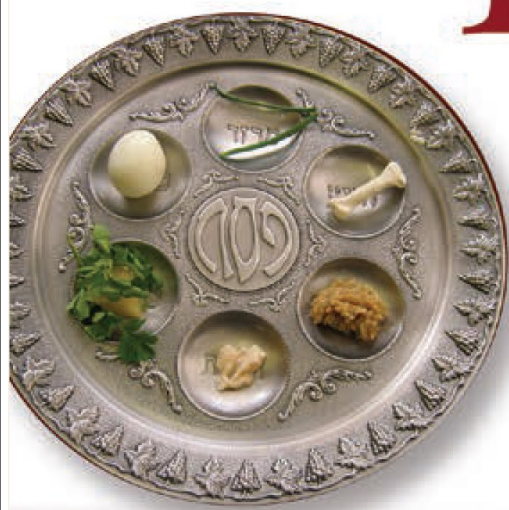


Jewish Roots of Believers in Yeshua (Jesus)

Feasts of the Bible



Passover

Pesach

Unleavened Bread

Hag HaMatzot

Firstfruits

Reishit

Pentecost

Shavuot

Trumpets

Rosh HaShanah

Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur

Tabernacles

Sukkot

Feast of Dedication

Hanukkah

Feast of Lots

Purim

Dates of Feasts, Hebrew Names,
and Fulfillment by Yeshua (Jesus).

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Holiday	Also Known As	Date Observed	Scripture Basis
PASSOVER	Pesach	14 NISAN (March or April)	Leviticus 23:4–5 Exodus 12:1–4
UNLEAVENED BREAD	Hag HaMatzot	15-21 NISAN (March or April)	Leviticus 23:6–8 Exodus 12:15–20
FIRSTFRUITS	Reishit	16 NISAN (March or April)	Leviticus 23:9–14
FEAST of WEEKS or PENTECOST	Shavuot	6 SIVAN (May or June)	Leviticus 23:15–22
FEAST of TRUMPETS or NEW YEAR	Yom HaTeruah Rosh HaShanah	1 TISHRI (September or October)	Leviticus 23:23–25

General Information

Passover: Commemorates God's Deliverance of Israel Out of Egypt

Pesach (PAY-sahk) means to "pass over." The Passover meal, seder (SAY der), commemorates the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The Lord sent Moses to lead the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. When first confronted by Moses, Pharaoh refused to let the people go. After sending nine plagues, the Lord said the firstborn males of every house would die unless the doorframe of that house was covered with the blood of a perfect lamb. That night, the Lord "passed over" the homes with blood on the doorframes. The tenth plague brought death to the firstborn sons of Egypt, even taking the life of Pharaoh's own son. Finally, Pharaoh let the children of Israel go. Passover was to be a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

In Leviticus 23, Hag HaMatzot (Hawg Hah-MAHT-zot) or Hag HaMatzah, also known as the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," is mentioned as a separate feast on the fifteenth day of the same month as Passover. Today, however, the feasts of Pesach, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits have all been incorporated into the celebration of Passover, and reference to Passover means all three feasts. Passover is celebrated for eight days, 14–21 Nisan. The Lord said that for seven days the children of Israel must eat unleavened bread. This bread, made in a hurry without yeast, represents how the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste.

In Scripture, leaven also represents sin. Today, cleansing the house before Passover is often a symbolic search to remove any hypocrisy or wickedness. Unleavened Bread is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord" (Deut. 16:16).

Firstfruits: Offerings are Given for the Spring Barley Harvest

On Reishit (Re-SHEET) people offered the first ripe sheaf (firstfruits) of barley to the Lord as an act of dedicating the harvest to him. On Passover, a marked sheaf of grain was bundled and left standing in the field. On the next day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, the sheaf was cut and prepared for the offering on the third day. On this third day, Reishit, the priest waved the sheaf before the Lord. Counting the days (omer) then begins and continues until the day after the seventh Sabbath, the 50th day, which is called Shavuot or Pentecost (the next feast on the calendar).

Jewish people rarely celebrate Reishit today, but it has great significance for followers of Jesus as the most important day of the year, the day of Jesus' resurrection.

