

The Book of Leviticus

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Bereans Sunday School Class
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Section Outline

- I. Sacrificial System (Leviticus 1–7)**
- II. Ministry of the Priesthood (Leviticus 8–10)**
- III. Laws of Purification (Leviticus 11–15)**
- IV. Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)**
- V. Covenant Ordinances (Leviticus 17–24)**
 - A. Sanctity of Blood (chapt. 17)**
 - B. Sanctity of Marriage (chapt. 18)**
 - C. Sanctity of Societal Ethics (chapt. 19)**
 - D. Sanctity of Justice (chapt. 20)**
 - E. Sanctity of Priests (21:1–22:16)**
 - F. Sanctity of Offerings (22:17-33)**
 - G. Sanctity of Time/Calendar (chapt. 23)**

G. Sanctity of Time/Calendar (23:1-44)

As with all things with which we have been blessed, our time belongs to God because it came from Him. God commands the proper observance of His times and seasons (vv. 1-2, 44).

How do we honor God with our time?

1. The Sabbath (23:3)

- The Sabbath is the oldest of holy times (Genesis 2:1-3).
 - ✓ After the fall of mankind in Eden, there is no further reference to the Sabbath until Israel is given the Law at Mount Sinai.

- ❑ The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant for Israel (Exodus 31:13-18; Isaiah 56:6).
 - ✓ The Sabbath is the only one of the Ten Commandments that was not universal or permanent.
 - The Sabbath is not Sunday, nor is Sunday the Sabbath. Sunday (“the Lord’s Day”) observes the resurrection of Christ:

“The frequent references to Sunday in Leviticus 23 (23:7, 11, 16, 35, 36, 39) mark it as a special holy day. The celebration of the Feast of Firstfruits on this day anticipates not only the resurrection of Christ in the new creation but the change of worship from Saturday to Sunday as well.” – Mark Rooker, *Leviticus*, New American Commentary (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 292.

 - Matthew 28:1; John 20:1
 - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2
 - ✓ The Law relates the Sabbath to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).
 - Psalm 95
 - Hebrews 4:1-11
- ❑ Feast days that did not fall on the seventh day were to be observed as full Sabbaths (see Leviticus 23:27-32, 39).
 - ✓ The agricultural nature of the feast days in Israel’s calendar reminded them of God’s creation and His provision.
 - ✓ Seasonal feasts reminded Israel of need for rejuvenation, re-creation, and rest.
 - ✓ Feasts were times when the believing community gathered as the people of God.
 - ✓ Israel’s redemptive history was commemorated in the feasts.

See “**Calendar of Convocations in the Law of Moses.**” Key: *Yellow* identifies sabbatical day and month; represents God as Creator. *Red* identifies redemption and sanctification; represents God as Redeemer and the Holy One. *Blue* second part of Passover; represents God as Provider. *Green* associates with harvest times; represent God as Provider.

Hag, when used in the name of a feast, indicates that it required pilgrimage. Compare the related Arabic word, *hajj*.

