

The Feasts of Israel

The Command to Israel, The illustration of Christ, The Application for the Christian

Part 1

Scripture reading; Matthew 16:1-4

Intro:

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

'For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.'

(and)

'You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.'

And 'I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.'

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

That was Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16, Revelations 4:11, Job 42:2,
Amos 3:7

From the very beginning, God had a plan, well actually from before the beginning and even before there were even such a things as time and a beginning, God had a plan. It was a plan designed to give glory to God and God alone, it was a plan designed by the Father, carried out by the Son and all performed in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

This plan called for the creation of the heavens above which included the sun, moon and stars and the dwelling place of God, it also included the earth and everything in it. The creation of all plants and animals and all of the things we see and don't see, all of these were to give God glory in their creation.

This plan involved the creation of angels and man, the former were to be His messengers and His ministers, the latter to be the crown of all His creation, all of these were created to glorify God, all of them created to reflect His goodness in His own likeness back to Him. Everything seen and unseen in our entire universe is part of His plan in giving God glory.

But within the plan of creation and God knowing all things, He knew that with the free will within angels and with man that there would be a fall, God planned for this, it would be a fall that would consume a third of the angelic realm and even more in the human. God knew that at one point this fall would almost consume and destroy all of His creation and the purpose it was originally created for. God knew from the beginning, that the cost of such glory for Himself would be high, very high, but it would be the only way God would and could get true glory for Himself.

Because if it could have pleased God and give Him true glory, God could have created the most elaborate biological robots you could imagine, ones that would look and sound and act, exactly like you and me and maybe even better, they would have a heart and blood and even brains and they could praise him with a million programmed messages of praise and worship and glory to Him forever, He could have done this, but it would have never been real praise, it would never have been real glory, for they would only be biological machines who would be doing simply what they were programmed to do. Like a dog doing tricks or a bird reciting phrases.

Because even we as pitiful, selfish, sinful humans know that such preprogrammed praise no matter how elaborate or complex it can be made it does not and cannot truly praise, but would rather mock the intellect of the one who created it.

If you don't believe me just go and try it some time, find the audio recorder on your phone because hardly anyone knows what a tape recorder is these days, but open the voice recorder or even your camera and take a video of yourself and record this saying as an example. 'You are wonderful; you are amazing, everything you do is just so awesome I can't even describe it'. Now replay it back to yourself or loop it so that it plays over and over again, I can see some of you are shaking your heads and laughing inside, and I know why, because it would sound foolish, it would sound foolish to you and those around you and you would be making a silly spectacle of yourself, and there would be absolutely no glory or praise to you in any of it. And neither does it for God.

Because a simple 3 year old child can say something like 'dad, you are the best dad ever', or 'mom you make the best peanut butter and jam sandwiches' or say 'I love you', that is real.

Or how about the bond between a husband and wife and the love they share. Could it ever be real if one partner was simply programmed to say the things a husband and wife say to one another? Things they say out of love things they say in intimacy?

Or what of friends, friends whom you would be willing to die for, because of who they are in the eyes of God, would you be willing to die for a friend if they were only a machine and they were programmed to only say ‘thanks you’re a pal’ in return. No, you wouldn’t, because that friendship would never be real.

You see, you can’t make that stuff real, you cannot program someone to give that kind of heart response from the heart, you can’t prerecord that into something and play it back with the same meaning and depth that comes when it comes from the heart of free will, it just doesn't work.

The same goes for God, no matter how sophisticated you make the machine or how complex you create the being there can be no glory from it if preprogrammed praise is all that comes from it. And I am amazed that Calvinist theologians haven’t figured this out yet.

Therefore, Gods plan was to create free will beings, angels and man, who through many trials and failures and even more lost to sin and rebellion, would come through with pure, unaltered, free will praise to Him and give Him glory, real glory for which He is seeking.

