



FEASTS AND FASTS OLD AND NEW



FEAST DAYS OF THE NEW MOONS (Rosh Chodesh): The first day of each new month (the Jewish calendar is based in part on the lunar month) was a special feast day on which burnt offerings were to be made. Trumpets were blown, as a mark of the festal nature of the occasion. The Feasts of the New Moon were a sign of the eternal character of the covenant and of the faithfulness of the Lord. The persistence of these feasts contributed to Israel's adherence to a lunar calendar in governing its religious and communal life. *Numbers 10:10, 28:11-15*

PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (Pesach): A seven day feast which began with a "Sedar" meal commemorating the historical deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the first Passover. A prohibition against eating leavened bread symbolized the haste of the Exodus night. On the first and last days, holy assemblies were held and sacrifices were offered. No servile work was done during the course of the feast. *Exodus 12 and 13; Numbers 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8*

FEAST OF WEEKS (Pentecost, the Day of First Fruits, Shavuot): A one day festival which marked the end of the grain harvest and the beginning of the season for the offering of first fruits, and also commemorated the giving of the Law. It came to be known as Pentecost because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day from the Sabbath beginning Passover. A holy convocation was held, and sacrifices were to be offered. *Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Numbers 28:26-31; Leviticus 23:10-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-12*

THE DAY OF BLOWING OF TRUMPETS (Seventh New Moon, Rosh Hashanah): A special festal observance of the New Moon of the seventh month. The sacrifices were greater than for other New Moons. All hard labor ceased. The traditional explanation for the special observance for this month's new moon is built upon the principle of the sacredness of the number seven. Since the Jewish civil year began on the first of the month Tishri, as the first day of the first month, this day was also called "Rosh Hashanah," or New Year. In more modern practice, this day marked the beginning of a period of fasting and penitence which continued until the Day of Atonement. *Numbers 29:1-6; Leviticus 23:24*

DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur): Israel's most solemn holy day, and a day of holy convocation. The Day of Atonement served as a reminder that the daily, weekly, and monthly sacrifices made at the altar of burnt offering were not sufficient to atone for sin. On this day, the high priest presented a blood sacrifice in the Holy of Holies for himself and for all of the iniquities of Israel. All work was strictly forbidden, and a strict fast was enjoined upon all the people. *Leviticus 16; 23:26-32; 25:9; Exodus 30:10; Numbers 29:7-11*

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Feast of Booths, Feast of Ingathering, Succoth): A feast lasting seven days. On the first and last days of the feast holy assemblies were held. The people dwelt in booths made of branches and boughs of trees to commemorate Israel's time of wandering in the wilderness. The feast was also associated with the fall harvest, and thus fruits were "in-gathered." *Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:34, 39-43; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Numbers 29:12-38*

FEAST OF DEDICATION (Hanukkah): An extra-biblical feast which commemorated the victories of Judas Maccabeus and the purification and rededication of the temple under his leadership. The feast lasts for eight days. Special candles were lit each of the eight nights, and so the feast was also known as the "Festival of Lights." *Maccabees 4:52-59*

FAST OF ESTHER AND FEAST OF PURIM: A feast was established by Mordecai in the 5th century B.C. to commemorate the miraculous deliverance of the Jews from the intrigues of Haman. A one day fast traditionally preceded the feast. *Esther 9*

NOTE: Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles are collectively known as the Three Pilgrim Feasts. These were the three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem. *Exodus 23:14-19*

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Nisan)
PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD - 14th to 20th of Nisan

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Iyar)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Sivan)
FEAST OF WEEKS - 6th of Sivan

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Tammuz)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Ab)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Elul)

DAY OF BLOWING OF TRUMPETS - 1st of Tishri
DAY OF ATONEMENT - 10th of Tishri
FEAST OF TABERNACLES - 15th to 21st of Tishri

New Moon - (Rosh Chodesh Heshvan)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Chislev)
FEAST OF DEDICATION - 25th of Chislev to 2nd of Tebeth

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Tebeth)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Shebat)

New Moon (Rosh Chodesh Adar)
FAST OF ESTHER - 13th of Adar
FEAST OF PURIM - 14th & 15th of Adar

Jewish Calendar	MARCH
NISAN 1st Month	APRIL
IYAR 2nd Month	MAY
SIVAN 3rd Month	JUNE
TAMMUZ 4th Month	JULY
AB 5th Month	AUGUST
ELUL 6th Month	SEPTEMBER
TISHRI 7th Month	OCTOBER
HESHVAN 8th Month	NOVEMBER
CHISLEV 9th Month	DECEMBER
TEBETH 10th Month	JANUARY
SHEBAT 11th Month	FEBRUARY
ADAR 12th Month	MARCH

