



## Sunday School Lessons: **The Fall Feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23**

### **Why learn about the Feasts of the Lord?**

- These three holidays outlined in Leviticus 23 point to Jesus the Messiah and are fulfilled in Him.
- Learning about the Jewish roots of our Christian faith can deepen our relationship with God.
- Studying how Jewish people celebrated the feasts in biblical times and today can help us share the Good News of Messiah Jesus with our Jewish friends.

### **In these lessons, you will learn about three autumn holidays:**

- *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year), in which we reflect on our lives, ask forgiveness, and thank the Lord for providing His Son to die in our place.
- *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), in which we acknowledge the seriousness of our sins, but rejoice in the atonement provided by Messiah Jesus.
- *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles), during which we celebrate God's provision for all our needs.

For more information about the Fall Feasts and their fulfillment in Jesus, order the book *The Fall Feasts of Israel* by Dr. Mitch Glaser at [www.chosenpeople.com/store](http://www.chosenpeople.com/store)



## Rosh Hashanah – The Jewish New Year

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.'" (Leviticus 23:23-25)



### Retelling the Story – A New Year's Party to Remember!

Every year, Jewish people around the world celebrate the Jewish New Year (*Rosh Hashanah* in Hebrew), which generally falls in September. The Jewish New Year is a very joyous time when the whole family gathers around the table to eat, laugh, and reflect on the past year. It is a very important day for Jewish people, and it is the first of three autumn holidays. The other two holidays are *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) and *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles).

The Jewish New Year is a time to reflect on the last year and think about all the good things and bad things we have done. *Rosh Hashanah* gives us the chance to stop and think about who we might have hurt with our words, our actions and even our thoughts. We can then ask for forgiveness and make things right.



Thinking about the bad things we have done can make us feel sad, so Jewish people often eat sweet things during *Rosh Hashanah* to remind us of how sweet forgiveness is. One favorite treat is apple slices dipped in honey. The New Year gives us a fresh new start!

**As believers in Messiah Jesus, we have been forgiven for all the sins we have ever or will**

**ever commit—nothing can be as sweet as that!**

**Reflection:** For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. (Romans 6:10)

## Bible Passage – Genesis 22 (Isaac and the Ram)

The *shofar* (ram's horn) was used in biblical times to call all the Israelites together for holidays such as *Rosh Hashanah*. When a shofar is blown, the sound is very loud—it is meant to be heard and obeyed! There is a very important story in Genesis about a ram and its horns, found in Genesis 22. This passage is always read at *Rosh Hashanah* because of its connection to the ram's horn and its lesson about faith in God to provide redemption. The New Testament also tells us about the *shofar* being blown in the future to gather believers to Jesus Himself (Matt. 24:29-31, 1 Thess.4:16).



Abraham and his wife Sarah couldn't have children for many years, and finally the Lord gave them a miracle son, Isaac, who was to be the father of many generations of Israelites. God needed to test Abraham's faith, and asked Abraham to take his son, whom he loved, and kill him. Abraham loved God so much that he obeyed, trusting God to provide another way. Isaac was tied up and Abraham raised the knife to kill him, but suddenly an angel stopped

Abraham's hand and showed him a ram caught in the brush by his horns. The ram was sacrificed instead of Isaac, and God knew that Abraham (as well as Isaac) loved and trusted Him.

Sometimes we have to do hard things in order to obey God. Sometimes we have to understand that God is in control, even when things get scary or confusing. Imagine what Abraham thought when he heard what God wanted him to do to Isaac. He still obeyed, even though it hurt tremendously, and the outcome was blessing, faithfulness and redemption.

As believers in Messiah Jesus, we have the greatest redemption in Him, who was innocent and yet died on a cross, giving up His life for us. This is why John the Baptist said in John 1:29 as he saw Messiah Jesus walking towards him, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus took our punishment for sin. Just like the ram was the substitute for Isaac, Jesus was the substitute for all humanity.

*Rosh Hashanah* is a great time to reflect on God's faithfulness in providing a substitute—we don't need to die because of our sin; we have been saved! Because of this, we should always ask for forgiveness from the Lord and from others we have wronged. We want our hearts to be clean and pure, so we can celebrate a New Year rejoicing in our sweet redemption.

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## The Main Points

- *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year, is a time to celebrate the sweetness of life and redemption.



