

Study of Romans – Romans 14:1-23

Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall to Spring 2012-13

Compare to I Cor 8, 9:19-23, 10:23-32

Dietary Restrictions:

Old Law

-Lev 11:1-47

New Law

-Mark 7:14-23
-Acts 10:9-16
-1Co 8:4-6
-Col 2:16-23
-1Ti 4:1-5

Festivals & Holy Days:

Old Law

-Lev 23:1-44

New Law

-Gal 4:1-11
-Col 2:16-23

1Co 10:31 - "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Col 3:17 - "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

Rom 12:1

1Co 4:5
2Co 5:10

Gal 6:4-5
Heb 4:12-13

Christians who lack knowledge and confidence in areas where God gives us liberty or has not spoken.

What is Paul's primary concern in presenting the thoughts of this chapter?

-Rom 15:5
-Phil 2:1-4

¹As for the one who is *weak in faith*, welcome him, but *not to quarrel over opinions*.

²*One person believes he may eat anything*, while the weak person eats only vegetables.

³Let not the one who eats *despise* the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass *judgment* on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵*One person esteems one day as better than another*, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully **convinced in his own mind**.

⁶The one who observes the day, observes it in **honor of the Lord**. The one who eats, eats in honor *of the Lord*, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor *of the Lord* and gives thanks to God.

⁷For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

⁸For if we live, we live *to the Lord*, and if we die, we die *to the Lord*. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the **Lord's**.

⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the *dead and of the living*.

¹⁰Why do you pass *judgment* on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the *judgment* seat of God;

¹¹for it is written, "*As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*"

¹²So then each of us will *give an account* of himself to God.

Despise - ἐξουθενέω (exoutheneō) - treat with contempt, look down on, ridicule

Judgment - κρίνω (krinō) - to pronounce judgment for wrongdoing
-Rom 2:3

Each person must operate with a clear conscience, regardless of his or her practice.
-vv. 14, 22-23
-Rom 2:14-16

Rom 8:35-39
1Th 5:9-11

Isa 45:23
Phil 2:10

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1Co 8:7-13

¹³Therefore let us not pass *judgment* on one another any longer, but rather decide **never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.**

¹⁴I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but **it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.**

¹⁵For **if your brother is grieved by what you eat**, you are no longer walking in love. *By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.*

¹⁶So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil.

¹⁷For the kingdom of God *is not a matter of eating and drinking* but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

¹⁹So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

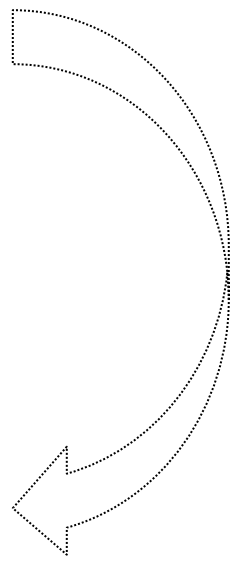
²⁰*Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God.* Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats.

²¹It is good not to eat meat or drink wine **or do anything** that causes your brother to stumble.

²²The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

²³**But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith.** For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

We must be willing to sacrifice liberty for the sake of love



These things are insignificant within the kingdom of God

What is a modern day example of an activity that is not forbidden, but could cause a brother to stumble or become distressed?

What is our responsibility in such situations?

Guidelines for Making Godly Decisions

Key Question	Relevant Verses	Comments
1 Has God spoken regarding this matter?	John 14:15, 21-22	Does the Bible provide specific instruction surrounding this subject?
What if this is regarding an area where God has given us liberty or has not spoken?		
2 Will it violate my conscience?	Rom 14:5, 14, 22-23	Am I confident that what I am doing is acceptable in the sight of God?
3 Will it bring honor to the Lord?	Rom 14:6-9	Does this decision provide an opportunity to distinguish myself from the world?
4 Could it cause a brother to stumble?	Rom 14:13, 20-21; I Cor 8:7-13	Could my actions cause a brother or sister to violate their conscience?
5 Could it grieve a brother in Christ?	Rom 14:15-19	Could this decision damage my reputation among brothers and sisters in Christ? In the world?

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Romans Chapter 14 - Questions for Discussion

Memory Verse:

Romans 14:21 (ESV)

²¹*It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.*

Parallel Passage - I Corinthians 8

How should Christians handle differences of opinion in areas where God gives us liberty?
(Phil 2:1-4)

How can participating in something that is allowed under God's laws cause another person to stumble or become distressed? What is meant by "stumble" and "distressed?"

What is a modern day example of an activity that is not forbidden, but **could** cause a brother to stumble or become distressed?

What is our responsibility in such situations?

What role does our conscience play in judging areas where God has not spoken?

How does participating in something that violates our conscience demonstrate that we are not living by faith?

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Parallel Passages:

1 Corinthians 8:1–13 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. ² If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. ³ But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. ⁴ Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵ For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. ⁷ However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹ And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. ¹² Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

1 Corinthians 9:19–23 (ESV)

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

1 Corinthians 10:23–32 (ESV)

²³ “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶ For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” ²⁷ If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— ²⁹ I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,

Unity:

Romans 15:5 (ESV)

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

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Philippians 2:1–4 (ESV)

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Dietary Restrictions:

Leviticus 11 (ESV)

¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, ² “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. ³ Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. ⁴ Nevertheless, among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁵ And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁶ And the hare, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. ⁷ And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. ⁸ You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you. ⁹ “These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. ¹⁰ But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you. ¹¹ You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. ¹² Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you. ¹³ “And these you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are detestable: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, ¹⁴ the kite, the falcon of any kind, ¹⁵ every raven of any kind, ¹⁶ the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind, ¹⁷ the little owl, the cormorant, the short-eared owl, ¹⁸ the barn owl, the tawny owl, the carrion vulture, ¹⁹ the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat. ²⁰ “All winged insects that go on all fours are detestable to you. ²¹ Yet among the winged insects that go on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to hop on the ground. ²² Of them you may eat: the locust of any kind, the bald locust of any kind, the cricket of any kind, and the grasshopper of any kind. ²³ But all other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you. ²⁴ “And by these you shall become unclean. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, ²⁵ and whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. ²⁶ Every animal that parts the hoof but is not cloven-footed or does not chew the cud is unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean. ²⁷ And all that walk on their paws, among the animals that go on all fours, are unclean to you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, ²⁸ and he who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you. ²⁹ “And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the ground: the mole rat, the mouse, the great lizard of any kind, ³⁰ the gecko, the monitor lizard, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. ³¹ These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening. ³² And anything on which any of them falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is an article of wood or a garment or a skin or a sack, any article that is used for any purpose. It must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean. ³³ And if any of them falls into any earthenware vessel, all that is in it shall be

