscribed in the Book of Life. Prior to Rosh HaShanah, the <i>shofar</i> (ram's horn) is blown to call people to repent and remind them that the holy days are arriving. During the Rosh HaShanah synagogue services, the shofar is blown 100 times.



# YESHUA (JESUS)

Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, saying that he had eagerly desired to eat this Passover with them before he suffered and that he would not eat it again until the kingdom of God comes. (Luke 22:7-16) After the Passover meal, they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:30) The hymn sung during Passover is the *Hallel* which includes Psalm 118:22: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." Jesus is the capstone that the builders rejected. (Matthew 21:42; 1 Peter 2:7)

Jesus was crucified as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of his sacrifice as the perfect Passover Lamb and the fulfillment of the new covenant between God and man. (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 2:11-13) Prophecy of this sacrifice is found in Psalm 22. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah also spoke of the sufferings and sacrifice of the Messiah, and how that sacrifice would be the ultimate atonement for the sins of God's people. (Isaiah 53)

*Matzot* is plural for *matzah*. Unleavened bread (matzah) is a symbol of Passover. Leaven represents sin. (Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:8) Matzah stands for "without sin" and is a picture of Jesus, the only human without sin. Jesus said that the "bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" and that he (Jesus) is the "bread of life," the "bread that came down from heaven," "the living bread" which a man may eat and not die. (John 6:32, 35, 41, 48)

While leaven is a symbol of sin, the Messiah is "unleavened" or sinless. He conquers the grave with his resurrection because he is not a sinner under the curse of death. Jesus was scourged and pierced at his crucifixion. As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, "By his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

All of the festivals instituted by God, including Passover and Unleavened Bread, are "shadows of things to come." (Colossians 2:17)

Yom HaBikkurim is a picture of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus rose on the third day of Passover season, Nisan 16, the day of Firstfruits. That event gave new meaning to this agricultural holiday.

The apostle Paul, a Jewish believer and rabbi, wrote, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him." (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22, 23, NIV)

Jesus' resurrection is the promise of the future resurrection of believers. (John 5:28, 29)

Although most believers in Jesus have never heard of Yom HaBikkurim, they celebrate it as Resurrection Day, or Easter.

Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem following his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. They were all together in the upper room for Shavuot on the 50th day after the Sabbath of Passover week; thus, the first day of the week. The Holy Spirit filled the house, with a sound like a mighty wind and what appeared to be tongues of fire, and filled the disciples. (Acts 2)

The apostle Peter referred to the prophet Joel who said that God would "pour out his Spirit on all flesh." (Joel 2:28-32)

Peter also said that the risen and exalted Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:32, 33) The people responded to Peter's message with repentance, and more than 3,000 were baptized. (Acts 2:37-40)

The new covenant between God and Israel (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 9:14, 15) is initiated on Shavuot, 50 days after the death of Christ.

*Rosh HaShanah* is sometimes referred to as the Day of Judgment. Jesus said he has the authority to judge people (John 5:24-27) and the apostle Paul referred to him as the judge of "the living and the dead." (2 Tim. 4:1) God does have a book of life; Revelation 21:27 calls it the "Lamb's book of life." The only way to have one's name inscribed in it is through faith in Jesus as Savior from sin, and then it is permanent. (John 10:27-30) Those whose names are not in the book will be judged and sentenced to hell: "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:15) Some people believe the four spring holidays (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Feast of Weeks) were fulfilled in Messiah's first coming and that the three autumn holidays (Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Booths) will be fulfilled at his second coming.