MOVABLE FEASTS TIED TO DATE OF EASTER

****40 days before Palm Sunday - LENT**
****Sunday before Easter - PALM SUNDAY**
****Week before Easter - HOLY WEEK**
****Moveable Date - EASTER/PASCHA**
****40 days after Easter - ASCENSION DAY**
****50 days after Easter - PENTECOST**
****Sunday after Pentecost - TRINITY SUNDAY (Western)/ ALL SAINTS DAY (Eastern)**

June 29th - FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES

August 6th - TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

August 15th - DORMITION OF MARY/THE THEOTOKOS

September 8th - NATIVITY OF MARY/THE THEOTOKOS

September 14th - ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (Eastern)

November 1st - ALL SAINTS DAY (Western)

November 15th - PRE-CHRISTMAS LENT (Eastern)

****Sunday closest to November 30th - ADVENT (Western)**

November 21st - PRESENTATION OF MARY/THE THEOTOKOS

December 8th/9th - CONCEPTION OF MARY/THE THEOTOKOS

December 25th - CHRISTMAS/NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

January 1st - CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD/HOLY NAME DAY

January 6th - EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

February 2nd - PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

March 25th - ANNUNCIATION

LENT, PALM SUNDAY, AND HOLY WEEK: Lent is a forty day period of fasting and spiritual preparation prior to Holy Week and the celebration of Easter. In the Orthodox tradition, the fast of Great Lent begins on Clean Monday; in the Western tradition, on Ash Wednesday. Palm Sunday is a feast in commemoration of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Holy Week focuses on the events in the last week of Christ's earthly ministry, including the institution of the Eucharist, His trial, crucifixion, and burial. Holy Week is a time of special fasting and contemplation.

EASTER: The highest feast day of the Church year, in celebration of our Lord's Resurrection.

ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST: Ascension Day celebrates the bodily ascension of our Lord into heaven. Pentecost is a feast day celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. In the West, the celebration focuses on the Person of the Holy Spirit. In the East, the descent of the Holy Spirit is seen as the final act of salvation enabling the Church to participate in the life of the Holy Trinity. Thus, Pentecost is sometimes referred to as "Holy Trinity Day," and the Monday following Pentecost is set apart as "Holy Spirit Day" to specially recognize the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

TRINITY SUNDAY: In the West, the Sunday following Pentecost is set aside as a feast honoring the Holy Trinity. In the Eastern tradition, this celebration is part of the Pentecost feast.

ALL SAINTS DAY: In the Orthodox tradition, the feast of All Saints is celebrated on the Sunday following Pentecost; in the West, All Saints Day is celebrated on November 1st. Specific saints are recognized on other days throughout the Christian year.

FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES: A feast commemorating the life and work of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In the Eastern tradition, the period between All Saints Day and this feast is a time of fasting.

ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS: A commemoration of the restoration and exaltation of the cross of Christ, found in 335 A.D. The day is kept as a strict fast in remembrance of Christ's sufferings upon the cross.

ADVENT/ PRE-CHRISTMAS LENT: In the West, the period prior to Christmas is called "Advent," and is a time of joyful anticipation of the coming of Christ on Christmas Day. In the East, the period between November 15th and Christmas is observed as a fast, in preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation.

CHRISTMAS: A feast in celebration of the Nativity and Incarnation of our Lord. The Christmas feast or season continues from Christmas Day until Epiphany or the celebration of the Baptism of Christ.

EPIPHANY: A feast day celebrating the showing forth of the Divinity of Christ. In the East, the emphasis is on the recognition of Christ's divinity through the events surrounding His baptism. In the West, the focus is on the acknowledgement of Christ's divinity on the part of the Three Magi, and Christ's baptism is celebrated one week later.

OTHER FEAST DAYS OF OUR LORD: In addition to Easter, Ascension Day, Christmas, and Epiphany, several other events in the life of Christ are also marked by special feast days. The Transfiguration is celebrated on August 6th. The Circumcision of our Lord eight days after his birth is celebrated on January 1st. (This feast is referred to as "Holy Name Day" in the Anglican tradition, because on the day of Christ's circumcision He was given the name "Jesus.") The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple when He was 40 days old is honored on February 2nd.

FEAST DAYS OF THE VIRGIN MARY/ THE THEOTOKOS: Because the Virgin Mary was specially chosen by God to bear the Son of God in His humanity, and because of her life of holiness and faith, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions give special honor to Mary. Significant events in her life are marked by special feast days. The Dormition (Falling Asleep) of Mary is celebrated on August 15th. (In the Eastern tradition, this feast is preceded by a fast beginning on August 1st.) The Nativity of Mary is celebrated on September 8th. The Presentation of Mary in the Temple is commemorated on November 21st. The Conception of Mary is celebrated on the 8th of December in the West, and on the 9th of December in the East. The Annunciation to Mary is celebrated on March 25th.