

**The Book of Leviticus:  
Why It Matters to Christians  
“Sabbath and Feasts”  
Leviticus 23**



# Leviticus

Week	Date	Topic
1	Oct 1	Leviticus Introduction
2	Oct 8	Sacrifices: Leviticus 1-7
3	Oct 15	Priesthood of Aaron: Leviticus 8-10
4	Oct 22	Ritual Cleanliness: Leviticus 11-15
5	Oct 29	Day of Atonement: Leviticus 16
6	Nov 5	Holiness of Conduct: Leviticus 17-20
7	Nov 12	Holiness of Priests: Leviticus 21-22
8	Nov 19	Sabbath and Feasts: Leviticus 23
9	Nov 26	Preparation and Punishments: Leviticus 24
10	Dec 3	Sanctification of the Land: Leviticus 25
11	Dec 10	Promises and Warnings: Leviticus 26
12	Dec 17	Vows and Redemption of Tithes: Leviticus 27
13	Dec 24	Summary class

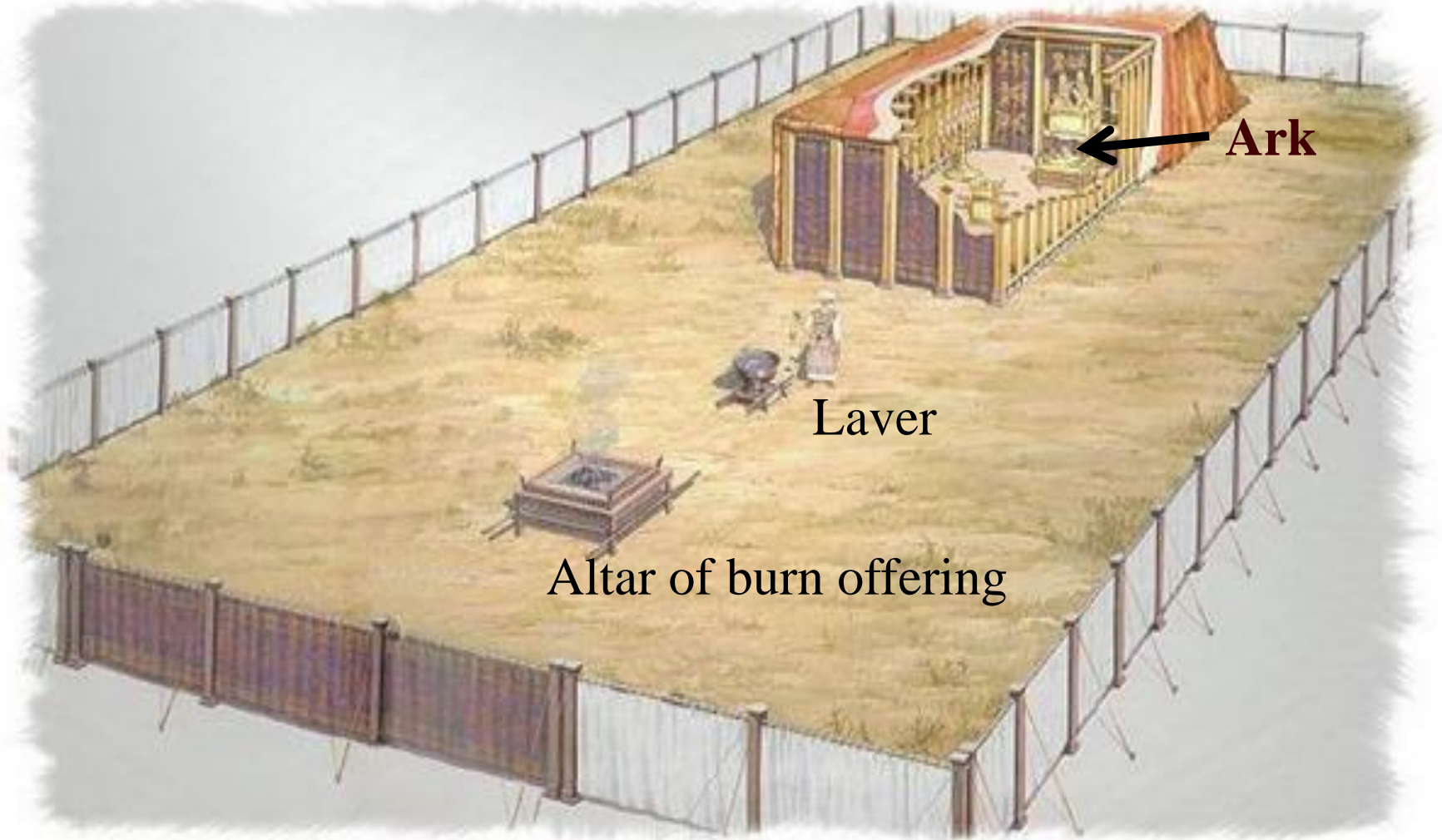
# Today's Objectives

- Review the previous week's lesson
- Learn about the Hebrew calendar and measurements of time
- Learn about seven additional feasts directed by God through Moses
- Review Old Testament correlations with Leviticus 23
- Review New Testament correlations with Leviticus 23

# Last week

- Reviewed the previous week's lesson about individual sins and punishments within Israel
- Reviewed Old and New Testament Scripture references to the priesthood and church spiritual leadership
- Spiritual leadership is not to be taken lightly and we all have a role in our own spiritual leadership today
- As priests we must live for Christ by higher standards
- In order to worship God, we must give Him our best

# Tabernacle



Ark

Laver

Altar of burn offering

# Altar



# Key To Studying Leviticus

- We must examine the messages and determine what the passage represents in order to see the riches God has for us
- Does the passage provide a spiritual truth?
  - Is this passage or verse a picture of New Testament spiritual truth that we obey today?
  - If it is, is that its only importance?
  - If this answer is yes, once we have determined the meaning of the picture, our interpretation is finished
  - If not, then we ask if it is a moral or physical command

# Key To Studying Leviticus

- Is it a moral or physical command:
  - Why did God give this verse/passage to the Israelites?
  - Is the command reflective of God's moral nature, and therefore one we need to follow, even today?
  - Did he want them to be different from the people around them?
  - If so, is the specific command relevant for us today, so that we might be different?
  - Did God give the command to them for health reasons? If so, is it relevant today? If we conclude that the specific command is not relevant for us, we must ask, What is the principle behind the commands of God? How does the principle apply to us?