One of the greatest parts of this whole plan would be the redemption of man. The redemption of fallen man would cost God His one and only Son, a plan of redemption by the Father and the Son, who agreed from before the foundation of the world that He would redeem man from this fall, this plan included the Holy Spirit who would agree to live inside of sinful man, in the heart of man, inside each and every true Christian, in order that God could receive true glory from His creation.

The implication of scripture is that sin or wickedness cannot dwell or be in the presents of God but God the Holy Spirit battles with the devil and his minions inside the mind of the Christian almost every waking moment of mans life.

God knew this, and within His great plan of creation and redemption and salvation He has given us His word, first the verbal word that has been passed from man to man, and later the written word passed from generation to generation throughout the chronology of history.

From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation He has given us His infallible word that we may have and hear His voice through all the generations of time.

In this word He has given us law and history, poetry and prophecy. The gospels and letters of men who were moved by the Spirit to guide us, teach us, admonish, exhort and convict us like no other writing could do. It is truly the timeless living word of God.

It alone can change the heart of man from stone to flesh, from death to life, from mortal to immortal according to His plan.

This word show us His will, His plan, His desire for all mankind, that we may learn how to live here on this earth in a way pleasing to Him and how to give Him glory and prepare us for the life hereafter in which we will glorify Him for all eternity.

From beginning to end, from the first words of Genesis to the last line in Revelations, God has shown us His whole plan of creation, everything is written out; from the first moments this earth was created, to the end where this earth is made new and we will dwell with God for all eternity.

One of the things it includes that I think is so often overlooked in modern churches is God's continued plan for Israel. Much of the modern churches think that God is done with Israel; that God is done with the Jew and the one thing that is so often overlooked and yet depicts the core of this whole plan to the world for all mankind so well is the annual feasts God commanded to Israel.

These feasts are not only holy days that are to be observed for the Jews and Christians as religious days to be kept, but each one of these has been designed as prophetic markers that are set in their place to show us Gods whole plan.

These feasts were not catered to fit the chronology of the world, rather these feast are prophecies of Gods plan. These feasts serve as time markers for all of creation and they mark many of the major events that God had planned for mankind. Many have already been fulfilled some are yet future.

The series is titled 'The Feasts of Israel' but the sub title is 'The Commands to Israel, The illustrations of Christ, and The Application for the Christian'. The aim of these messages is not only to present to you the command and purpose these feasts are for Israel, but also, the depiction of Christ's past present and future roll each one of them and also the application for the Christian in each of them.

You see God has given us many signs in His word, God said in Genesis 1:14 when He created the sun, moon and stars, He said

"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons and for days and years;

In the first 4 verse of Matthew chapter 16, the verses that were read for us earlier, we see just a small illustration of what signs can do for us. Signs and times and of things to come are the bases of all prophecy that God has used in His creation for mankind. His word is all for our benefit, for our knowledge, for our safety, for our salvation, to show us everything in His plan about what He is doing and is going to do, as Amos 3:7 says;

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

And all of these secrets are revealed to us in His word, in His signs, and works in the world. Because along with His word His signs are very important to us and those around us, we can read His word but if we ignore the signs around us we and others can be in great danger.

For example let me illustrate it like this somewhere in our past we have all read the drivers hand book in how to drive and the rules of the road and we learned of all the signs we will encounter in our driving experience, we know that if you are driving in your car at 100km per hour and you pass this sign (100km) you should be perfectly fine. However if you continue to travel at that speed and you pass this sign 80km you may get into some trouble, maybe a warning maybe a ticket.

If you continue to travel at 100km/h and you pass this sign 50km you most certainly will get in to bigger trouble. But not a much as if you were to pass this sign do 100km/hour (stop). This will certainly get you into trouble and possibility the loss the privilege of driving. You see we have read in a book that these are all signs posted as the rules of the road for your general safety.

But what if you drive your car 100km/hour past this sign, (sharp curve) or this one (bridge out) or even this one (cliff) you may not just be slapped with fines or loss of privileges, but now you may be harmed with bodily injury or even death, they are posted for safty

But what if you drive your car 100km/hour past this sign, (cross walk) or this one (school crossing) or even this one (children playing) now its not just your life you are endangering but others around you, a danger caused by your ignorance to the signs.