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unclean, and you shall break it.³⁴ Any food in it that could be eaten, on which water comes, shall be unclean. And all drink that could be drunk from every such vessel shall be unclean.³⁵ And everything on which any part of their carcass falls shall be unclean. Whether oven or stove, it shall be broken in pieces. They are unclean and shall remain unclean for you.³⁶ Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern holding water shall be clean, but whoever touches a carcass in them shall be unclean.³⁷ And if any part of their carcass falls upon any seed grain that is to be sown, it is clean,³⁸ but if water is put on the seed and any part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.³⁹ “And if any animal which you may eat dies, whoever touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening,⁴⁰ and whoever eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. And whoever carries the carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.⁴¹ “Every swarming thing that swarms on the ground is detestable; it shall not be eaten.⁴² Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, any swarming thing that swarms on the ground, you shall not eat, for they are detestable.⁴³ You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them.⁴⁴ For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.⁴⁵ For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”⁴⁶ This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground,⁴⁷ to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

Mark 7:14–23 (ESV)

¹⁴ And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand:¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”¹⁷ And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable.¹⁸ And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,¹⁹ since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)²⁰ And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Acts 10:9–16 (ESV)

⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.¹³ And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”¹⁴ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.”¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

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Colossians 2:16–23 (ESV)

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. ²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

1 Timothy 4:1–5 (ESV)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

Judgment:

Romans 2:3 (ESV)

³ Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

Despise - 2024 ἐξουθενέω (*exoutheneō*): vb.; ≡ Str 1848—LN 88.195 **despise**, treat with contempt, look down on, ridicule (Lk 23:11; Ac 4:11; Ro 14:3; 1Co 1:28; 6:4; 16:11; 2Co 10:10; Gal 4:14; 1Th 5:20)¹

Judgment - 3212 κρίνω (*krinō*): vb.; ≡ DBLHebr 8189, 9149; Str 2919; TDNT 3.921—**1.** LN 30.75 **decide**, come to a conclusion (1Co 2:2); **2.** LN 30.99 **prefer**, to judge one thing better than another (Ro 14:5); **3.** LN 30.108 **evaluate**, judge based on correctness of something (Ac 4:19; 1Co 10:15); **4.** LN 31.1 **hold a view**, have an opinion (Ac 15:19); **5.** LN 56.20 **make legal decision** decide a legal question of right or wrong (Jn 18:31; Ac 23:3); **6.** LN 56.30 **condemn**, judge as guilty (Jn 7:51); **7.** LN 37.49 **rule** over people, govern (Lk 22:30)²

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

² Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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Festivals and Holy Days:

Israelite Festivals		
Feast	Time of Celebration	References
Passover	Nisan 14	Exod 12:1–14; 23:15; Lev 23:5; Num 28:16; Matt 26:17–20
Unleavened Bread*	Nisan 15–21	Exod 12:15–20; 34:18; Lev 23:6–8; Num 28:17–25
Firstfruits	Nisan 16, Sivan 6	Lev 23:9–14; Num 28:26
Pentecost (Harvest, Weeks)*	Sivan 6	Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15–22; Num 28:26–31; Deut 16:9–12; Acts 2:1
Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	Tishri 1	Lev 23:23–25; Num 29:1–6
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Tishri 10	Lev 16:2–34; Lev 23:26–32; Num 29:7–11; Heb 9:7
Tabernacles (Ingathering, Booths, Sukkot)*	Tishri 15–22	Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:33–43; Num 29:12–39; Deut 16:13–17; Neh 8:13–18; John 7:2
Dedication (Lights, Hanukkah)†	Chislev 25 (for 8 days)	John 10:22
Purim†	Adar 14–15	Esth 9:18–32

3

See Appendices A-C for articles concerning Jewish festivals and holy days

Leviticus 23 (ESV)

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the Lord that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts. ³ “Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places. ⁴ “These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. ⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the Lord’s Passover. ⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ⁸ But you shall present a food offering to the Lord for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you

³ Barry, J. D., Grigoni, M. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

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shall not do any ordinary work.”⁹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,¹⁰ “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest,¹¹ and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.¹² And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord.¹³ And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin.¹⁴ And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.¹⁵ “You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering.¹⁶ You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the Lord.¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the Lord.¹⁸ And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.¹⁹ And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings.²⁰ And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.²¹ And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.²² “And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.”²³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,²⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation.²⁵ You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the Lord.”²⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,²⁷ “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the Lord.²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God.²⁹ For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people.³⁰ And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people.³¹ You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.³² It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”³³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,³⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the Lord.³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.³⁶ For seven days you shall present food offerings to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the Lord. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.³⁷ “These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the Lord food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day,³⁸ besides the Lord’s Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the Lord.³⁹ “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the

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land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” ⁴⁴ Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the Lord.

Galatians 4:1–11 (ESV)

¹ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. ⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? ¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Colossians 2:16–23 (ESV)

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. ²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

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Honor of the Lord:

1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Romans 12:1 (ESV)

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Lord of the Dead and Living:

Romans 8:35–39 (ESV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:9–11 (ESV)

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Standing in Judgment:

1 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)

⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Isaiah 45:23 (ESV)

²³ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

Philippians 2:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

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Galatians 6:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

Hebrews 4:12–13 (ESV)

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Guidelines for Making Godly Decisions

- 1. Has God spoken regarding this matter?** – Does the Bible provide specific instruction surrounding this subject?

What if this is regarding an area where God has given us liberty or has not spoken?

- 2. Will it violate my conscience? (Rom 14:5, 14, 22-23)** – Am I confident that what I am doing is acceptable in the sight of God?
- 3. Will it bring honor to the Lord? (Rom 14:6-9)** – Does this decision provide an opportunity to distinguish myself from the world?
- 4. Could it cause a brother to stumble? (Rom 14:13, 20-21; I Cor 8:7-13)** – Could my actions cause a brother or sister to violate their conscience?
- 5. Could it grieve a brother in Christ? (Rom 14:15-19)** – Could this decision damage my reputation among brothers and sisters in Christ? In the world?

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Appendix A

SABBATH (שַׁבָּת, *shabbath*-). A day of complete rest from secular work following six days of labor. Established and modeled by God.

Introduction

The concept of the Sabbath was modified over time. In the Old Testament, Sabbath began as a holy day for God, which included cessation from secular work. During the Intertestamental period, the Sabbath gained a legalistic tone, and came to include detailed aspects of observance. During the New Testament era, Jesus addressed and clarified the meaning of the Sabbath.

Old Testament

The word “Sabbath” (שַׁבָּת, *shabbath*-), which means “cease,” “rest,” “complete rest,” or “desist,” is found in every section of the biblical texts. Forms of the word שַׁבָּת (*shabbath*-) occur 104 times in the Old Testament. Roughly 40 percent of the occurrences are in the Pentateuch, another 40 percent occur in the Prophetic Books, and the remaining 20 percent occur in the Wisdom literature and historical books. Wisdom literature contains only two references to Sabbath (Psa 92:1; Lam 2:6). The texts associated with the priesthood contain the most references to the Sabbath. The noun שַׁבָּת (*shabbath*-) is thought to be derived from the verb שָׁבַת (*shabbath*-), meaning “Sabbath-rest.”