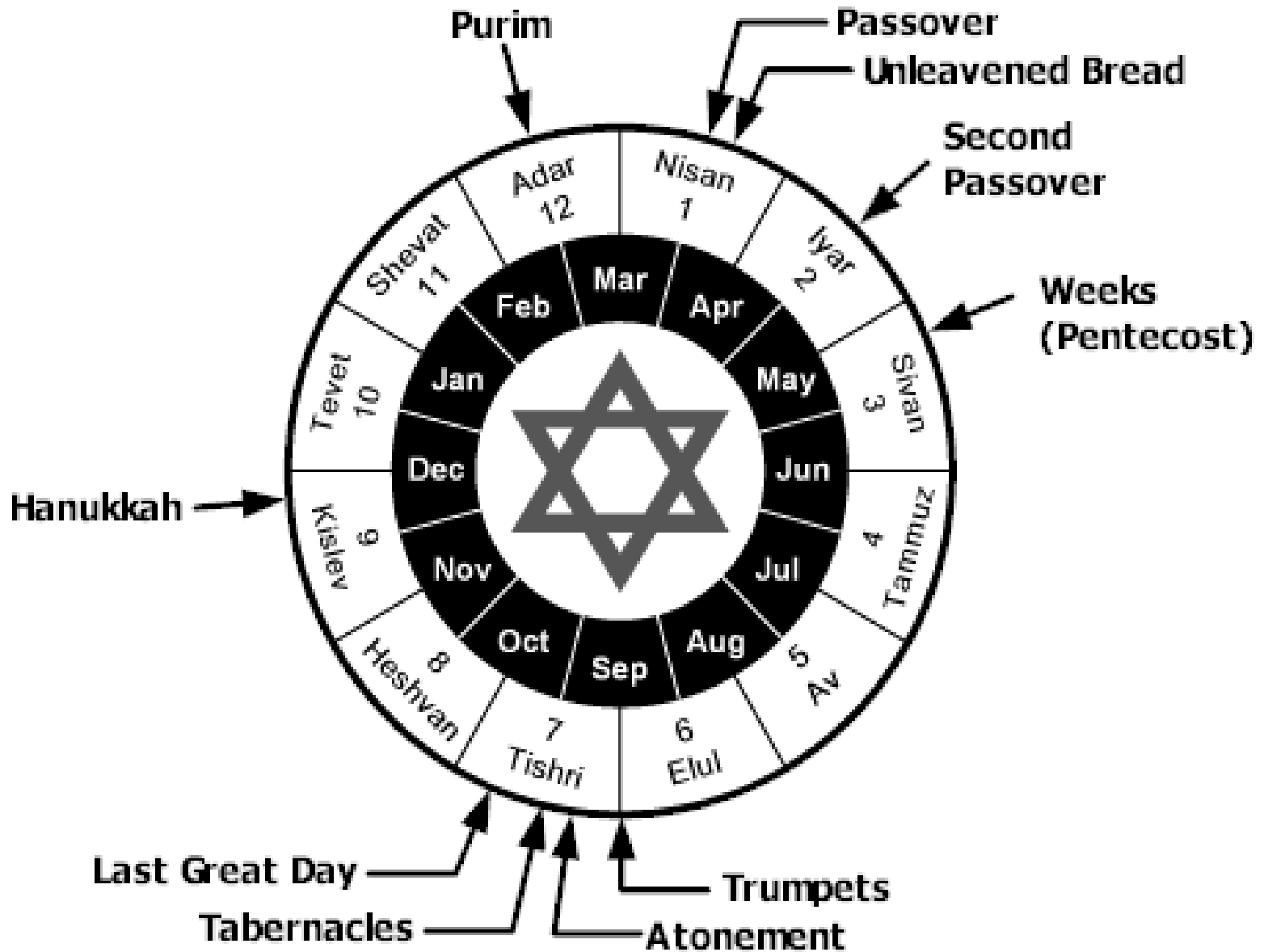


# Sacrifices To God

- God designed these offerings to
  - Enable the Israelites to worship God
  - Taught the Israelites conditions necessary to restore and maintain the believers' communion with God in view of their sin and defilement
- Each offering involved three objects
  - The person bringing the offering
  - The object being offered (animal, for example)
  - The mediator (priest)
- Differences in offerings
  - Each offering was different from the other offerings
  - Within each offering there were different options of what the offerer could present and how he could present it

# Overview

- God considered many things set apart to Him as holy
  - Israelites (Lev 17-20)
  - Priests, holy gifts, and sacrifices (Lev 21-22)
- He also regarded certain days and times of the year in the same way (Lev 23)
  - Seven days of feasts and celebration held annually
  - Israelites would assemble around the tabernacle
- Israelite year
  - Solar year containing 365 days and a lunar month
  - Lunar months have 29 or 30 days
  - Periodically made up the lost time by adding another month...like having two Decembers



# Jewish Calendar

- The Jewish calendar is based on three astronomical phenomena
  - Rotation of the Earth on its axis – one day
  - Revolution of the moon around the earth – one month
  - Revolution of the Earth around the sun – one year
- These three phenomena are independent of each other
- On average
  - The moon revolves around the Earth in about  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days
  - The Earth revolves around the sun in about  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days
- So – about 11 days difference every year, made up with a leap month every third year