Or what if you pass this sign going 100 km/hr in life (∧ rapture in 5 min) and you have no clue what it is there for or what it means.

God has given us signs in His word, not only for our safety but also our salvation, for us and for others in regards to our eternity, and some of those signs are found in the feasts He has set out for Israel, but not only Israel but for all mankind in His plan for this world, not just for our safety but also for His glory.

In this series of looking into the feasts of Israel I want to focus mainly on is first; the time of the feast in relation to the calendars and the seasons they were in. Second; the roll or significance the feast was to Israel, in both historical and present and in the future realms.

Third; the Messianic significance of each feast. In relating to you what each feast signifies in regards to Jesus Christ in the past, present and the future. And forth; the personal significance, how each one of these feast applies to the Christian in the applications for the church. All of these are important signs that God has given us through His word for all of mankind.

Now days many think that the Old Testament was all about law and the New Testament is all about grace and that the old does not pertain to the new, this is so wrong.

Anyone who believes this kind of thinking is foolish and is not looking at all the signs God has given us in His word. Yes Jesus illustrated that the new gospel did not fit or be compatible with the old system of the law, not in that it replaced it but rather fulfilled it. Paul says plainly in Romans chapter 6 verse 15 regarding this thinking;

Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

This thinking that the Old Testament no longer applies to us is a clear misunderstanding of the signs God has given us. Many now day's think and preach that God is done with the Jews, that the Church has replaced Israel in all areas pertaining to His eternal workings in the world. This is also foolish thinking, Romans 11:1 and 2a Paul says;

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

² God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

And in verse 11:

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy salvation has come to the Gentiles.

When we understand all the signs God has given us in His word we know that in the great plan of this world and the ages to come He is far from being done with the Jews, in fact they will become the main part and pivotal point in the moments and years after the rapture occurs. One just needs to look at our current events regarding the immense focus that is placed on Israel in the last while.

A country that makes up 0.1% of the world population is the primary focus of much media and news attention in regards to world events in the Middle East. It's a sign.

Zechariah 12:3 says;

And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

The fact that they continue to remain and grow and stand against what seems to be insurmountable odds can only be attributed to one thing, that it is part of God's plan.

They are God's people, and when God assigned to them the oracles of His word, from which we have the written word, the bible, we have, in our hands the entire plan of God for the world, for man, a plan that includes the Jews and the Gentiles.

But one of the things of this plan that we need to look in this introductory message in regards to the feast of Israel is years. Earlier I quoted what God said in Genesis 1:14 when He created the sun and moon He says

"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons and for days and years;

Now in regards to years, there are many significant years in our history that we remember, some in our own lifetime experiences, some from the impact they have had on history itself. I am sure none of us living now will ever forget 2020 or 2021, as the years of biggest deception of a world pandemic with Covid. If we go back in time we may all remember or know years like, 2005 hurricane Katrina, 2001 with the 9/11 attacks on the world trade centers, 1991 the gulf war, 1989 the end of the Berlin wall, or even further back to 1948 the birth of Israel, 1939-1945 world war 2 and the holocaust, 1914-1918 the first World War.

All of these are simply dates in our world time line of history, but what if I gave you the year date of 5781? (or 1582 after Sept 7) What would your response to this date be?

Some shrugs and some guess, some far distant year where we will no longer inhabit earth because we will have destroyed it by global warming and live on different planets in a different galaxies, well not really. You see the year 5781 is simply the Jewish calendar year we are in right now and is the same as our 2021AD.

To give a quick and simple background on our current AD system of measuring years Wikipedia says:

The term (AD) anno Domini is Medieval Latin and means "in the year of the Lord", but is often presented using "our Lord" instead of "the Lord", taken from the full original phrase "anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi", which translates to "in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ".