References in the Pentateuch. While the word Sabbath does not occur in Genesis, the concept is shown in the creation account of Gen 1:1–2:4a, where God creates the world and all living things in six days and rests (שַׁבָּת, *shabbath*-) on the seventh. Exodus 20:11 clarifies that the seventh day is meant to be the Sabbath day. The Decalogue characterizes the Sabbath as a day that:

- is holy and blessed
- should be remembered and kept holy
- belongs to the Lord
- requires abstinence from work for all people (Jews and Gentiles alike) and animals

The text implies that God rested on the seventh day of creation, and therefore humankind should follow His example (*imitatio Dei*) and rest on the seventh day (see also Deut 5:12–15).

Exodus 16 includes a discussion of the Sabbath day in the narrative of the Israelites wandering in the Sinai desert. Moses instructs the people to collect two days worth of manna on the sixth day, reserving half for the seventh day, which is a day of rest and a holy day to the Lord. When some of the people do not listen and attempt to collect manna on the seventh day, God asks Moses (regarding the people): “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions?” This passage demonstrates that:

- the Sabbath day is a commandment of the Lord (Exod 20)
- the people need to rely upon the word of God, not their own understanding

Although this passage is the first in the biblical text to mention the Sabbath, Childs and Buber note that the text assumes the audience knew the concept, and the lesson concerns something that was already in existence.

Other references in Exodus clarify that:

- The Sabbath should continue even during the harvest and planting seasons (Exod 34:21).

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- The Sabbath is a sign between the Lord and humankind that God is the source of sanctification (Exod 31:13).
- The penalty for working on the Sabbath is death (Exod 31:14–15; 35:2).
- The Sabbath is a perpetual covenant (Exod 31:13, 16).

Leviticus mentions the Sabbath 24 times (the most frequent of any biblical book). These references stress:

- rest on the Sabbath day (Lev 16:31; 23:2, 32)
- humility toward God (Lev 16:31, 32)
- the permanence of the Sabbath, which endures upon everyone for all generations (Lev 16:31; 19:3; 23:2; 24:8)
- that Sabbath is a holy convocation (Lev 23:2)
- the Sabbath must be kept from evening to evening (Lev 23:32)
- the Sabbath endures upon land as well as people (Lev 25:2–6; 26:34)

The references to the Sabbath day in the Pentateuch emphasize similar features, including the importance of rest, humility towards God, the holiness of the day, care for the needy, permanence of the statute, and consequences for disobedience. Further references in the Pentateuch tie the observance of the Sabbath to creation (the day God rested) and the exodus (the redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt). In addition, the Sabbath is a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and Israel.

References in the Historical Books. The historical books of Kings, Chronicles, and Nehemiah mention the Sabbath. References to the Sabbath in the historical books assume knowledge of the Pentateuch and emphasize the prohibition against working or performing commerce on the Sabbath. The priest and the king now play a role in the Sabbath observance, with the king providing sacrifices for the burnt offering, the priest performing sacrifices in the temple including a meal, and the duration of the observance is clarified from evening to evening.

- Second Kings 4:23 specifies that travel to visit a “man of God” was not restricted on the new moon or the Sabbath.
- Second Kings 11:4–12 (2 Chr 23:4–11) demonstrates that national defense and the defense of the king are allowable on the Sabbath.
- Second Kings 16:17–18 associates the Sabbath with a “covered way” or “canopy.” In this passage, the canopy which was built for the Sabbath is removed during the reign of Ahaz (circa 735–715 BC).

First and Second Chronicles provide details on the practices involved in the Sabbath observations. Passages such as 1 Chr 23:31; 2 Chr 2:4; 8:13; 31:3 indicate that the celebration of the Sabbath day includes a burnt offering, a portion of which is contributed by the king (2 Chr 31:3). These passages also associate the celebration of the Sabbath with the tent of meeting, temple of the Lord, a meal with bread, the burning of incense, covenant, redemption, and the land.

- First Chronicles 9:32 identifies rows of bread as part of a Sabbath meal.
- Second Chronicles 2:4 and 31:3 specify that the burnt offerings are given both morning and evening and are a lasting obligation upon Israel.
- Second Chronicles 36:21 describes the abandonment of the land of Judah during the Babylonian exile as a Sabbath rest for the land.

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The events described in Nehemiah likely occur in the fifth century BC after some Israelites have returned to Judah from exile in Babylon. Apparently, many people had abandoned the celebration of the Sabbath and many of God's ordinances. The passages in Nehemiah stress the importance of the Sabbath celebration (9:14). Nehemiah 10:31 reiterates a prohibition against commerce on the Sabbath as well as the sabbatical rest for the land and the remission of debts every seven years. Nehemiah 13:15–22 specifies the prohibition against commerce includes:

- treading wine
- loading
- transporting
- selling grain, grapes, or figs
- buying good from foreigners.

These acts are said to “profane the Sabbath” and were part of the reason for God's prior judgment upon Judah.

References in the Wisdom Literature. The Sabbath is mentioned twice in Wisdom texts. Psalm 92:1 identifies itself as “a song for the Sabbath.” The song is joyous, giving thanks to the Lord and declaring His lovingkindness in the morning and His faithfulness in the afternoon. The association of the song with the Sabbath highlights the intent of the day is much more than a legalistic restriction of activity; it is a joyous occasion reflecting on the many blessings the Lord has given. In contrast, Lam 2:6 highlights the judgment of the Lord that separated the people of Judah and Israel from celebrating the Sabbath. The passage shows that the inability to celebrate the Sabbath, and its restrictions, is painful for the people.

References in the Prophets. The prophetic texts provide a primarily negative view of the Sabbath observance in the later years of the divided monarchy. They utilize the Sabbath as an example for how the Israelites “ritualized” the ceremonies God commanded, losing the inner meaning of the event. God expresses that observing the Sabbath (among other festivals, rituals, and offerings) is detestable when conducted for the wrong reasons (Isa 1:13; Ezek 22:8, 26, 23:38).

- Ezekiel 20:12–24 details that profaning (perhaps meaning secularizing) the Sabbath occurred as early as the period of the exodus, and is not unique to the time of the prophets. Profaning the Sabbath brings about God's wrath.
- Jeremiah 17:21 echoes this negative tone, warning that ignoring the Sabbath will lead to the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Hosea 2:11 specifies that one consequence of Israel's disobedience will be the discontinuation of Israel's celebrations.
- Amos 8:5 details that the Israelites were eager for the Sabbath to end so they might engage in commerce.

The prophetic texts also contain positive references to the Sabbath.