- Jewish people often eat apples and honey and round challah bread
- We can all celebrate *Rosh Hashanah* by taking the time to ask for forgiveness from others and ask the Lord to forgive our sins. We want to start the year with a clean slate, as we seek to love God and our neighbor.
- By asking for forgiveness from others and from the Lord, we can understand more of His redemption and love for us, as He gave us the ultimate gift of redemption!
- The story of Isaac and Abraham shows us how Abraham loved God so much that he trusted Him when God asked him to kill his son Isaac. God provided a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac.
- At *Rosh Hashanah*, the sound of the *shofar* (ram's horn) calls everyone together for the holiday.
- If not for the ram, Isaac would have died. The ultimate redemption is through Jesus, who died in our place. He is our ram!



**Reflection:** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II Cor. 5:21)

## Hebrew Words

**Rosh HaShanah** (rosh ha shah-NAH) – The Jewish New Year, literally meaning the “head” of the year.

**Shofar** (SHOW-far) – A ram’s horn that is blown like a trumpet. In the time of the Israelites, it was used for battle and assembling the people; today, it is sounded during Jewish holidays.

**Challah** (HAh-lah) – Special braided bread eaten at Jewish celebrations. For the Jewish New Year, the braid is curved into a circle, representing the end of one year and the beginning of another.



**L'Shanah Tovah!** (sounds like it's spelled) – The traditional New Years' greeting, “Happy New Year!”

## Craft – Honey Cards

- 1) Take heavy construction paper and fold it in half. Trace the shape of a honey jar on it and cut it out to make a card.
- 2) Trace the outline of the honey jar card twice on a piece of felt, then cut out the felt and glue it to the front and back of the card.
- 3) Write a label like "Honey" on the front of the card.
- 4) Inside, write holiday messages like "God's Love is Sweet" "Forgiveness is Sweet," etc.



## Game/Snack

You can serve a snack of apple slices and honey, and try to get challah bread from a Jewish bakery or supermarket in a Jewish part of town (you can also find recipes on the internet to make challah yourself). It can also be fun for the kids to try to blow a shofar, if you have one: you need to press your lips together tightly and blow with a medium breath.



## Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement

“The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present a food offering to the Lord. Do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 23:27-28)



### Retelling the Story – A Special Day

For Jewish people, the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur* in Hebrew) is not just any special day—it’s the holiest day of the year, and many things are done on this day to make it different. It’s a day to be quiet, to think about the Lord and even to fast (not eat any food).

*Yom Kippur*, for the Israelites, was the day when the gift of forgiveness was given to the people. A sacrifice was made by the High Priest and the blood covered their sins symbolically before the Lord. Although there were consequences to pay for bad actions, the sins were forgiven! Imagine you were playing ball inside the house when your mom said you could not. Suddenly the ball hit a lamp and broke it to pieces. Your mom was mad and she punished you for disobeying. Afterwards she gave you a hug and said you are forgiven. The sin is still there (the broken lamp) but the forgiveness (the hug from mom) has covered it.



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On *Yom Kippur* in biblical times, the High Priest would go inside a special room in the Temple reserved only for *Yom Kippur*, and there he would present an offering to the Lord to symbolize the request from the people for forgiveness. The High Priest would then return and tell the people if the Lord had forgiven them and covered their sins!

In the same way, Jesus made the greatest sacrifice so our sins would be covered by his blood: “But now in Christ Jesus you, who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13)

Jesus was the greatest High Priest, who offered His own body before the Lord. The Lord was pleased with this offering, and Jesus' blood covers all our sins and gives us eternal life. Jesus is the ultimate atonement! As it is written in Hebrews 10:10, "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

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## The Main Points

- The Day of Atonement is the holiest day for Jewish people, as we remember the sacrifices on our behalf and the Lord's forgiveness.
  - It is also a day for us to remember that we sin and the sin can never be erased, but the Lord has covered our sins (which are ugly and dirty) so we can be closer to the Lord, who is perfectly holy and beautiful.
  - On *Yom Kippur*, Jewish people wear white clothes to symbolize that we want to be clean and spotless before God (see Isaiah 1:18).
  - Jewish people also fast on the Day of Atonement in order to focus on God and remember that He is the giver of life. At the end of *Yom Kippur*, there is a great feast to rejoice in the Lord and give thanks for His forgiveness!
  - Jewish people do not wear leather (such as the leather found in shoes) because leather, which is made from animals, reminds us of the sacrificial offering.
  - Many Jewish people do not know about the best sacrifice of all time—Jesus giving His life for us on the cross. His sacrifice is PERFECT, so we never have to sacrifice animals for atonement again. On this day, as we remember our sins as a group, we know that Jesus has forgiven us forever and covered our sins before the Lord with His blood!
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## Hebrew Words

**Yom** – Day

**Kippur** (key-POOR) – Atonement

**Cohen Gadol** (CO-hen gah-DOHL) – The High Priest who went into the special room of the Temple only on Yom Kippur, bringing an offering to the Lord for the people's atonement.