This calendar era is based on the traditionally reckoned year of the conception or birth of Jesus, with AD counting years from the start of this era and BC denoting years before the start of the era... This dating system was devised in 525 by Dionysius Exiguus of Scythia Minor, but was not widely used until the 9th century.

It goes on to say that;

It is often directly contrasted to the more ancient, Anno Mundi (AM) (conferring "in the years of the world") which recounts the ages based on biblical tradition beginning with the Creation account. To this day, it is firmly observed

through virtually all Jewish religious sources, some minor non-Jewish orthodox societies, and is a reference in many aged and restituted manuscripts.

The year 5781AM the year of the world is simply the same year as 2021AD, one counts from the year of Christ's birth; the other counts from creation.

So why the difference or why the fuss, why do the Jews have a separate calendar year and not conform to the new calendar measurement of years that the rest of the world is using, well it has to do with the 'AD' and what does the abbreviation 'AD' stand for again? Anno Domini, Right, the year of our Lord, and who is our Lord? Jesus Christ

You see the Jews do not yet recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and therefore do not recognize the pivotal AD and BC points in time relating to Him, namely referring to Him as 'our Lord'.

Since the Jews rejected Jesus and do not recognize Him as Lord they also reject the yearly calendar notation that centers around His birth denoting the time of this age in the form of AD and BC which stands for 'Before Christ'. They not only rejected Christ as Lord but also the system that denotes time to Him as such and therefore have a world year calendar of 5781.

On a side note it's not only the Jews reject Him, in the 17 and 18 hundreds the terms CE and BCE came into effect by those who do not presuppose faith in Christ and so a 'Current Era' and a 'Before Current Era' were created for those who do not believe in or wish to associate Jesus as Lord in the calendar system, in this case the numbers stay the same only the notation of the year is changed.

Which is kind of silly because you still reference it from the same reference point which is the time of His birth.

Now you may say this is all very interesting or you may think that it is not but the question comes to mind what does this have to do with the feast of Israel?

Answer much in every way, you see every Feast that we want to look at in the next few messages always depicts Christ in one way or another, He depicts Gods plan for salvation of man, everything revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ. From creation in Genesis to the New Heaven and earth in revelations it is all about Jesus Christ, The Jews were meticulous with rules and feasts and the keeping of them.

But they rejected The Christ at His first coming.

They scourged Him, they nailed Him to the cross and they crucified the Lord with thieves.

However, Zechariah 12 verse 10 prophesies saying;

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

I believe that this will happen at His second coming, when the Lord comes all the way down to the earth at the end of the tribulation and they (that is the Jews) will see Him, see Him for who He truly is, the verse says ‘they will look on ‘Me’ the Lord speaking, they will look on ‘Me’ whom they pierced and they will morn for ‘Him’ as one morns for his only son.

For over 2000 years they have rejected Him, and that final Jewish generation, of the Jews who will live through the tribulation will look upon Him (that is Jesus Christ) and mourn for the rejection that has been taught by their tradition for so long.

For over 2000 years they have rejected the Christ and His first coming and even their own yearly dating of the calendar bears witness to this rejection.

One other thing I want to cover in this introduction is this, not only do the Jews hold to a different calendar year as we do, they also hold to a different calendar altogether. But not only to just one different calendar but two systems within that calendar as well. One thing I learned in studying some of this calendar information is that there is a lot and I mean a lot of information out there regarding calendars, regarding dates, missing years, missing days, corrections and changes to our calendars over the years and yes it can become quite mind boggling especially when you consider the different calendars from different ages, different nationalities, different religions, so many different structures and formulas throughout history.

But we are to still be thankful for the Jew, in his own answer to the question ‘What advantage then has the Jew?’ Paul says in Romans ‘much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.’

And within these oracles is their calendar and time of the world including the feasts of Israel they were commanded to keep.

To keep it simple we have our own January February March and April, May June July and August, September, October November and December. Our year begins on January 1 and ends on December 31, and every 4 years we add an extra day to February to account for the earth’s 365.24 day orbit around the sun.

This is our basic Gregorian calendar, in 1582 it was adopted with some minor changes from the Julian calendar which had been in effect since 45BC.