- Isaiah 56:1–4 illustrates that a person (applying to Israelites and non-Israelites) who preserves justice and does righteousness is blessed and will not profane the Sabbath.
- Isaiah 58:13 and 66:23 emphasize that Sabbath observance includes a voluntary abstinence from personal pleasures in order to follow God's will.
- Ezekiel 20:12, 20 stresses that the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between God and Israel.

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As with the historical books, the prophetic texts highlight abstinence from work on the Sabbath and a call to keep the day holy (Jer 17:21–27). They also provide additional details on Sabbath observance during this period:

- Ezekiel 44:24 assigns the priests as responsible for keeping the Sabbath holy.
- Ezekiel 45:17 indicates that the prince is responsible for providing the burnt offerings, drink offerings, and grain offerings associated with the Sabbath.
- Ezekiel 46:1–12 clarifies that the gate to the temple will remain open on the Sabbath and closed the other days. The prince will bring the burnt offering (comprised of six unblemished lambs and one unblemished ram) to the threshold of the gate, giving his burnt offering and peace offering to the priests. The prince and the people will then worship at the opening of the gate.

Intertestamental Period

Intertestamental writings detailed Sabbath restrictions and recorded military losses resulting from Sabbath observance. The Damascus Document, dating to the first century BC, outlines several limits to activity on the Sabbath including:

- walking farther than 1000 cubits
- drinking outside the camp
- drawing water into any vessel
- wearing perfume
- opening a sealed vessel
- assisting an animal to give birth or helping an animal out of a pit
- having sexual relations in the city with the sanctuary.

The book of Jubilees (second century BC) adds further prohibitions:

- plowing a field
- starting a fire
- riding an animal
- riding in a boat
- killing anything
- making war

Jubilees 2:30 alters Sabbath observance from applying to all people, limiting it just to Israelites. Fragment 5 of the work of Aristobulus associates the Sabbath with a sevenfold structure in the cosmos and to wisdom.

The prohibition against making war on the Sabbath led to several military losses:

- Josephus records that Ptolemy I Soter (323–283/2 BC) captured Jerusalem when the Israelites refused to fight on the Sabbath (Ant 12.1.1).
- Second Maccabees 5:25–6 states that Apollonius waited until the Sabbath day to assault the city of Jerusalem because the people would not fight on the Sabbath (168 BC).

However, 1 Macc 2:38 reverses this practice, as Mattathias declares that the Israelites need to defend themselves on the Sabbath. By the end of the Roman period, the Jews not only defended themselves on the Sabbath but engaged in offensive attacks.

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New Testament

Each section of the New Testament text mentions the Sabbath. In the Gospels, Jesus teaches regarding Sabbath observance. The authors of Acts and the letters further clarify the meaning behind Sabbath observance.

Gospels. As Jesus begins His ministry, He enters the synagogue on the Sabbath and begins to teach with authority (Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:16, 31; 13:10). Luke 4:16 adds that it was Jesus' normal custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, showing that Jesus followed the customs outlined in the historical books and the prophets (compare Mark 3:1; Luke 4:44; 13:10). John 7:22–23 records that circumcisions were performed on the Sabbath day.

Matthew 12:1–12; Mark 2:23–3:6; Luke 6:1–9 record Jesus and His disciples traveling, eating, and Jesus performing healing miracles on the Sabbath. In addition, Luke 13:14; 14:1–6; John 5:1–18; 7:22–23; 9:1–41 record healings conducted on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees observe the acts and confront Jesus about breaking Sabbath law (*halakhah*). Jesus responds that David was allowed to break the Sabbath when he ate bread in the House of God, and that the priests break the Sabbath rules every Sabbath by conducting the burnt and peace offerings. He also argues that anyone would save their animal if the animal was in danger. Jesus responds that because a person is of much greater value than an animal it is acceptable to do good deeds (i.e. healing) on the Sabbath.

In Mark 2:27, Jesus utters the phrase “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.” The phrase brings two primary points into focus:

1. The Sabbath regulations, as interpreted by the Pharisees, had lost the intent of the Sabbath prescribed in the Old Testament. Therefore, the rules they observed were human made, not God made, and able to be broken.
2. The Sabbath proclaimed at creation was intended to serve mankind as a holy day, giving blessing, and observing God's rest/restoration.

Nothing of Jesus' or His disciples' actions were contrary to the purpose and intent of the Sabbath observance. As such, Jesus was not rewriting the law, but fulfilling and clarifying the original law as described in the Pentateuch, Historical Books, and the Prophets.

In Matt 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56, Mary Magdalene and Mary (Jesus' mother) discover the risen Jesus at sunrise just as the Sabbath is ending. In addition, John 19:31 describes the need to remove Jesus' body from the cross before the beginning of the Sabbath observance, which also impacted the preparation of spices and perfumes for the body.

Acts and Epistles. The book of Acts preserves nine occurrences of the word Sabbath. The text mentions the Sabbath as a day for religious gathering/teaching and associates it with the formation of churches in Antioch (Acts 13:13–52); Philippi (Acts 16:11–15); Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–9); and Corinth (Acts 18:1–4).

The Letters contain two occurrences of the term “Sabbath.” In Col 2:16, Paul argues that people should not be judged based upon their observance of various ritual acts, including eating and observance of festivals and the Sabbath. He labels these as “shadows” which were fulfilled by Christ. The meaning of the passage is debated; however, the text discusses misperception that performance of ritual was a pathway to salvation (Judaizing) and asceticism. This context demonstrates that Paul is not abolishing the Sabbath concept, but instating a lack of condemnation for failing to observe an ascetical form of self-denial. He is also arguing against the idea that Sabbath observance plays a role in salvation (through works).

Hebrews 4:9 refers to a Sabbath-rest that remains in effect. The author of Hebrews

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anticipates an eschatological fulfillment for the people of God in the period inaugurated with the appearance of Jesus (Heb 4:3–13). The eschatological context points to a present and future reality. Hebrews 4:3 indicates that presently, people who believe are able to enter into Sabbath rest. Additionally, Heb 4:11 points to a future rest for those who are obedient. The passage emphasizes the Old Testament principles that God’s Sabbath is based on abstinence from work (Heb 4:10), rest (Heb 4:3), tied to creations (Heb 4:4), and a call for obedience (Heb 4:6).

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BRYAN C. BABCOCK⁴

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Appendix B

FEASTS AND FESTIVALS OF ISRAEL - Major community events occurring throughout the year that recognized God's work and presence with His people.

Feasts and festivals were a common component of ancient religious practice. They were celebrations of divine provisions or protection. Each major Israelite feast recognized a specific aspect of God's saving work. Every member of Israelite society participated in feasts. Since sharing a table signified peace or fellowship, feasts as religious observances demonstrated a peaceful relationship between God and Israel. The most significant texts regarding the feasts of Israel are Lev 23, describing the festivals, Num 28–29, emphasizing the offerings, and Deut 16, emphasizing pilgrimages.