# FASCINATING FACTS

- Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem yearly to celebrate Passover. At age 12, Jesus went with them. (Luke 2:41-50)
  - The Passover lamb must be a perfect male with no spot or blemish. (Exodus 12:5)
  - The cup of the Lord's Supper is the third cup of the Passover *seder*, the cup of redemption. The bread of the Lord's Supper is the *afikomen*. It is the matzah that is broken, hidden, found, bought for a price, and then eaten to end the meal. *Afikomen* means "I came" in Greek.
  - A hymn is usually sung at the end of the passover service, as was the case with Jesus and his disciples. (Matthew 26:30)
- Passover in the Hebrew Scriptures: Ex. 12; Nu. 9; 28:16-25; 2 Ch. 35:1-19; Ezr. 6:19; Eze. 45:21
- Passover in the New Testament: Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 6:4; 11; 13; 19; 1 Corinthians 5:7

- The only type of bread eaten during the eight days of Passover/Unleavened Bread is matzah. It is made with flour and water only, not any leaven. It is striped and pierced during baking.
  - The utensils used must never touch leaven. Bakery goods are made with matzah meal.
  - On the night before Passover, the father does a final search for any remaining leaven in the house. Traditionally, by candlelight, he sweeps any remaining bread crumbs onto a wooden spoon with a goose feather. When finished, the bread crumbs, the feather, and the spoon are placed in a bag and burned the next morning.
- Unleavened Bread in the Hebrew Scriptures: Exodus 23:15; 34:18; 2 Chronicles 30; Ezra 6:22
- Unleavened Bread in the New Testament: Acts 12:3; 20:6

- Biblical events that happened on this day:
- The manna, which God provided from heaven as food for the Israelites while they wandered in the wilderness, stopped after they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. (Joshua 5:10-12)
  - Queen Esther risked her life to save the Jewish people from annihilation. (Esther 3:12-5:7)
  - Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. (Luke 24:44-47)
  - Since the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, firstfruits sacrifices and offerings are no longer offered on this day. Today, Jews use this date to begin the counting of the days (omer). On the 33rd day of counting the omer, a minor rabbinical holiday called Lag B'Omer is celebrated where campfires are built and people roast potatoes and sing songs.

- Shavuot is celebrated 50 days after Passover, so it became known as *Pentecost*, which means "50" in Greek. The days from Passover to Shavuot are counted as weekly Sabbath services.
  - Special foods for this holiday are dairy foods, such as cheesecake and cheese blintzes, because the Law is compared to milk and honey.
  - Homes and synagogues are decorated with flowers and greenery, which represent the harvest and the Torah as a "tree of life." Observant Jews often spend the night reading and studying the Torah.
- Feast of Weeks in the Hebrew Scriptures: Ex. 34:22; Dt. 16:9, 10; 2 Ch. 8:13; Ezekiel 1 (Traditional reading)
- Feast of Weeks in the New Testament: Acts 2:1-41; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8; James 1:18

- Rosh HaShanah is a serious New Year holiday, not a happy one like January 1. A common custom is sending cards to relatives and friends to wish them a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year. The message includes the greeting *L'shanah tovah tikatevoo*, which means "May you be inscribed [in the Book of Life] for a good year."
  - It is traditional to eat apple slices dipped in honey. The apples represent provision, and the honey represents sweetness for the coming year.
  - Many Jewish people attend Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services even if they have not attended synagogue services the rest of the year.
- Feast of Trumpets in the Hebrew Scriptures: Numbers 29:1-6 .

# HEBREW

פסח

חג המצות

יום הבכורים

שבועות

ראש השנה



# JEWISH FEASTS AND HOLIDAYS

The Gregorian calendar, used by most western nations today, was established by Pope Gregory VIII in 1582. It is a solar calendar.

The Jewish calendar uses both lunar and solar movements. The months are determined by the moon, and the year is determined by the sun. The Jewish day begins at sunset.

There are 12 months in the Jewish calendar, each with 29 or 30 days. Approximately every third year is a leap year containing an extra month. This adjustment is necessary to ensure that the major festivals stay in their appointed seasons.

Over the years the names of the months and the process of establishing the calendar has changed. Following the Babylonian exile in 586-516 BC, the Jewish calendar reflected the Babylonian names of the months and these names still exist today in the current Jewish calendar.

Today the Jewish calendar is determined by precise astronomical calculations, but that wasn't always the case. For centuries the calendar was determined each month by the sighting of the new moon. (Numbers 10:10; Psalm 81:3)

Today the new moon is called *Rosh Hodesh* (head of the month) and is marked in the synagogue with prayers, Torah readings, and special greetings.