Feasts of Weeks: Offerings are Given and Commemorates the Giving of the Law

Fifty days after Passover, Shavuot (Sha-voo-OTE) is celebrated. Also known as Pentecost, Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, and the Latter Firstfruits, it is the time to present an offering of new grain of the summer wheat harvest to the Lord. It shows joy and thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest. Often called Matan Torah (giving of the Law), it is tied to the Ten Commandments because it is believed God gave Moses the Ten Commandments at this time.

The book of Ruth is often read to celebrate the holiday. Shavuot is one of the three pilgrimage feasts when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord" (Deut. 16:16).

Feast of Trumpets: The Beginning of the Civil New Year

The Ten Days of Repentance with Rosh HaShanah (Rosh Ha-SHA-nah) on the first day and Yom Kippur on the last day make up the High Holy Days. Jewish tradition says that God writes every person's words, deeds, and thoughts in the Book of Life, which he opens and examines on this day. If good deeds outnumber sinful ones for the year, that person's name will be inscribed in the book for another year on Yom Kippur. So during Rosh HaShanah and the Ten Days of Repentance, people can repent of their sins and do good deeds to increase their chances of being inscribed in the Book of Life. During the Rosh HaShanah synagogue services, the shofar (ram's horn) is blown 100 times.

Yeshua (Jesus)

Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, saying that he had eagerly desired to eat this Passover with them before he suffered and that he would not eat it again until the kingdom of God comes (Luke 22:7–16). After the Passover meal, they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30). The hymn sung during Passover is the Hallel which includes Psalm 118:22: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” Jesus is the cornerstone that the builders rejected (Matt. 21:42; 1 Peter 2:7). Jesus was crucified as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Lord’s Supper is a remembrance of his sacrifice as the perfect Passover Lamb and the fulfilment of the new covenant between God and man (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 2:11–13). Prophecy of this sacrifice is found in Psalm 22. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah also spoke of the sufferings and sacrifice of the Messiah (Isa. 53).

Unleavened bread (matzah) is a symbol of Passover. Leaven represents sin (Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:7–8). Matzah stands for “without sin” and is a picture of Jesus, the only human without sin. Jesus said that the “bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” and that he (Jesus) is the “bread of life,” the “bread that came down from heaven,” “the living bread” which a person may eat and not die (John 6:32, 35, 41, 48). While leaven is a symbol of sin, the Messiah is “unleavened” or sinless. He conquers the grave with his resurrection because he is not a sinner under the curse of death. Jesus was scourged and pierced at his crucifixion. As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, “By his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5 KJV). All of the festivals instituted by God, including Passover and Unleavened Bread, are “shadows of things to come” (Col. 2:17).

Firstfruits is a picture of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus rose on the third day of Passover season, 16 Nisan, the day of Firstfruits. That event gave new meaning to this agricultural holiday. The apostle Paul, a Jewish believer and rabbi, wrote, “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him” (1 Cor. 15:20–23). Jesus’ resurrection is the promise of the future resurrection of believers (John 5:28–29). Although most believers in Jesus have never heard of Reishit, they celebrate it as Resurrection Day, or Easter.

Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem following his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. They were all together in the upper room for Shavuot on the 50th day after the Sabbath of Passover week, thus, the first day of the week. The Holy Spirit filled the house, with a sound like a mighty wind and what appeared to be tongues of fire, and filled the disciples (Acts 2). The apostle Peter referred to the prophet Joel who said that God would “pour out his Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28–32). Peter also said that the risen and exalted Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32–33). The people responded to Peter’s message with repentance, and about 3,000 were baptized (Acts 2:41). The new covenant between God and Israel (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 9:14–15) was initiated on Shavuot, 50 days after the death of Christ.

Rosh HaShanah is sometimes referred to as the Day of Judgment. Jesus said he has the authority to judge people (John 5:24–27) and the apostle Paul referred to him as the judge of “the living and the dead” (2 Tim. 4:1). God does have a book of life; Revelation 21:27 calls it the “Lamb’s book of life.” The only way to have one’s name inscribed in it is through faith in Jesus as Savior from sin, and then it is permanent (John 10:27–30). Those whose names are not in the book will be judged and sentenced to hell: “Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).