2. The Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits (23:4-14)

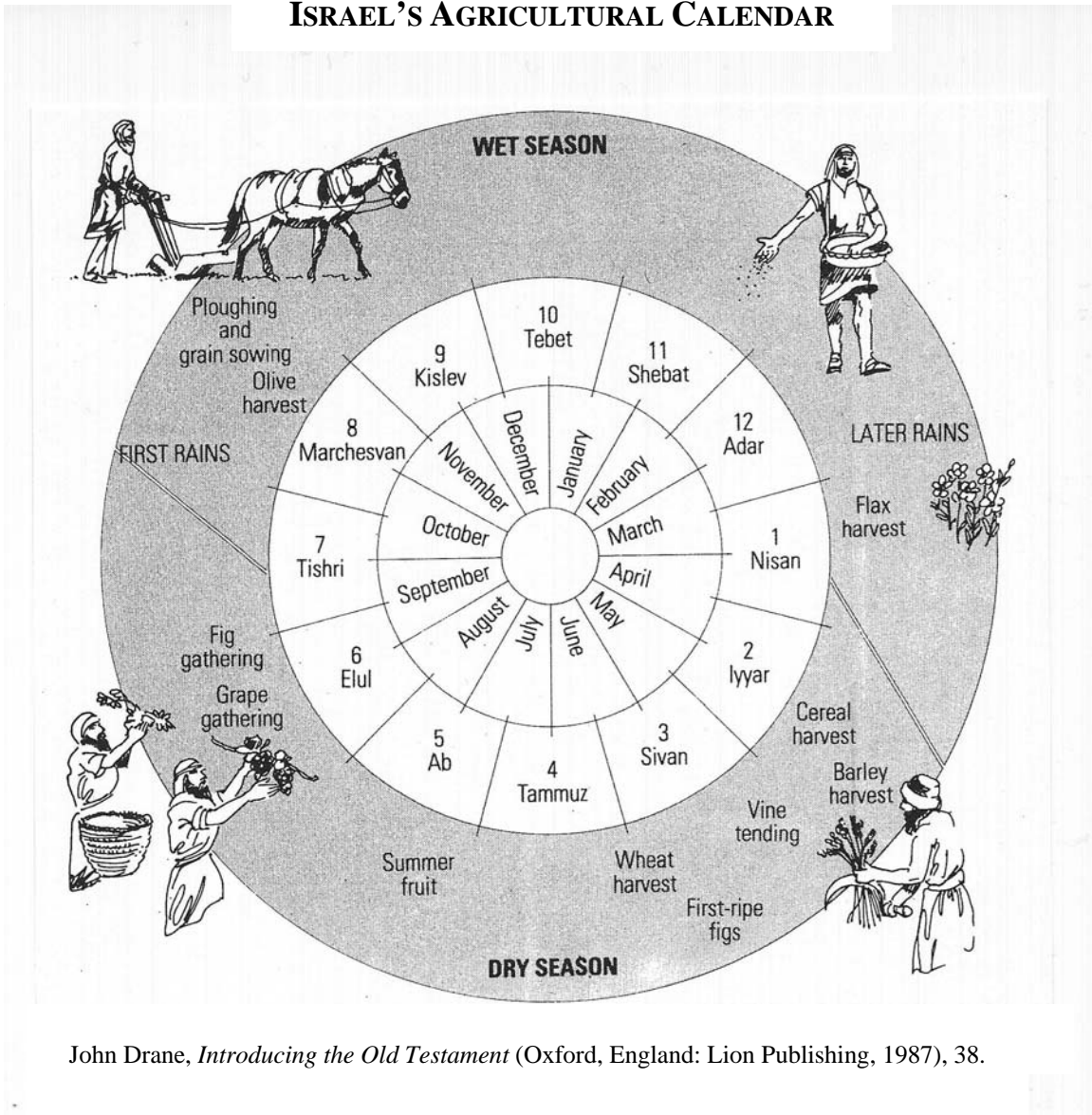
- ❑ Passover (vv. 4-5) celebrated divine redemption of Israel and their consequent freedom.

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 6-8) reminded Israel of the need to purge sin from their lives in order to live a life of holiness and purity.
 - During the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Israelites brought the first sheaf of barley harvested as an offering to the Lord (vv. 9-14).
3. The Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (23:15-22)
- Feast of Weeks celebrates God's gracious Provision and identification of Israel as His people at Mount Sinai.
 - The feast is called Pentecost because it occurs 50 days after the firstfruits of the barley harvest. It is associated with the wheat harvest.
 - The feast falls on the first day of the week (vv. 15-16).
 - It is the only feast for which Israel presented leavened bread (v. 17).
 - Care and provision for the poor is associated most closely with this feast (v. 22).
4. The Feast of Trumpets/New Year (23:23-25)
- The seventh month is a sabbatical month. It commences the civil year by celebrating God as Creator and Refresher.
 - The seventh month had the greatest concentration of religious feasts in the Israelite calendar. The month was a time for covenant renewal.
 - Trumpets called the people away from their earthly labors to a sabbatical season of wholehearted worship.
5. The Day of Atonement (23:26-32) – see notes on Leviticus 16
- On the Day of Atonement fellowship was renewed by means of the removal of continuing uncleanness.
6. The Feast of Booths (23:33-43)
- Final harvesting at this time included the summer fruits and olives.
 - Only for the Feast of Booths did God command rejoicing (v. 40).
 - This feast is also associated with the wilderness life of Israel following the exodus from Egypt (v. 43; Nehemiah 9:15).
 - "Israel's true identity was as a pilgrim people who traveled light by this world's standards." – Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002), 437.

Summary of Applications from Leviticus 23:

- All our times are in God's control and are His gift to us. See Ecclesiastes 3.
- As a community believers need to recognize God as Creator, Redeemer, Lord, Provider, and Sustainer. See Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 43:1, 15; Psalm 132.
- All that we have and enjoy comes from God. He is our Provider. We are to be content in Him. See 1 Timothy 6:6-12, 17-19.

ISRAEL'S AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR



John Drane, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Oxford, England: Lion Publishing, 1987), 38.