

The Christian and the Feasts of the LORD

Version 1.2

In Leviticus 23, the feasts of the LORD are prescribed to the children of Israel. Many Christians, because they say they are not Israelites or not under the law of Moses, consider that these feasts do not concern them and consequently should no longer be kept. Others have replaced these feasts of the LORD with pagan feasts, sometimes disguised as feasts of the LORD (Christmas, Easter, the Assumption...). We shall say here why every Christian should, as far as possible, keep the feasts of the LORD and avoid pagan feasts. For an easier understanding of this text, we recommend that the reader also read our article on the Christian and the sabbath, in case he has not yet read it, and is not satisfied with the arguments given here.

Reminder of the list of the feasts of the LORD mentioned in the Bible

Feast	 Institution	 Perpetual (verse)	 Non-observance = sin (specific verse)	 Sanction (nature + verse)
Sabbath	Exod 20:8-11; Lev 23:3	Exod 31:16-17	Exod 31:14	Death → Exod 31:14-15
Passover (Pesach)	Exod 12:1-14	Exod 12:14	Num 9:13	Cutting off → Num 9:13
Unleavened bread	Exod 12:15-20; Lev 23:6-8	Exod 12:17	Exod 12:15,19	Cutting off → Exod 12:15,19
Firstfruits	Lev 23:9-14	Implicit via Lev 23:15-21 (Pentecost depends on the Firstfruits and is perpetual v.21)	 Not explicitly stated	 Not specified
Pentecost (Shavuot)	Lev 23:15-21	Lev 23:21	 Not explicitly stated	 Not specified
Trumpets	Lev 23:23-25	 Not explicitly 'perpetual' (but annual cycle established)	 Not explicitly stated	 Not specified
Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Lev 16; Lev 23:26-32	Lev 16:29-31	Lev 23:29	Cutting off + Destruction by God → Lev 23:29-30
Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Lev 23:33-43	Lev 23:41	 Zech 14:17	 Absence of rain + Plague (punishment) → Zech 14:17-19

Table of the feasts of the LORD

additional feast decided by an irrevocable commitment of the Jews and their posterity

Purim — Esther 9:20-28 — Esther 9:27-28 —  Not explicitly stated —  Not specified

The new moons, without being feasts, also have particular prescriptions: Numbers 28:11-15, Numbers 10:10

Why observe these feasts

The perpetual character

Let us begin by recalling that, for the Israelites, several of these feasts have been declared perpetual, that is to say without limit in time. These are: the sabbath (Exod 31:13-17, Lev 23:3), Passover (Exod 12:14), unleavened bread (Exod 12:15-20), the day of atonement (Lev 23:27-30, Lev 16:29-31), tabernacles (Lev 23:41-43), the feast of weeks (Pentecost, Lev 23:21), the feast of trumpets (Lev 23:24-25), ... They cannot therefore have been revoked by a new covenant. The non-observance of several is described as sin in the Bible, and the non-observance of the first four is very severely sanctioned (up to death). The non-observance of the fifth (the feast of tabernacles) is sanctioned at a period of humanity subsequent to the coming of Jesus Christ on earth, by the presence of curses (Zechariah 14).

For happiness and blessing

As we recalled with verses in the article ‘the Christian and the law of Moses’ and in the article ‘the Christian and the sabbath’, the promises attached to the observance of the law include happiness, longevity and blessing. God did not give his laws as a wicked dictator in order to

For example, one sees specific blessings attached to the feast of tabernacles (Zechariah 14). Through the feasts of the LORD, we mark our gratitude to God, we say thank you to him according to the protocol and at the time prescribed by himself. In saying thank you, in a certain way one asks again for blessings.

One sees in 2 Chronicles 30 and what follows the feast of Passover and of unleavened bread celebrated by Hezekiah and the people of Israel. We are told that at the end of the feast, blessings were pronounced, and they were heard by God. 2 Chronicles 30:27 “27 Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.”

and a proof of this blessing is how God destroyed the 182,000 soldiers of the army of Sennacherib who had come to attack them, without their having to fight (2 Chronicles 32). Hezekiah, after these feasts, also had immense riches and built cities (2 Chronicles 32:27). Now it was said of the feast that he had made that nothing like it had been done since Solomon, and we know that Solomon too was particularly blessed with riches.

To honour God and to mark our love and our covenant

The celebrations of these feasts have often been presented in the Bible as part of the main historical markers of the return of the people of Israel to God (Nehemiah 8:13-18 (tabernacles) and sabbath (15-22)); 2 Chron 30, 2 Chron 35, 2 Kings 23 (Passover)). The feasts therefore have a particular status, as acts of covenant, tests of obedience, and markers of transformation.

As it is said in Nehemiah 30:1,5 [sic; probably 2 Chronicles 30:1,5], the feast is held in honour of the LORD. Now we see people making arrangements to organise all kinds of feasts in honour of humans or to take part in them (birthdays, weddings, diplomas, funerals, installations, appointments...). How can one be willing to hold feasts in honour of humans, but not willing to hold the feasts in honour of the LORD? Now, we know that according to Jesus Christ the first and greatest commandment is the one that tells us to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself comes second. How can one love God first and yet honour men more than God? And ignore the feasts that he prescribed in his honour?

Remember the following verses:

Proverbs 29:26 “Many seek the ruler’s favour; but every man’s judgment cometh from the LORD.”

1 Samuel 2:30 “...for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

2 Chronicles 30:5-6 “5 So they established a decree to make proclamation *throughout all Israel*, from Beersheba even to Dan, *that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem*: for *they had not done it of a long time in such sort* as it was written. 6 So *the posts went with the letters* from the king and his princes *throughout all Israel and Judah*, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, *Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you*, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.” Continuing the text, one can read “7 *And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren*, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8 *Now be ye not stiffnecked*, as your fathers were, but *yield yourselves unto the LORD*, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. 9 *For if ye turn again unto the LORD*,...”

This passage first reminds us that the feasts are in honour of the LORD and also serve to mark a return to the LORD. It also reminds us that their transgression is like a rejection of the LORD, and that by keeping them one calls down the blessing of God (continuation of verse 9).

By obedience

The feasts were instituted by God, as commandments to be respected. They were not abolished by Jesus Christ, who clearly said that he did not come to abolish the law or the prophets. Out of obedience to God, we must respect them. I know that several will tell me that the law of Moses no longer applies to us and that it is Faith that saves us. I refer you to the article on the sabbath or to the one on the Christian and the law of Moses, where

these questions are developed in detail. It is important to go there in order to understand that despite the arguments which would give the impression that they should be dropped, it remains important to obey these feasts. As for the sabbath, we have a specific document for the feast of Passover, another for the feast of tabernacles, for more details. Let us recall that the feast of Passover prescribed in the Bible is not the feast of Easter celebrated in several so-called Christian denominations, which is in fact a pagan feast having a name similar to the feast of the LORD, but with an s at the end (Easter rather than Passover). The treatise on the feast of Passover provides the appropriate explanations. [Translator's note: the author's point rests on the French words 'pâque' (Passover) and 'pâques' (Easter), which differ by a final s; the English words are unrelated.]

Some reject the feasts but hold the harvest festival and preach the collection of tithes, which are part of the law or of the Levitical priesthood. At that point, they do not say that we are no longer under the law. But if it is a question of keeping the feast of tabernacles or of atonement, suddenly they will say that we are no longer under the law. Let us be true and sincere before God.

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