

A. Seasonal Feasts of the Lord

The feasts are in three groups; the three pilgrimage festivals, the **Regalim**. In Leviticus 23:4-44, the Lord set out seven feasts, which marked the year for his people. These are known as the feasts of **Redemption, Revelation and Rejoicing** -

Pessach or Passover - including **Unleavened Bread** and **Firstfruits**

- **Firstfruits** - On the day after the *Shabbat* which falls during the time of unleavened bread, Firstfruits is celebrated. It is similar to the firstfruits celebration of *Sha vu Ot*, except that it is in celebration of the Barley harvest, while *Sha vu Ot* is for the wheat harvest. It is the **Resurrection Day of our Lord**.

Sha vu Ot - The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Festival of Revelation)

The feast falls on the 6th of Sivan (May-June). A firstfruits feast, it is the time of wheat harvest and the time of giving of the Law. It is calculated that GOD gave the *torah* to his people at Mount Sinai, fifty days after they left Egypt.

Sukkot comprises

- **The Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanna**
 - ✧ *1st Day of Tishri, the 7th month (September or October)*
 - ✧ *Rosh Hashanna = head of the (civil) year.*
 - ✧ *Note: 1st of Nisan = beginning of the religious year*
- **The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur**
 - ✧ *10th Day of Tishri*
- **Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, Booths or Ingathering**
 - ✧ *15th Day of Tishri*
 - ✧ *The only feast with specific instructions to Rejoice (Lev 23:40)*

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 “*Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.*”

B. Shabbat - the Sabbath

Shabbat - in Creation GOD laid down the principle of a day of rest on the seventh day. He commands his people to observe this day (*Lev 23:3*). Shabbat is the sign of God's covenant with his chosen people and it is a focus of family life and bringing up children.

C. Chanukah,

Chanukah, the Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication, is not mentioned in the average Bible except to record Jesus celebrating it in Jerusalem. However, the miraculous victory it celebrates is recorded in 1 Maccabees 4:52, which is found in the Apocrypha. It is celebrated on the 25th of Kislev (November – December).

Background - In 165 BC, the Greek empire, under Antiochus IV Epiphanes imposed Greek philosophy and religion on Israel and throughout the empire. They built an Image of their god Zeus on top of the Temple altar and desecrated the temple by sacrificing pigs. This fulfilled a prophesy in the book of Daniel. The abandonment of Jewish customs was enforced by terror.

A revolt led by Judah Maccabee, in the manner of all God's miraculous deliverances, was successful in driving out the Greeks and the temple was cleansed and rededicated. However, it was found that there was only sufficient purified olive oil to light the *Menorah* (seven branch candelabra) in the Temple for one day and it would take eight days for fresh supplies to be ready. However, the *Menorah* (lampstand) burned miraculously until the fresh supplies were ready.