

## **Examining Judaism (1)**

We live a world of religious confusion. This is nothing new due to man's desire to worship by his own devices

Listen to the words of Jesus, "Then the Scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and your mother"; and "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death". But you say, "Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"-then he need not honor his father or mother. "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (Matthew 15:1-9 NKJV)

God gave His commandments through Moses and the prophets. They include special occasions of remembrance. In this article we want to look at those feasts and what they represented.

### **Passover**

Probably the best known of the Jewish feasts; Passover commemorates the 10th plague sent on Egypt. Exodus 12:29-30 speaks of God killing all of the firstborn in Egypt. The Israelites were instructed to kill a one-year- old male lamb, having neither spot nor blemish. Its blood was to be sprinkled on the doorpost of their houses. Inside they were to roast the lamb and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

The lamb is referred to as "the Passover lamb" in verse 21. Passover means "to spring over" or "to spare". As God saw the blood on the doorpost, He passed over them. This feast was to remind Israel of coming of Egypt.

It's connection to the New Testament is associated with Jesus' last week. Six days before the Passover, He entered Jerusalem with a great multitude of people proclaiming Him the King of Israel, (John 12:13)

### **Feast of Unleavened Bread**

Closely connected was the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" in Leviticus 23:5-8; Deuteronomy 16:1-8 and Mark 14:1. Starting on the fourteenth day of the month of Nissan, also called Abib, the Jews were to eat the Passover meal and remove all leaven from their houses, Exodus 12:15, and fast for six days. On the seventh day, they had a sacred assembly. Therefore the "Passover" observed on the 14th of Nissan, roughly our April and the 15th was the "Feast of the Unleavened Bread."

According to Luke 22:7, it was on the "Day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb must be killed" that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. He would become the Lamb of God and die so God would pass over our sins. Jesus used the fruit of the vine and unleavened bread as emblems of His body and blood.

### **Pentecost**

This is first mentioned in Leviticus 23:9-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-12 and Numbers 28:16-31. It is also called the "Feast of Weeks" in Number 28:26 and the "Feast of Harvest" in Exodus 23:16. The Passover always occurred on the new moon. Seven Sabbaths later (29 days) on the 50th day they observed this feast. Therefore Pentecost was always on Sunday, the first day of the week.

It celebrated the wheat harvest, Exodus 23:19. They were to bring the first fruits of harvest and offer it to the Lord. Specifically the offering was two loaves of two-tenths an ephah. They were baked with leaven, Leviticus 23:17. Like Passover, the Jews traveled to Jerusalem for its observance.

It was on the day of Pentecost (Sunday) that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles (Acts 2). The first gospel sermon was preached and Christ's church was established. -- Dennis Tucker    *(To Be Continued)*