# Sabbath (23:1-3)

- God speaks through Moses to the Israelites
  - Designates appointed feasts
  - Are to be sacred assemblies of the Israelites
- Sabbath
  - Six days for work, Seventh day is a day of rest
  - A day of sacred assembly
  - Prescribed in Ex 20:8-11, 31:13-17, 35:2-3, Lev 19:3
  - Heart of the entire system of annual feasts
- Jesus proclaimed he was lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28)
  - Our Sunday is not a continuation of the Jewish Sabbath
  - It closed the week, our Sunday opens the week

# Seven Annual Feasts (23:4-8)

- Seven annual feasts introduced (vs. 4)
  - Requires attendance in vicinity of the tabernacle
- Passover
  - Most important, commemorated God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex 12:1-28)
  - Jesus is crucified during Passover (Matt 26:17-29)
- Feast of Unleavened Bread
  - Day after the Passover
  - One of three feasts that all adult males had to attend
  - Reminded Israelites that they needed to live a pure life since God had redeemed them by the Passover lamb
  - Read 1 Cor 5:6-8

# Feast of Firstfruits (23:9-14)

- First sheaf of the grain harvest in the spring
  - Israelites also offered a lamb, flour, and wine
  - Represented God's provisions of spiritual and physical food and drink for His people
  - Presented on the day after the Sabbath following Passover
- Jesus arose from his tomb on this day (1 Cor 15:20)
- Modern Jews stay up the entire night of this observance to study and discuss the Torah
  - Based on the tradition that the Israelites had fallen asleep the night before God gave them the Torah
  - Moses had to awaken them

# Feast of Pentecost (23:15-22)

- Had several names
  - Harvest, Weeks, and Pentecost
- End of the spring harvest, 50 days after the Passover
  - Day after the end of the seventh week
  - Thanksgiving festival which lasted only one day
  - Time of appreciation for God's provisions and care
- Offering
  - Bread offered contained yeast
  - Seven male lambs, one year old
  - One young bull and two rams
  - One male goat for a sin offering
  - Two lambs for a fellowship offering



# Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25)

- During the seventh month of Israel's religious calendar
  - Rosh Hashanah in Hebrew
  - Celebrated on the first day of the seventh month
  - Although Israelites blew trumpets on the first day of every month, this day ushered in the feast
  - After Babylonian captivity, the Jewish civil year began on this day
- Trumpet is a common symbol in OT and NT
  - Trumpet sounds calling Christians (1 Cor 15:52)
  - Assemble Israelites heralding the Day of the Lord (Jer 32:37)