In Exodus 12, God established the order of the months. This was the first Jewish calendar used to determine the holidays. Nisan (Abib) was to be the first month and mark the redemption of Israel from Egypt. Passover is celebrated in Nisan.

By Jesus' time, there was a second calendar used for civil affairs. This calendar began with the month of Tishri. The first of Tishri was the civil New Year, *Rosh HaShanah*. The second calendar is still in use.

To determine the Jewish calendar year, simply add 3761 to the western calendar year. The Jewish year 5768 begins on September 13 of the Gregorian year 2007. (See the "Jewish Year" column above *Rosh HaShanah* for the Jewish years that correspond to the Gregorian years.)

Gregorian Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Holiday	(Starts at sundown the previous day)							
Pesach (Passover)	April 3	April 20	April 9	March 30	April 19	April 7	March 26	April 15
HagHaMatzoh (Unleavened Bread)	April 4	April 21	April 10	March 31	April 20	April 8	March 27	April 16
Yom HaBikkurim (First Fruits)	April 5	April 22	April 11	April 1	April 21	April 9	March 28	April 17
Shavuot (Pentecost)	May 23	June 9	May 29	May 19	June 8	May 27	May 15	June 4
Jewish Year	5768	5769	5770	5771	5772	5773	5774	5775
Rosh HaShanah (New Year)	Sept. 13	Sept. 30	Sept. 19	Sept. 9	Sept. 29	Sept. 17	Sept. 5	Sept. 25
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	Sept. 22	Oct. 9	Sept. 28	Sept. 18	Oct. 8	Sept. 26	Sept. 14	Oct. 4
Sukkot (Feast of Booths)	Sept. 27	Oct. 14	Oct. 3	Sept. 23	Oct. 13	Oct. 1	Sept. 19	Oct. 9
Simchat Torah	Oct. 5	Oct. 22	Oct. 11	Oct. 1	Oct. 21	Oct. 9	Sept. 27	Oct. 17
Chanukah (Festival of Lights)	Dec. 5	Dec. 22	Dec. 12	Dec. 2	Dec. 21	Dec. 9	Nov. 28	Dec. 17
Purim (Feast of Lots)	March 4 2007	March 21 2008	March 10 2009	Feb. 28 2010	March 20 2011	March 8 2012	Feb. 24 2013	March 16 2014



# Fascinating Facts About Feasts of the Bible

## ◆ Leviticus 23 – God's Redemption Plan

Leviticus 23 is sometimes referred to as "God's calendar of redeeming grace" or the "calendar of divine redemption." These 44 verses basically tell of God's redemptive plan for the world He created.

Three main lessons of the seven feasts described are:

- a. God's Protection
- b. God's Provision
- c. God's Promise

The holidays and Sabbath days are a "shadow of things to come." (Colossians 2:16, 17)

Many believers in Jesus as Messiah say that:

*Passover* pictures the death of Jesus, the perfect sacrifice. He died on Passover.

*Unleavened Bread* pictures the sinless Jesus, "the bread of life" from heaven.

*Yom HaBikkurim* (Firstfruits) foretold his resurrection on the third day.

*Shavuot* (Pentecost) foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit 50 days later.

## ◆ Seven Appointed Feasts

There are seven holidays that God instituted, which were intended to be times to meet with God. The LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies." (Leviticus 23:1, 2) These seven holidays are:

- Pesach – Passover
- Hag HaMatzot – The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Yom HaBikkurim – The Feast of Firstfruits
- Shavuot – The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
- Rosh HaShanah – The Feast of Trumpets
- Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement
- Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths)

## ◆ Three Pilgrimage Feasts

Three of the seven appointed feasts were pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord." (Deuteronomy 16:16) Those three holidays are:

- Hag HaMatzot – Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Shavuot – The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
- Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths)

## Recommended Books

- *God's Appointed Times*, Barney Kasdan, Lederer Books, 1993.
- *The Feasts of the Lord*, Kevin Howard, Marvin Rosenthal, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997.
- *The Fall Feasts of Israel*, Mitch and Zhava Glaser, Moody Press, 1987.
- *A Family Guide to the Biblical Holidays*, Robin Sampson and Linda Pierce, Heart of Wisdom Publishing, 2001.

