



CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER BIBLE READING DEVOTIONAL

Scripture:	Leviticus 23	Title:	Celebrating The Annual Festivals Today
Author	Ps Li Cuixian		
Summary of Chapter	This chapter introduces seven annual festivals Israel is to observe in addition to Sabbath, namely, (1) Passover; (2) Unleavened Bread; (3) First Fruits; (4) Pentecost; (5) Trumpets; (6) Atonement; and (7) Tabernacles. They vary between 1 to 7 days long. These festivals are rich with symbolism and prophetic significance.		

Key Verse(s) NLT How does it speak to me?

<p>³⁷ <i>“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals. Celebrate them each year as official days for holy assembly by presenting special gifts to the LORD... each on its proper day.</i></p> <p>³⁸ <i>These festivals must be observed in addition to the LORD’s regular Sabbath days, and the offerings are in addition to your personal gifts...</i></p>	<p>In addition to the Sabbath rest, Israel must observe these annual festivals without fail. They are appointed by the Lord for the holy assembly of Israel to celebrate and observe with appropriate offerings and gifts. They are a call to remember God’s hands upon Israel for their deliverance from their slavery till their dwelling in the Promised Land. Many scholars believe these festivals are prophetic forecasts to the first and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first four festivals relate to the first coming, from the death of Jesus, to burial, to resurrection and birth of the Church on Pentecost. Whereas the last three festivals correspond to that of Rapture, Great Tribulation, and the dwelling in the New Heaven and Earth. You may refer to supplementary notes at the end of the devotional.</p> <p>We do not celebrate most of these festivals, except the Lord’s Table and Resurrection Sunday. These festivals are meant for Israel to have complete rest in the Lord while celebrating them joyously or somberly unto the Lord. Families will gather and reminisce on God’s work in their nation’s history. Why is this so important that the Lord had to enforce it? Let me state the obvious, our physical body and mental health need rest, we cannot work non-stop, our body will eventually crush in on us. The other reason is for fathers of families to share God’s salvation plan for mankind and God’s fingerprints in the life of each family member.</p> <p>Personally, as a single lady with pre-believing parent, I do not have the benefit to remember God’s goodness in a family setting. However, that does not stop me from setting aside a period annually to rest, remember His goodness, and restart. For 5 years now, I had taken annual leave from 26 Dec to 1 Jan to go somewhere quiet for a personal retreat. It has been the most beneficial time of the year for me, where I had uninterrupted and unhurried communion with my Saviour. Words cannot express how enriched I was and how precious those times were.</p>
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APPLICATION REFLECTIONS

Adult:	Consider setting aside a day in the year to rest and remember God’s salvation for you and your family. If you are having this devotion with your family, share with them how you came to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour.
Youth:	How would a family ‘festival’ look like for you?
Child:	Together with your parents, read the supplementary notes and learn about the 7 different annual festivals that Israel celebrates.

PRAYER

Praying Scripture:	Thank you, Lord, for calling us to rest and celebrate. May we intentionally set aside time to rest and celebrate your salvation and goodness. So, thank you for the salvation through the finished work of Christ. While we await your second coming, quicken our hearts to give attention to the people who need the good news of hope.
Thanksgiving Prayer:	I/We thank you for _____ (e.g. delicious food we ate, places we went, prayer that was answered, etc)
Intercessory Prayer:	I/We want to pray for _____ (e.g. healing of sickness, family members, work or study, leaders, nation, etc)
Salvation Prayer:	I/We pray for the salvation of my/our unsaved loved ones _____ (add one name per day). In Jesus’ Name I/we pray. Amen.

Supplementary Notes

With reference to

Mark Levitt, <https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Introduction/introduction.html>; David Guzik, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Lev/Lev-23.cfm;

Festivals	Actual practice	Significance
(1) Passover, Nisan 14-15	God saved the Hebrews firstborn in Egypt.	Jesus, the Passover Lamb, died for sins once for all on Passover.
(2) Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15-22, to be eaten for 7 days	As leaven refers to sin and evil, to not eat it symbolized that Israel is to walk in purity after the deliverance of Passover.	Jesus, the Bread of Life, died for our sins. His perfect and sinless body (the unleavened bread of Holy Communion) was broken so that his disciples will live.
(3) Firstfruits, Nisan 16-17	In offering the firstfruits to God, Israel is to recognise God's blessings over the land and anticipate a greater harvest.	Resurrection of Jesus, the firstfruits; eventually resurrection of the Church (1Co 15:20, 23).
(4) Pentecost, Sivan 6-7 (50 days after Firstfruits)	Israel is to bring new grain from the harvest and wave two unleavened bread unto the Lord.	Connected to the birth of the Church, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, when the Holy Spirit come upon them.
The first four feasts are linked together, with a separation from the last three, also linked, feasts. The first four relate to the work of Jesus in His first coming. Jesus was crucified on Passover, buried on Festival of Unleavened Bread, raised on Festival of First Fruits, and sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. There is a gap of four months between the two groups of festivals, where the second group falls during the time of autumn harvest.		
(5) Trumpets, Tishri 1	Gathering of workers from the field in the Temple. (The high priest will blow the trumpet and the workers will stop harvesting to worship.)	Rapture of the Church which is ultimate assembly of God's people at the sound of the trumpet—believers will stop their work and rise from the earth
(6) Atonement, Tishri 9-10	A day of solemn reflection as they afflict their souls in recognition of their sins and need for atonement.	The ultimate, perfect atonement Jesus offered and also the affliction Israel will see during the Great Tribulation (Jer 30:7).
(7) Tabernacles, Tishri 15-22	A time of rejoicing in God's provision for Israel during wilderness wandering. It was a celebration and rest and refreshment.	God will dwell among His people forever (Ezk 37:26). The people of the earth will gather in His Temple (new Heaven) to worship Him (Zec 14:16-17).
The last 3 feasts are forecast of God's gathering of believers to Himself at Rapture; the persecutions of the remnant during the Tribulation; and finally, the eternal dwelling with God in the New Heaven and New Earth.		