In addition to religious festivals, Israelites celebrated other feasts, including birthdays, weddings, and agricultural or personal events (Harrison, "Feasts and Festivals of Israel," *BEB*, 784). These occasions were not secular, as each event had a divine blessing.

Sabbath Celebrations

Sabbaths were the most frequently observed festivals of God. They occurred weekly, monthly, every seven years, and every fifty years. Sabbath celebrations were included in the list of Israel's appointed feasts (Lev 23:1–44). The Sabbath Year was more festive than the weekly Sabbath celebration. The Jubilee Year, celebrated every seven years, freed slaves and canceled debts. Each of the New Moons constituted a minor festival—it included feasting, rest from work, and extra sacrifices. While the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee may never have actually been practiced, the New Moon celebrations continued throughout Israel's history.

The Levitical Feasts

The most well-known feasts of Israel are those described in Lev 23. The three pilgrimage feasts—the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles—demanded that every male Israelite travel to Jerusalem to worship at the temple.

Pascal Feasts. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are closely related and ran consecutively (Lev 23:4–8). The Feast of Weeks followed seven weeks later, and connected the Passover of the exodus with the bounty of the conquest.

Passover Feast. The Passover was established in Exod 12 prior to the Sinai covenant. It is technically non-Levitical, but Levitical statutes expanded regulations for the Passover.

Of all the feasts of Israel, the Passover is the clearest example of God's election and grace. The Passover celebrated God's divine grace and deliverance of the faithful. By "passing over" the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, God allowed Israelite firstborns to live (Exod 12:21–31). Kline suggests that the emphasis of Passover is not on the passing of God over the Israelites but on His "covering" the Israelites through the blood on the doorpost. This interpretation makes the Passover an atonement feast like the Day of Atonement, and may be contradicted by passages such as Exod 12:12–13 (Kline, "Feast of Cover-Over," 498–500).

The exodus account was read during the Passover. Passover excluded foreigners and hired help, but circumcised resident aliens could participate (Exod 12:45–49).

Passover was originally celebrated on the 14th day of Abib, but postexilic celebrations shifted it to Nisan. Initially celebrated within households, the establishment of the temple demanded a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Deut 16:5–7). The feast was austere, and demanded a specific menu and procedure:

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- Lamb from the sacrifice was main course. It was to be roasted by fire and completely consumed (Exod 12:7–10). The lamb was to be treated carefully, and could not have any broken bones (Num 9:12).
- Bitter herbs were served, signifying the bitterness of the Israelite’s struggles in Egypt.
- Only unleavened bread could be used. Initially, this was caused by the inability to wait for the bread to rise (Exod 12:39). Later, the absence of leaven represented purity from sin.
- Participants in the Passover feast were to be fully dressed for travel, anticipating God’s deliverance (Exod 12:11).

The Passover meal was later expanded to include:

- Spring greens dipped into a cup of salt water, representing the passage through the Red Sea (salt water) and entrance into the land (spring greens).
- Roasted eggs to commemorate a peace offering for the temple.
- Charoset, chopped apples, and nuts. It was visually similar to the mortar the Hebrew slaves used to build bricks for the Egyptians.

The Passover traditionally included wine. After the destruction of the temple, a roasted, meatless lamb’s shank was presented on a plate rather than lamb meat. This was a reminder that the temple—where the sacrifice would have been performed—was gone (Zimmerman, *Celebrating Biblical Feasts*, 66).

Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a week-long remembrance that consecrated the coming season. It may be considered an extension of the Passover feast rather than an independent holiday. The biblical texts intertwine the two feasts, with the Passover celebrated on the first day of the feast—the 14th of Abib—and the Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated on the following day—the 15th of Abib (Exod 13:3–10; Lev 23:4–8). The Feast of Unleavened Bread continued for seven days and required daily offerings. It concluded with a convocation and rest from laborious activity (Lev 23:8).

The feast demanded a rejection of leavened bread from the Israelites’ meals, households, and storage places (Deut 16:4)

While the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not a pilgrimage feast, it was often celebrated in Jerusalem, since Passover’s pilgrimage would have already occurred. This feast likely included the waving of the first fruits, signaling the dedication of the coming growing season (Exod 34:26; Lev 23:10–14).

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). The Feast of Weeks, alternatively called the Feast of Harvest or Pentecost, celebrated the grain harvest and the renewal of the covenant. It is named for the seven weeks separating it from the Passover celebration. The Feast of Weeks celebrated the entrance into the Land of Promise and the bounty of that land (Lev 23:10).

The Feast of Weeks was marked by the offering of the firstfruits of the grain harvest. In contrast to the Passover feast, this grain offering explicitly included leaven (Lev 23:17). Meat offerings of bulls, a ram, and seven lambs were also required (Num 28:27). Deuteronomy indicates that the Feast of Weeks was to be celebrated at the temple once it had been established (Deut 16:11). This makes Feast of Weeks one of pilgrimage feasts. The date of the feast is “from the day after the Sabbath” (Lev 23:15 ESV). It generally falls around the sixth of Sivan.

The *Book of Jubilees* indicates that the Feast of Weeks included a covenant-renewal ceremony. Thus, the festival may have (at one time) been called the Feast of Oaths (חַבְּדוּת),

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shevu'oth) rather than the Feast of Weeks (תּוֹבֵחַ, *shavu'oth*). The ceremony reflects the renewal of the covenant prior to the entry into the land (Deuteronomy) and after the conquest of the land (Josh 24). In addition to covenant renewal, the Feast of Weeks included the reading of the book of Ruth. This reflects the harvest that provided for Ruth and Naomi, and Ruth's acceptance into the community of God.

Fall Feasts. Three feasts occurred in the month of Tishri:

1. The Feast of Trumpets called for repentance.
2. The Day of Atonement sought redemption.
3. The Feast of Tabernacles, a pilgrimage feast, remembered the fulfillment of the redemption from Egypt (Glaser, *Fall Feasts of Israel*, 16).

Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah). The Feast of Trumpets occurred on the first day of the agricultural year and signaled a call for repentance. Leviticus says that it should be announced with the blast of trumpets and be treated as a holy convocation. A food offering was included in the celebrations alongside the prohibition against work (Lev 23:23–25). The meat offerings of the feast were the same as those of the Feast of Weeks, but with only one bull (Num 29:2).

The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of a new agricultural year. It was unusual in that the trumpet, likely the *shofar*, would announce the feast and assemble the people (Jones, "Trumpets, Feast of," *NBD*). This feast dedicated the new agricultural year to God for His provision. Psalm 81 may allude to the Feast of Trumpets (Psa 81:3) in the context of the deliverance from Egypt. The psalm ends with a call for repentance, reminding the people to call upon the Lord as those in Egypt did (Psa 81:11–16).

Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was the most holy of the feasts—the one time each year when the high priest could approach the mercy seat to make atonement for the nation's sins. It occurred on the tenth day of Tishri, and was treated as a Sabbath (Lev 16:29). The Day of Atonement, described in detail in Lev 16, contained precise procedures and sacrifices:

- The high priest had to be properly bathed and attired for the ceremony (Lev 16:4).
- A bull was offered as a sin offering for the high priest and his household. Since the high priest made intercession for the nation, this purification was particularly important. Purification for the high priest is repeated four times: Lev 16:6, 11, 17, and 24.
- Two goats were placed at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. One was sacrificed as a sin offering and one would be the scapegoat sent to Azazel (Lev 16:7–10). A sin offering for the people was offered at least three times: Lev 16:10, 17, 24.
- After the offering of the bull, a censer of fire and incense was presented in the holy place. The blood of the bull was then sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat of the Ark (Lev 16:12–14).
- The goat for the sin offering was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat to make atonement for the holy place (Lev 16:15–16). The blood from both the bull and the goat was then spread on the horns of the altar seven times (Lev 16:18–19).
- The high priest touched the scapegoat and confessed national sins over the animal. It was then set loose into the wilderness (Lev 16:21–22).
- The high priest changed to normal priestly robes, bathed, and then offered burnt offerings for both himself and the people. The fat of the sin offering was burnt. The remains of the sin offerings were removed from the camp and burned (Lev 16:27–28).
- The individual(s) who led the scapegoat to the wilderness washed their clothes and bathed before returning to camp (Lev 16:26).

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There were 15 sacrifices total (three sin offerings and 12 burnt offerings) and the scapegoat.

The peoples' impurity demanded the purification of the tabernacle and the altar. Sin and purification were the focus of the day's events (Rooker, *Leviticus*, 211–13). The Day of Atonement was the only fast day commanded in the Mosaic Law ("Day of Atonement," *Eerdmans*).

Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the period of the wilderness wanderings directly following the emancipation from Egypt. It lasted seven days, beginning on the 15th of Tishri. It is also called the Feast of the Ingathering, since it gathered the people together after the harvesting season and was the final pilgrim feast of Israel.

The feast opened and closed with convocations of the peoples. There were daily sacrifices. The final day of the feast may have had the same rules against working as the Feast of Unleavened Bread (MacRae, "Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles," 258). The remembrance of the wilderness wandering was considered an occasion of joy, connected to God's saving work on Israel's behalf. A large number of sacrifices were offered during the week's celebration (Num 29:12–38).

Feasts of the Exilic and Intertestamental Periods

Besides the Mosaic Feasts, the most well-known Israelite feasts are introduced in the books of Esther and the Maccabees. The earlier feasts relate to the exodus directly or through their association with the Sinai covenant. The later feasts are each associated with a distinct saving act.

Feast of Purim. Purim—the Feast of Lots—was an exilic-era feast celebrating the Jewish deliverance from Haman's plan to massacre them. Gerleman suggested that Purim is an exilic equivalent to the Passover. While this is not commonly accepted, Purim did celebrate salvation (Schellekens, "Accession Days and Holidays," 117).

Purim was characterized by celebration, not sacrifice. The feast occurred on the 14th and 15th day of Adar. It was a feast of excess, with the 13th of Adar was a day of fasting. The book of Esther was read in commemoration of Purim—typically on the night before.

Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah). The Feast of Dedication—also called the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah—commemorated the cleansing of the temple. It had been defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes IV, but the Maccabees restored it in 164 BC. The name, "Feast of Lights," comes from a legend: when the altar was rededicated, there was only oil enough for one day. The lamps miraculously remained lit for eight days. For this reason, Hanukkah was celebrated for eight days beginning on the 25th of Kislev. Its festivities were similar to those for the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Macc 10:6).

Nicanor. The defeat of the general Nicanor was celebrated on the 13th of Adar (1 Macc 7:49). Since this was the day before Purim, it was a day of fasting. Nicanor's death was remembered on Purim.

Feasts in the New Testament

Both Passover and Pentecost are practiced by early Christians—Christ was crucified at the Passover, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on Pentecost (Acts 2). The Christian community usually reinterpreted these feasts as signs of Christ's saving works. The Bible ends with the anticipation of one final feast: the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

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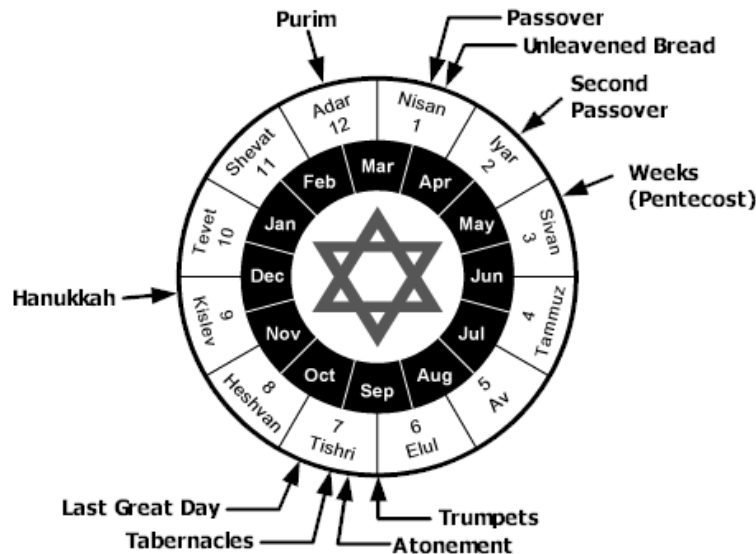
JOHN T. SWANN⁵

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Appendix C

Biblical Pilgrimage Festivals and Major Feast Days of Ancient Israel and Modern Judaism
by Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.



Three Biblical Pilgrimage Festivals:

- **Hebrew Bible Origins:**
 - Three agriculture-related pilgrimage festivals are mandated in **Exodus 23:14-17**: a seven-day springtime festival of **Unleavened Bread**, around the barley harvest; an early summer festival of **Harvest**, when the wheat ripens; and an autumn festival of **Ingathering**, when olives, grapes, and other fruits are harvested (cf. Exod 34:18-23).
 - The book of **Leviticus** gives regulations for feast days that are to be celebrated "with a sacred assembly," including the weekly **sabbath** (Lev 23:1-4) and **seven annual feast days**: Passover (7 days, incl. unleavened bread), First fruits, Pentecost or Weeks, the New Year, the Day of Atonement, the first day of Booths, and the eighth day of Booths (Lev 23:5-44)
 - These festivals are later *transformed* and combined with commemorations of historical/religious events; originally the people could bring their offerings to any major sanctuary, but later they are required to go to the Jerusalem temple, esp. for *three main pilgrimage festivals* (see **Deut 16:1-17**).