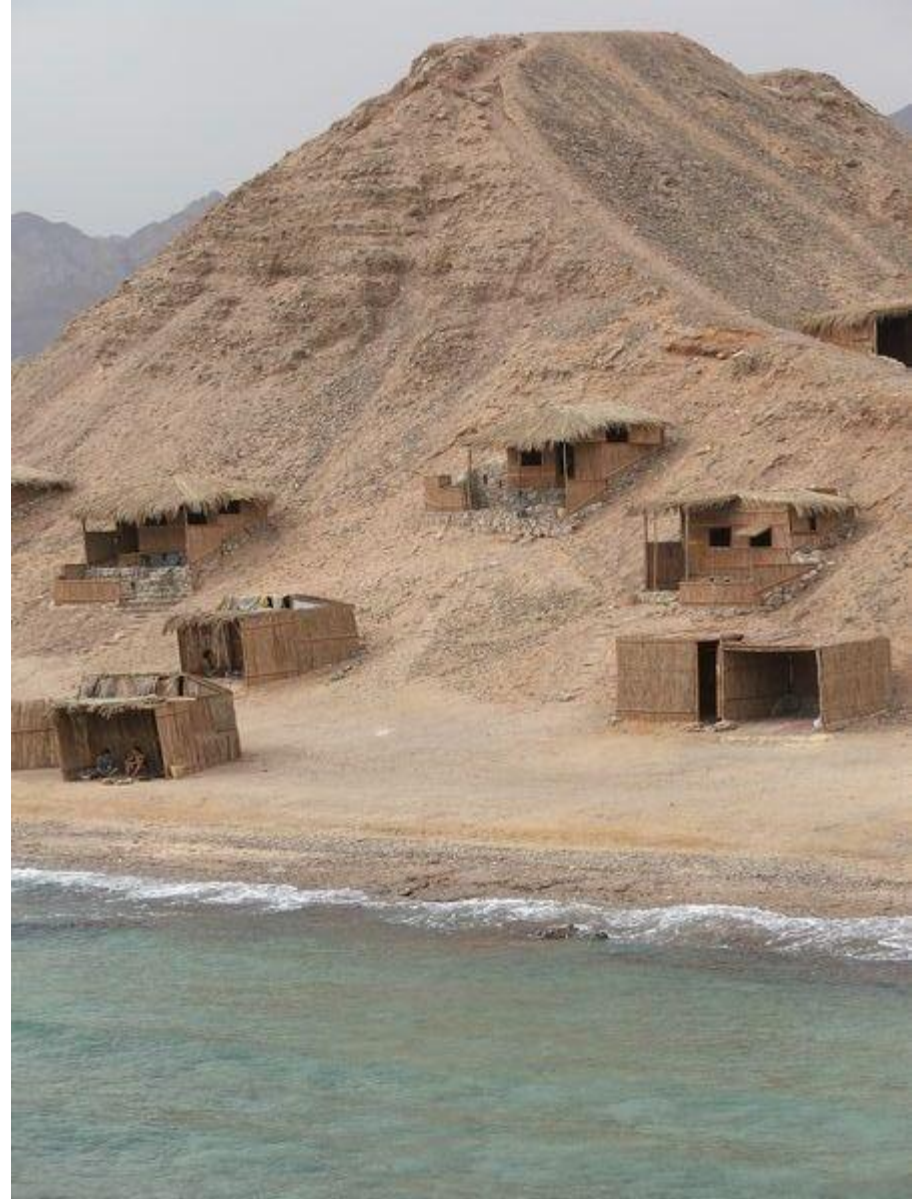
# Day of Atonement (23:26-32)

- Called Yom Kippur
  - Described in Lev 16 as more for the priests benefit
  - In Lev 23, stresses responsibility of the ordinary Israelite
  - Fast, not a feast; people were to deny themselves
  - Abstaining from normal pleasures and comforts
- 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month
  - Sacrifices made by priests atoned for all remaining sins of believing Israelites
  - Benefits lasted only for one year

# Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-34)

- Fifteenth day of the seventh month
  - Joyous occasion, lasting eight days
  - Commemorated the Israelites' journey from Egyptian bondage to blessing in Canaan
  - Also called Feast of Booths and Feast of Ingathering
  - People build shelters to remind them of their life in the wilderness lived in them for seven days
- Feasts not mentioned
  - Feast of Purim (lots) added in Esth 9:20-32, time of the Persians
  - Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) instituted much later, time of the Maccabees

# Sukkot



## FEASTS & FASTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Season	Month			Day(s) of Month	Feast or Fast	Attendance by Adult Males
	Sacred	Civil	Modern			
Spring	1	7	March/April	14	<i>Passover</i>	Optional
Spring	1	7	March/April	14-20	<i>Unleavened Bread</i>	Required
Spring	1	7	March/April	The day after the Sabbath following Passover	<i>Firstfruits</i>	Optional
Spring	3	9	May/June	4	<i>Pentecost</i> (a.k.a. Harvest, Weeks)	Required
Fall	7	1	September/October	1	<i>Trumpets</i>	Optional
Fall	7	1	September/October	10	<i>Day of Atonement</i> (the only fast)	Optional
Fall	7	1	September/October	15-21	<i>Tabernacles</i> (a.k.a. Booths, Ingathering)	Required

# Review

- Reviewed last weeks less on individual sins of Israel and the punishment
- Learned about the Hebrew calendar and measurements of time
- Learned about seven additional feasts directed by God through Moses
- Reviewed Old Testament correlations with Leviticus 23
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- Next week: Leviticus 24