**Lavan** (lah-VAHN) – White

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## Bible Verse

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)





## Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles

“Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 23:39-43)



### Retelling the Story – Living in a Tent

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot* in Hebrew) is a joyous holiday! It reminds us of the time the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years after being freed from slavery in Egypt. During that time, the Lord told the Israelites to build booths and decorate them with fruit and all kinds of palms and branches. These temporary dwelling places are called *Sukkot* (booths or tents; *Sukkah* = singular). The Israelites had no water, food, or resources; without God, they would have died because of the extreme climate but He provided for all their needs—just like He does for us today. Philippians 4:19 says, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Today, many Jewish families will build their own *Sukkah* during this feast. They use a place in their backyards, porches, or balconies to celebrate and remember this feast. It’s fun for the whole family to build a *Sukkah*—it needs to have at least three walls and a roof that you can see through (made of canvas or bamboo, for example). The *Sukkah* is supposed to be used for a week; you can sleep in the *Sukkah* and you should eat all your meals there.

As believers in Jesus, this feast reminds us how the Lord takes care of us; He looks after even our smallest needs. He protects us and He has given us all we need, even eternal life in Messiah Jesus. Just as He looked after the Jewish people in the desert, he looks after of all of us today. We can say with joy, “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.” (Psalm 32:7)



At this time of the year in Israel, the hot summer months are coming to an end and the ground is dry—there is no rain in Israel from April until around October. The soil desperately needs rain so that the winter crops can be planted and the drinking water can be replenished. We must trust the Lord to provide! Usually a few drops of rain fall during *Sukkot*, and many people pray for God to send rain during the week-long holiday.

As Jesus was celebrating *Sukkot* in Jerusalem, He made a very bold announcement to the people, who understood how fragile their lives were without water. Jesus said, "Let anyone who is thirsty, come to me and drink, whoever believes in Me, as the Scriptures have said streams of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38) Everyone needs Jesus just as much as they need water.

For believers in Jesus, there is a great future celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles that is described in the book of Revelation: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21:3)



## The Main Points

- *Sukkot* is a time to celebrate how the Lord caused the Israelites to dwell in safety even when the living conditions were not ideal. He provided for their food, water, and housing needs. Consider how the Lord provides for our needs in both big and small ways.
- *Sukkot* is a time to rejoice! It is one of three holidays (the other two being Passover and Pentecost) when the Israelites were supposed to travel from their homes to Jerusalem in order to give an offering in the Temple. They gave thanks to God for bringing them through such a somber season to a time of rejoicing and refreshment.
- Most holidays are only one day, but not *Sukkot*; you live in your *Sukkah* for a whole week in order to remember how the Lord has provided for you. You see the stars and remember how big God is—yet He knows even the smallest details. Lots of guests come to visit your *Sukkah* and eat tasty meals with you.
- *Sukkot* were the fragile, temporary dwellings the Israelites used while they waited to enter the Promised Land and build permanent homes. This reminds us that our bodies are temporary as well. They are fragile, needing food, water and shelter every day to survive. The Spirit of the

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Lord dwells in our bodies, filling us and giving us the Living Water that Jesus talked about. Without Jesus, we would be hollow inside. We would be dry and cracked, like the ground without rain.

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## Hebrew Words

**Sukkah** (SOO-kah) – A temporary shelter or booth to live in

**Geshem** (GEH-shem) – Rain

**Mayim** (MY-im) – Water

**Ochel** (OH-hel) - Food

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## Craft

Make a 3-D mini-*Sukkah* with popsicle sticks and pieces of fabric. Glue the support beams on paper, wrap fabric around the sticks, make a light roof (with leaves, branches, canvas, etc) and don't forget a door for people to go in and out.



## Games/Snack

Eat a delicious snack, drink a cool glass of water and thank God that He provides food to eat, water to drink, and a home with strong walls and a roof. The entire *Sukkot* lesson can be given while sitting on the floor under a big tent. The tent can be made by simply draping fabric over chairs or hanging fabric from the ceiling. If possible, the tent can be constructed outside like a regular *Sukkah*. You will need wooden beams, cloth or tarp to wrap around the sides (the walls) and bamboo, palm branches, or canvas for the roof.

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## Bible Verse

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38)