- **Feast of Passover (*Pesach*) and Unleavened Bread (*Mazzot*):**
 - The barley-harvest festival was transformed to include the commemoration of the original Exodus, when the Hebrews came out of Egypt, ca. 1300 BCE.
 - The *Passover* was originally celebrated in each family's house; an unblemished lamb was slaughtered and eaten, and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts with a branch of the hyssop plant (**Exod 12:1-13, 21-28, 43-49**; cf. John 19:29).
 - The lamb was slaughtered on the afternoon of the 14th day of the month of Nisan/Abib (called the "Day of Preparation"), and the Passover meal eaten just after sunset (the beginning of the 15th day, in the Jewish calendar).

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- The seven-day feast of *Unleavened Bread* is also related to the Exodus, when the Hebrews did not even have time to let bread rise as they were leaving Egypt (**Exod 12:14-20; 13:3-10**).
- Both festivals combined became a major pilgrimage feast, with the people going to the Jerusalem temple to offer the sacrificial lamb (Lev 23:4-14; Num 9:2-5; 28:16-25; **Deut 16:1-8**).
- In modern Judaism, the entire **Song of Songs** is read in the synagogue services during Pesach.

- **Feast of Weeks (Pentecost or Shavuot):**
 - The older "Wheat-Harvest" festival was later mandated to be held 7 weeks (=50 days in Hebrew counting) after the Passover (Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26; **Deut 16:9-12; 34:22**).
 - Later it also became a commemoration of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai (Exod 19-20).
 - In the NT it is called "Pentecost" since it is held "50 days" after Passover (cf. Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8).
 - In modern Judaism, the Book of **Ruth** is read in the synagogue services during the Feast of Shavuot.

- **Feast of Booths (Tabernacles or Sukkoth):**
 - The older "Ingathering" or "Fruit-Harvest" festival became a commemoration of the 40 years that the Hebrew wandered in the desert, living in temporary shelters like tents or "booths" (Lev 23:33-36, 39-43; **Deut 16:13-15**).
 - In the Second-Temple period, it was an 8-day festival involving the imagery of water and light; *water* was brought daily from the Pool of Siloam (cf. John 9:1) up to the Temple and poured over the altar; *light* was provided by large lamps that were lit nightly in the temple courtyards.
 - The eighth day of Sukkoth, considered the last and greatest day of the feast, included an assembly of all the people (Lev 23:36).
 - In modern Judaism, the Book of **Qoheleth** is read during the feast of Sukkoth.

- **New Testament References:**
 - The *Synoptic Gospels* have **only one Passover** meal (often mentioned together with the Feast of **Unleavened Bread**), which Jesus celebrates just before his death (Mark 14:12-26; Matt 26:17-29; Luke 22:15-20)
 - The *Fourth Gospel* reports **three different Passovers** during Jesus' public ministry (John 2:13-23; 6:4; 11:55--19:14; but never mentions "Unleavened Bread"), as well as the Festival of **Booths** (7:2, 14, 37), and an unspecified feast (5:1) that some scholar think might be **Pentecost**.

Other Feasts and Special Days in the Bible:

- **Weekly Sabbath (Shabbat):**
 - Resting from work on the seventh day of the week is mandated in the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15), and reinforced frequently throughout the Hebrew Bible (Exod 23:12; 34:21; Lev 23:3).

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- It is based on the story that God rested from his work after the six "days" of creation (Gen 2:1-3).
- However, Jews throughout the centuries have debated exactly what constitutes unlawful "work" (cf. Jer 17:10-27) and whether God does not do at least some essential life-sustaining "work" on the sabbath (cf. John 5:9-18; 7:21-23).

- **First of the Month (*Rosh Kodesh*):**
 - The sighting of the new moon each month was a significant event celebrated by a minor festival in biblical times (1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron 2:4; Ps 81:3; etc.)
 - In modern Judaism, the first of each month is not a major celebration, although some special prayers and readings are done in the synagogues.
 - In some Jewish communities, it is a day free from work for women (but not men), to honor them for their refusal to participate in the worship of the Golden Calf.

- **New Year (*Rosh HaShanah*):**
 - The first day of the seventh month (the month of "Tishri" on the Jewish calendar) is celebrated with "sabbath rest" and a "sacred assembly" (Lev 23:23-25; cf. Num 29:1).
 - On this day, the burnt offerings were reestablished by the priest Ezra in the period after the Babylonian Exile (Ezra 3:6; cf. Neh 8:2).
 - Festivities include the blowing of the *Shofar* (a type of *trumpet* made out of a ram's horn).
 - Note that the [Jewish Calendar](#) has **four different days** called "New Year" (just as Westerners have "New School Year" and "New Fiscal Year" dates different from Jan. 1): **Nissan 1** (in March) = new year for counting calendar months; **Elul 1** (in August) = new year for tithing of animals; **Tishri 1** (in September) = new year for years (increase year numbers); **Shevat 15** (in February) = new year for trees (when fruit is ripe enough to eat).

- **Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*):**
 - An annual purification ritual, involving a sacrifice offered for the purification of the temple, the land, and the people (Lev 16:1-34; 23:26-32).
 - The New Testament does not directly mention this feast day, but adapts its imagery to speak of Jesus' death as an atonement for sins (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17).

- **Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights (*Hanukkah*):**
 - The temple of Jerusalem had been "desecrated" (but not "destroyed") by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BC.
 - After the success of their revolt, the Maccabees cleansed and rededicated the Temple and the Altar in 164 BC, and mandated an annual 8-day celebration to commemorate this joyful event (1 Macc 4:36-59).
 - This winter-time feast is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but only in the Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal books of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees.
 - It is also mentioned briefly in John 10:22, but nowhere else in the New Testament.

- **Feast of Lots (*Purim*):**
 - Commemorates Queen Esther's defeat of a plan to slaughter all Persian Jews, ca. 400 BCE, as told in the Book of Esther.

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- In modern Judaism, the entire Book of **Esther** read on the day of Purim. It is a time of great celebration, with noisemakers, costumes, etc. (somewhat equivalent to Western "Carnival" or "Mardi Gras" festivities).
- **Lesser Agricultural Feasts:**
 - "Fifteenth Day of the Month of Shevat" (*Tu B'Shevat*) - considered the "New Year for Trees" (Lev 19:23-25)
 - "Counting the Omer" (*Sefirat Ha'Omer*) - based on Lev 23:15-16, which tells the Israelites to "count" the fifty days between Pesach and Shavuot.
- **Sabbath Years:**
 - Every seventh year, no agricultural work was to be done; the land should also be allowed to "rest," and the people should harvest only what grows on its own in the fields (Exod 23:10-11; Lev 25:2-7, 18-24; 26:34-43).
- **Jubilee Year:**
 - Every fifty years, all debts are to be forgiven, slaves were supposed to be freed, and land that was sold was to be returned to its original owners (Lev 25:8-17, 25-55; 27:16-25). Scholars debate whether this biblical injunction was ever actually carried out.

