

From the West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

Why is it that the world focuses on a calendar that starts the New Year in the middle of the darkest, coldest part of the year for the northern hemisphere? The Bible tells us “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”, Genesis 1:1, but the earth was in confusion and darkness ruled. So God created light and He separated the light and the darkness on the first day. Then God proceeded to create the weekly cycle by His day by day creation. On the fourth day of creation, He placed the lights in the firmament of heaven to “let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years”, Genesis 1:14, NKJV. By doing so, He created the earth with its own built in calendar.

When God brought His chosen people Israel out of slavery, out of the world of the Egyptians with their ten day work week and their humanly devised calendars, He had to reintroduce them to His week. He told them on the sixth day “Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord”, Exodus 16:22-23, NKJV, and God also had to explain to them His yearly calendar. Exodus 12:2, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.” In Hebrew, the first month is called “Abib”, referring to the fresh green ears of the barely plant. God lays His calendar out, starting in the spring of the year, to coincide with the seasons of the year. But God doesn't stop there.

In Leviticus 23:15 is a list of festivals God commanded His people to keep. These festivals, according to Paul, are “a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17, NKJV). What Paul is saying here is that God's festivals are prophetic, revealing, salvational acts of Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 23 tells us the very first salvational act of Jesus is the seventh day Sabbath, verse 3, which Christ Himself says He is Lord of, see Mark 2:28, and God claims the Sabbath as a sign that He is the God who sanctifies them. See Exodus 31:12-17. The next salvational act of Jesus Christ listed in Leviticus 23 is the Passover, see verse 5. Jesus being our Passover Lamb “who takes away the sin of the world”, John 1:29, NKJV, who was slain “from the foundation of the world”, Revelation 13:8, NKJV.

The next salvational act listed in Leviticus 23 pictures the responsibility of the people of God to do our part in our relationship to God, called the Days of Unleavened Bread, verse 6. Paul explained to the mostly Gentile church at Corinth that since Christ's sacrifice cleansed them, they were to “Therefore let us keep the feast” of Unleavened Bread by putting the sin out of their lives, represented by leaven, and to replace it “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”, 1 Corinthians 5:8, NKJV, by putting Jesus Christ into their lives. Jesus calls Himself “the bread of life”, John 6:35, and is “the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through” Him, see John 14:6, NKJV.

The rest of Leviticus 23 lays out the other salvational acts of Christ, including the wave sheaf offering, verses 11-14, representing Christ as the first of the first fruits, “the firstborn among many brethren”, Romans 8:29, NKJV, and the Feast of weeks, seven Sabbath's long, verse 15, representing the calling of the firstfruits, see James 1:18 and Revelation 14:4. The next event in Leviticus 23 is the celebration of the fiftieth day as Pentecost. In Acts 2 we see Pentecost as the giving of God's Holy Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament church.

The last salvational acts of Jesus Christ are pictured taking place in the fall of the year. Trumpets, Leviticus 23:23, representing a time of war where Christ returns with His saints and His army to conquer the world and put away Satan, see Revelation 19. The Day of Atonement, meeting face to face with God, Leviticus 16. The Feast of Tabernacles, representing Christ's role on earth with His saints, see Revelation 20, and the Eighth Day, picturing the new heavens and the new earth with God as our Father and we His children, see Revelation 21.

God's calendar is beautiful and accurate and if observed reminds us how God is working out salvation

available to all through Jesus Christ.

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