

God's Holy Holidays *Leviticus 23*

Do “set apart” days reflect and shape society’s values?

1. God Gave the Israelites Their Holidays

- God appointed the festivals; to be “sacred assemblies” (lit: holy summons) (v1–2)
- Does the Sabbath belong here? (v3) → The Sabbath as a model for the annual festivals
 - i. Work ceases, people gather around the Tabernacle → because they have been freed from slavery by the gracious God!

2. The Festivals

- Passover → celebrating the ‘passing over’ of the Israelites (who were freed from Egypt) (v5)
- Festival of Unleavened Bread → celebrating God’s swift rescue of Israel out of Egypt (v6–8)
- Offering of Firstfruits → first sheaf of harvest offered to God as a symbol that God gives the blessings in the land of milk and honey (v9–14)
- Festival of Weeks → 50 days after Firstfruits; symbol of thanksgiving to the gracious God (v15–22)
- The various Fall Festivals → all involve leaving work and gathering around the tabernacle (v23–44)

3. Exodus as a Shadow of Jesus’s Work

- Passover → Freedom from sin and death through the blood of Jesus
- Firstfruits → Jesus’s resurrection as a representative of ours (1 Cor 15:20)
- Festival of Weeks → Our spiritual blessings through the Holy Spirit

How do we shape our ‘liturgies’ to be gospel-shaped?

Let’s remind ourselves often of the work of the gracious God in Jesus!