Jewish Feasts Introduced in the Rabbinic Period:

- ***Simchat Torah*** ("Rejoicing in the Torah"):
 - Held on the day after the end of Sukkoth (thus the 23rd day of Tishri), this feast celebrates the ending and restarting of the annual cycle of Torah readings in the synagogue.
 - On this day, the end of the Book of Deuteronomy is read, followed immediately by the beginning of the Book of Genesis.
 - Although not mandated in the Hebrew Bible as a particular feast day, many biblical passages celebrate the centrality of the Torah in Jewish life (e.g., Ps 119).
- ***Tish B'Av*** ("9th day of the month of Av"):
 - A major fast day (fasting for 25 hours), commemorating the two destructions of the Jerusalem Temple (586 BCE & 70 CE).
 - The destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians is told near the end of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and bemoaned by the prophet Jeremiah.
 - The destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans is told by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus.
 - The Book of **Lamentations** (attributed to Jeremiah) is read in synagogue services on this day.

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Summary Chart of the Main Feasts in Modern Judaism:

[Yellow highlighting indicates the "High Holy Days" or "Days of Awe"; green highlighting indicates the three traditional "Pilgrimage Festivals."]

Hebrew Name of Feast Translation / Alternate Names	Hebrew Date (Gregorian Equiv.)	Biblical Basis (esp. Lev 23 & Deut 16)	Description / Historical Event Commemorated / How Celebrated
Shabbat "Sabbath"	7th Day each Week (Fri eve - Sat eve)	Gen 2:1-3 ; Exod 20:8-11; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:12-15	Day God "rested" or "ceased work" after finishing the creation of the world.
Rosh Hashanah / Jewish New Year "Head of the Year"; Trumpets	<i>Tishri 1</i> (Sept/Oct)	Lev 23:23-25	Anniversary of the completion of creation. Blowing of the Shofar (Ram's horn).
Yom Kippur "Day of Atonement"	<i>Tishri 10</i> (Sept/Oct)	Lev 16:1-34 ; 23:26-32	Tenth day after Rosh Hashanah; day of fasting and praying; holiest day in the Jewish year.
Sukkot / Succoth / Booths "Season of Rejoicing"; Tabernacles	<i>Tishri 15</i> (Sept/Oct)	Lev 23:33-36; Deut 16:13-17	Eight-day fruit-harvest festival; commemorates the Israelites' 40 years wandering in the Sinai desert. Book of Qoheleth read.
<i>Shemini Atzeret</i> "Assembly of the Eighth (Day)"	<i>Tishri 22</i> (Oct)	Lev 23:36	The "last great day"; an eight day of celebration at the end of Sukkoth.
Simchat Torah "Rejoicing (in) the Torah"	<i>Tishri 23</i> (Oct)	[Ps 119]	Ends the annual cycle of Torah readings in the synagogue, and immediately begins again.
Chanukkah / Hanukkah "Feast of Dedication"; Feast of Lights	<i>Kislev 25</i> (Dec)	[1Macc 4; 2 Macc 10]	Eight-day festival; recalls the rededication of the Temple (164 BCE) after the Maccabean revolt. Book of read.
<i>Tu B'Shevat / Tu Bishvat</i> "15th (day of the month) of Shevat"	<i>Shevat 15</i> (Jan/Feb)	Lev 19:23-25	"New Year for Trees"

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Hebrew Name of Feast Translation / Alternate Names	Hebrew Date (Gregorian Equiv.)	Biblical Basis (esp. Lev 23 & Deut 16)	Description / Historical Event Commemorated / How Celebrated
Purim "Feast of Lots"	<i>Adar 14</i> (Feb/March)	Esther	Commemorates Queen Esther's defeat of a plan to slaughter all Persian Jews, ca. 400 BCE. Book of Esther read. Major party time, with noisemakers, costumes, etc.!
Pesach "Passover" & "Unleavened Bread"	<i>Nisan 15</i> (March/April)	Exod 12:1-51; 23:14-19; Lev 23:4-14; Num 9:2-5; Deut 16:1-8	Eight-day barley-harvest festival; recalls Israelites' Exodus out of Egypt, ca. 1300 BCE; Seder meal held at home. Song of Songs read.
<i>Sefirat Ha'omer</i> "Counting of the Omer/Sheaves"	<i>Nisan 16</i> (March/April)	Lev 23:15-16	Counting the 49 days between Pesach and Shavu'ot.
<i>Lag Ba'Omer</i> "33rd (day) of (Counting) the Omer"	<i>Iyar 18</i> (April/May)	none	"Lag" is not really a word, but comes from the Hebrew letters L=30 and G=3.
Shavu'ot "Festival of Weeks"; Pentecost	<i>Sivan 6</i> (May/June)	Lev 23:16-21; Deut 16:9-12	Wheat-harvest festival; commemorates God's revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Book of Ruth read.
Tisha B'Av "9th (day of the month) of Av"	<i>Av 9</i> (July/Aug)	2 Kings 25:8-9; Jer	Major fast day; commemorates the two destructions of the Jerusalem Temple (586 BCE & 70 CE). Book of Lamentations read.
<i>Tu B'Av</i> "15th (day of the month) of Av"	<i>Av 15</i> (July/Aug)	none	Mildly festive day, esp. for unmarried girls; no clear historical background

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Five Minor Fast Days:

Name	Hebrew Date	Biblical Basis	Historical Event Commemorated / How Observed
Fast of Gedalia	Tishri 3	2 Kings 25:25-26	Killing of Gedaliah, Jewish governor of Judah.
Fast of Tevet	Tevet 10	2 Kings 25:4	Beginning of the siege of Jerusalem (68 CE)
Fast of Esther	Adar 13	Esther 9:31	Queen Esther's three-day fast before approaching King Ahasuerus.
Fast of the Firstborn	Nisan 14	Exod 12:29	Last plague in Egypt; observed only by first-born males.
Fast of Tammuz	Tammuz 17	Zech 8:19	Two captures of Jerusalem; followed by 3 weeks of mourning.

National Holidays in the Modern State of Israel:

Name	Hebrew Date	Historical Event Commemorated
<i>Yom HaShoah</i> / "Day of the Shoah"	Nisan 27	Six million Jews killed during the Holocaust and the heroes of the resistance.
<i>Yom HaZikaron</i> / "Memorial Day"	Iyar 4 or 3	Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism (the day before <i>Yom HaAtzmaut</i>).
<i>Yom HaAtzmaut</i> / "Independence Day"	Iyar 5 or 4	Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948 (moved up if Iyar 5 is a shabbat).
<i>Yom Yerushalayim</i> / "Jerusalem Day"	Iyar 28	Israel's capture/unification of all of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War of 1967.

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⁶ Just, Felix, S.J., Ph.D., "Biblical Pilgrimage Festivals and Major Feast Days of Ancient Israel and Modern Judaism," <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Festivals.htm>, 2007