Some titles, spellings, dates, pronunciations, traditions, interpretations, and customs vary.

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HOLIDAY	ALSO KNOWN AS	DATE OBSERVED	SCRIPTURE BASIS	GENERAL INFORMATION
<b>DAY OF ATONEMENT</b>	<b>Yom Kippur</b>	<b>10 TISHRI</b> (SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:26-32</b>	<p><b>Day of Atonement: The Day the High Priest Makes Atonement for Sin</b>  <i>Yom Kippur</i> (Yome Ki-POOR), also known as Day of Atonement, is the most solemn holy day of the Jewish people. <i>Yom</i> means “day” and <i>Kippur</i> means “atonement” or “covering.” <i>Atonement</i> means the reconciliation of God and man. The ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are known as the “days of repentance.” Yom Kippur is the final day of judgment when God judges the people.  In Bible times, the High Priest sacrificed an animal to pay for his sins and the sins of the people. It was a time of fasting and prayer. The shofar (ram’s horn) is blown at the end of the evening prayer service for the first time since Rosh HaShanah.  When the high priest was finished with the atonement sacrifice, a goat was released into the wilderness. This “scapegoat” carried Israel’s sins away, never to return. (Leviticus 16:8-10, 20-22, 29-34)</p>
<b>FEAST OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES</b>	<b>Sukkot</b>	<b>15-21 TISHRI</b> (SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:33-43</b>	<p><b>Feast of Booths: Commemorates the 40-Year Wilderness Journey</b>  <i>Sukkot</i> (Soo-KOTE or SOO-kote), also known as “Feast of Tabernacles,” is a week-long celebration of the fall harvest and a time to build booths (temporary shelters of branches) to remember how the Hebrew people lived under God’s care during their forty years in the wilderness. (Nehemiah 8:14-17) The celebration is a reminder of God’s faithfulness and protection.  Jews continue to celebrate Sukkot by building and dwelling in temporary booths for eight days. The four special plants used to cover the booths are citron, myrtle, palm, and willow. (Leviticus 23:39, 40)  Sukkot is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to “appear before the LORD.” (Deuteronomy 16:16)</p>
<b>REJOICING IN THE LAW</b>	<b>Simchat Torah</b>	<b>22 or 23 TISHRI</b> (SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER)	<i>Leviticus</i> <b>23:36</b>	<p><b>Joy of Torah: Celebrates the Completion of Reading the Torah</b>  The eighth and final day of the celebration of Sukkot was appointed by God as a sacred assembly. Today the final day is known as <i>Simchat Torah</i> (SIM-khat TOE-rah or SIM-khat Toe-RAH) meaning “Rejoice in the Torah, God’s Word.” Starting in the Middle Ages, it is a celebration of the giving and receiving of the <i>Torah</i> or the <i>Pentateuch</i> (the first five books of the Bible) which is the foundation of Jewish belief and faith. Torah also means “Law” or direction. Followers of Jesus accept the Torah and the other books of the Jewish Scriptures. They believe that “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20, 21)</p>
<b>FEAST OF DEDICATION</b>	<b>Hanukkah (Chanukah)</b>	<b>25 KISLEV-2 TEVET</b> (NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER)	<i>John 10:22</i> Also Book of Maccabees (Apocrypha)	<p><b>Feast of Dedication: Commemorates the Purification of the Temple</b>  <i>Hanukkah</i> (KHA-noo-kah), the Feast of Dedication, celebrates the Maccabees’ victory over the Greeks and the rededication of the Temple in 165 bc after Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes defiled it by sacrificing a pig on the altar and pouring the blood on the Scripture scrolls. The Maccabees’ victory, a miracle of God’s deliverance, is recorded in the books of Maccabees, which are included in the Apocrypha.  Hanukkah is also known as the Feast of Lights because of a legendary miraculous provision of oil for the eternal light in the Temple. After cleansing the Temple, the supply of oil to relight the eternal flame (the symbol of God’s presence) was only enough for one day. But God performed a great miracle, and the flame burned for the eight days necessary to purify new oil.</p>
<b>FEAST OF LOTS</b>	<b>Purim</b>	<b>14 or 15 ADAR</b> (FEBRUARY OR MARCH)	<i>Book of Esther</i>	<p><b>Feast of Lots: Commemorates the Preservation of the Jewish People</b>  <i>Purim</i> (POOR-im) marks the deliverance of the Jews through Jewish Queen Esther in Shushan, Persia (Susa, Iran). Esther was her Persian name, meaning “star.” Her Hebrew name was <i>Hadassah</i>, which means “myrtle.”  The annual celebration of Purim is a joyous feast remembering the foiled plot of Haman to kill all the Jews living within King Xerxes’s (Ahasuerus’s) kingdom. Esther’s uncle Mordecai uncovered the plot and warned Esther, who then told the King. The King had Haman executed. Adar 14 and 15 became days of joy and feasting. (Esther 9:18-32)  Purim is celebrated on Adar 14 in most cities except those cities surrounded by walls since the time of Joshua. Walled cities celebrate Purim on Adar 15 (<i>Shushan Purim</i>). In Jewish leap years, when there is an extra month of Adar, Purim is always celebrated during the second month.</p>