The Hebrew calendar also has 12 months which are named Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei, Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, and Adar, each month consisting of 29 or 30 days. But unlike our own calendar which adds a leap year day every 4 years to our month of February the Hebrew calendar adds a whole month every 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th year cycle.

They add between the month of Shevat and Adar, another Adar, resulting in Adar 1 and Adar 2, this is done to make up the year and seasonal shift that would otherwise occur over time resulting in not having the proper feasts in the proper time of the year.

Remember the Lord spoke to Moses in Exodus 13:10 in regards to one of the first feasts;

"You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

Thus adding importance to the feasts being held, not only on its proper date but also in its proper season as we will learn more of in later messages.

To make things even more interesting to their calendar is that they have 2 calendar systems within the same 12 month cycle, their civil calendar new year starts in the month of Tishri, which is the 7th months listed in the list, this year Tishri the 1st will mark their new year of 5782 and this will be on our September 7th, this will mark their civil new year, however they also have a religious calendar year within the same calendar system. Nisan 1 is the start of their religious year, this was on March 14 of our calendar.

The Jewish holy calendar starts in Nisan or Abib as noted in the bible and ends with the month of Adar, their Civil calendar starts with Tishrei and ends with Elul.

And within these months we have the Jews keeping meticulous track of times and seasons and the feasts they are commanded to keep, as Moses told them in Exodus 13: 8 and 9

⁸ "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, '*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.'

⁹ "It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.

¹⁰ "You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

Now there are 7 feasts that we will be looking at, they are Passover, Unleavened bread, and Firstfruits. The feast of Weeks, sometimes call the feast of Harvest or Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and the feast of Tabernacles.

The first 4 are spring feasts and were fulfilled at Jesus first coming; the last 3 are fall feasts and will be fulfilled when Jesus comes at his second coming. All of these are set in place in order to illustrate and show us God's great plan of salvation for the world.

All the way from the beginning when he created the sun, moon and stars and said that they shall be for signs and seasons right up to the new heaven and new earth where we shall be in glory forever more God's great plan will continue until it is fulfilled and accomplished.

Conclusion:

And so in conclusion to this introduction, the purpose of this series is to look at the feasts of Israel, and look into what they were commanded to observe and keep regarding the holy days. Secondly it is looking at the illustration of Christ and how He is depicted and prophesied in each of these 7 feasts, past, present and future. To reveal to us this great plan of the ages that has been given to us in the form of words in the bible.

And lastly the application for the Christian. I have often quote Deuteronomy 29:29 where Moses says:

"The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

The thinking is that we may do all the words of this law, that we may learn all the words of this law, that we may live according to all the words of this law, for us and our children during our time here on earth.

I think too many Christians go through their Christian life not knowing the importance of the Old Testament, not knowing the importance of the Old Testament for their Christian walk, not knowing the application of the feasts of the Old Testament for the Christian in regards to salvation and future prophecy.

Because as I said earlier from the very beginning God had a plan, and It was a plan designed to give glory to Him and Him alone, it was a plan designed by the Father, carried out by the Son and all performed in the presence of the Holy Spirit

And I hope that within these next few messages I can portray that plan to you from the feasts that Israel was commanded to keep, feasts that are not just for the Jew's, for their own religion and purpose,

feast that are not just put there as a Christian holyday, but show that these feasts are a plan for all men, for every man, every man women and child here on this earth, because that is where we will be spending the rest of eternity as believers, here on this earth, the earth which He has created and will make new for us, so that we can glorify and praise the Lord for all eternity.

Psalm 148 reads;

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!

2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!

3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light!

4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.

6 He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths;

8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;

- 9 Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars;
- 10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying fowl;
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;
- 12 Both young men and maidens; Old men and children.
- 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven.
- 14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints—Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. Praise the LORD!

When we truly know our Lord and His plan it is then that we can truly praise Him and give Him glory. And so let us begin to know Him through this series in The Feasts of Israel.