# YESHUA (JESUS)

The Holy of Holies, in the Temple, was separated from the congregation by a veil from floor to ceiling. It was entered once a year on Yom Kippur, when the High Priest offered the blood sacrifice of atonement on behalf of the people. When Jesus died on the cross, the thick veil was ripped from top to bottom. (Luke 23:44-46) Christ came as high priest and entered the Holy of Holies (heaven itself) once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:11-28) Believers in Jesus accept his sacrifice on the cross as the final atonement for sin, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:21-25a) When Messiah returns, Israel will look on him, whom they pierced, and repent. (Zechariah 12:10) On this day of repentance, Israel will be forgiven and permanently restored. (Isaiah 66:7-14; Romans 11:26)

Two ceremonies were part of the last day of Sukkot: 1. People carrying torches marched around the Temple, then set these lights around the walls of the Temple, indicating that Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 49:6) 2. A priest carried water from the pool of Siloam to the Temple, symbolizing that when Messiah comes the whole earth will know God “as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9) When Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles, on the last day of the feast, he said, “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 next morning while the torches were still burning, he said, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) Sukkot represents the final harvest when all nations will share in the joy and blessings of God’s Kingdom. During that time, all believers will celebrate this feast. (Zechariah 14:16-19)

John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” John 1:14 reads, “... and the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.” Jesus is the Word which became flesh (incarnated) and dwelt (tabernacled) among us. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path. (Psalm 119:105) Jesus, the Word made flesh, is also a lamp to our feet and light for our path that leads to salvation. (John 8:12) We rejoice (*simchat*) in the Torah—the written Torah and the *incarnate Torah*—Jesus. Jesus said that he came to fulfill both the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 5:17) Torah is the written word; Jesus is the living Word.

Although the history behind Hanukkah is recorded in books that were written in the time between the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, the book of John tells us that it was celebrated in Jesus’ day: “Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade.” (John 10:22, 23) The Feast of Dedication is a reminder of those who courageously remain faithful to God in the face of persecution. One of the major themes throughout the New Testament is remaining faithful to Christ, especially during persecution. (Matthew 5:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 4:9) The book of Revelation speaks specifically to the persecution believers will face before the return of Christ. (Rev. 2:10; 13:10) Hanukkah is also a reminder that God is faithful and delivers his people not only from the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, but also from the oppression of sin and death.

Purim celebrates the story told in the book of Esther. (Esther 9:18-32) It is a celebration of God’s faithful protection of his people. The Jews of Esther’s day were delivered from an irrevocable decree of the Persian king Ahasuerus. God also has an irrevocable decree that all people are sinners and deserve death. (Genesis 2:17; Romans 3:23) However, the Messiah delivers all who believe in him from that irrevocable decree as well. (Isaiah 53; Romans 6:23) Many have and may continue to persecute believers in Messiah, but Isaiah’s prophecy suggests that they will not prevail because “God is with us,” or literally because of *Immanuel*. (Isaiah 8:10)

# FASCINATING FACTS

- After the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, Jewish people could no longer offer the prescribed sacrifices for atonement from sins. They have substituted prayer, good works, and charitable donations hoping to take away the penalty for their sins.
- Yom Kippur is a day of fasting. No work is done on this day, including at home. Many Jewish people spend the day at synagogue, praying for forgiveness of their sins. Immediately after the evening service, they have a “break fast” meal.
- The book of Jonah is read during the afternoon service to remind people of God’s forgiveness and mercy.

Day of Atonement in the Hebrew Scriptures: Lev. 25:9, Num. 29:7-11, Ez. 45:20, Zec. 12:10-13:9  
Day of Atonement in the New Testament: Acts 27:9

- Sukkot is a happy feast when people rejoice in God’s forgiveness and material blessings.
- The sukkah, or booth, is a temporary structure built of wood or wood and canvas. The roof is made of branches and leaves, with enough open spaces to see the stars. The sukkah is decorated with fall flowers, leaves, fruits, and vegetables. Many Jewish people erect booths on their lawns or balconies and eat at least one meal a day in them.
- A *lulav*, made up of willow, palm, and myrtle branches, is waved in all four directions (north, south, east, and west) and up and down to symbolize that God’s presence is everywhere.

Feast of Booths in the Hebrew Scriptures: Numbers 29:12-40; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Ezra 3:4  
Feast of Booths in the New Testament: John 7

- In Israel, Simchat Torah is usually celebrated on 22 Tishri. In other places, it is 23 Tishri.
- In the synagogue, the Torah is divided into portions and read each week in the worship service. During Simchat Torah, men and women in the congregation receive an *aliyah*, which is a chance to read a portion of the Torah from the pulpit. When finished, the congregation celebrates by marching around the sanctuary, carrying the Torah scrolls, singing, and praising God. Then, the reading of the Torah is completed by reading the last chapter of Deuteronomy. The reading of the Torah begins again with Genesis 1 for the next year.
- Before entering the Promised Land, the Israelites were instructed to read the Law (Torah) during the Feast of Tabernacles. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)

- Hanukkah is primarily a family celebration that centers around the lighting of a nine-candle *menorah*, or candlestick, called a *hanukkiyah*. Each night another candle is lit with the center candle called a *shamash*, or servant candle, until all nine are lit.
- Holiday foods include *latkes* (potato pancakes) and donuts fried in oil. The oil is a reminder of the miracle of the oil.
- Perhaps because Hanukkah falls close to Christmas, it is now traditional to give presents, often one per night after the candles are lit.
- Children play dreidel games with a top that reminds them of the great miracle of God’s deliverance from the Greeks. Hanukkah is also called the “Festival of Lights.”

- The word *purim* means “lots” and refers to the lot Haman cast to decide the day for the destruction of the Jewish people. (Esther 3:7)
- God’s name is not mentioned in the book of Esther, but his providence and provision are obvious.
- Purim is a happy and noisy holiday. To celebrate, the *megillah* (scroll of the book of Esther) is read in the synagogue. Whenever Haman is mentioned, everyone boos, stamps feet, and shakes noisemakers (called *groggers*). Whenever Mordecai is mentioned, everyone cheers.
- *Hamantaschen* is a three-cornered cookie which represents Haman’s hat.
- Other Purim customs include parades, dressing up as characters and reenacting the story of Esther, parties, and carnivals. It is customary to give gifts to the poor on Purim. (Esther 9:22)

יום כִּפּוּר

סוכות

שמחת תורה

חנוכה

פורים