

vanderlaaninfo

## **Ray Vander Laan On God's Calendar** (the land, the language, and the Jewish culture of Jesus)

1. Jewish people know how to *celebrate* God. Besides the weekly Sabbaths God gave the Jews 37 days of holidays to celebrate being His people. "Rejoice" means *to dance with joy before God*.
2. *Celebration* for those of us in the West may be more difficult because our relationship with God tends to be so "intellectual" rather than "emotional." We value truth in *information* form i.e. words, bullet points, etc. Jews, being Eastern, think in terms of pictures. Thus, a Westerner may say that God is omniscient and omnipotent while a Jew might describe Him as "living water" or "the bread of life."
3. There are 3 sets of information regarding Old Testament times that we need to consider in their proper context: 1) those things that are specifically described in the Word of God *ie the lamb for Passover had to be without defect Ex 12:5*, 2) those customs and traditions from the time of Moses to AD 70 that the Jews developed to help them carry out God's commandments *ie the Jews of Jesus day had determined that the Passover lambs must come from the flocks of Bethlehem where David had tended sheep*,. 3) those customs and traditions that developed among the Jewish people after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 *ie the Jews began to bake the unleavened bread "matzos" in such a way that it was "striped and bruised."*
4. At the Jewish feast of Pentecost the Jews gathered in the Temple to hear read the 1st 10 chapters of Ezekiel about "rushing wind:"

*Acts 2:1-4 NIV When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

5. The Sabbath day (meaning Saturday) began at dusk on our Friday evening and ran through Saturday evening at dusk.
6. Daily sacrifices were required in the Temple for everyone - one was completed at 9:00 in the morning and one was completed at 3:00 in the afternoon. In the Bible God does many powerful things at those two times of day. These daily sacrifices were called "prayer times" - a devout Jew saw these as times to *worship*. The tax collector of Luke 18:9-14 is actually saying "may this sacrifice be for me."

### **VIP Principle - God acts when His people are in worship.**

7. Three feasts of "rest" God required of Israel (an understanding of the Jewish feasts is incredibly important to a Christ follower who wants to have a deeper knowledge and love of his Lord)
  - a. Weekly feasts called Shabbat - God celebrated the creation of the world Ge 2:1-3
  - b. The Sabbath year - Lev 25:4-5 \* Note below God's punishment of Israel for disobeying this commandment to "rest the land." (after the events of 2 Chron. 36:20-21 Jewish rabbis taught that God would take from a man's life one day for every Sabbath he did not honor and keep as holy.)

*2 Chron 36:20-21 NIV*

*20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21 The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.*

- c. The feast of Jubilee - Lev 25:8-55

*Col 2:16-17 NIV Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*

**Christ in the 7 Key Feasts of Israel (Lev 23)**  
**(the first 3 of these feast were call corporately "Passover")**

1. Passover (March/April) - deliverance from bondage  
(Jesus is our perfect lamb who delivers us from the bondage of sin)
2. Unleavened Bread (March/April) - thanking God for giving us bread out of the earth  
(Jesus was buried "planted" on this day)
3. Firstfruits (March/April) - faith promise  
(Jesus raises from the dead and becomes the "first fruits from the dead")
4. Pentecost (May/June - 50 days after Passover) - Lev 23 - The day the Jews celebrated Moses coming down from Mount Sinai with the 10 Commandments, but because of the Israelite's idolatry with the Golden calf, about 3,000 were struck dead (Ex 32:28.) On the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection about 3,000 were saved (Acts 2:41.)
5. Trumpets (Sept/Oct - Rosh Hashanah) - The Feast of Trumpets - Jesus will return and gather His chosen ones (1 Thess 4:16)
6. Atonement (Sept/Oct - Yom Kippur) - God will Judge (2 Cor 5:9-10)
7. Tabernacles (Sept/Oct - Sukkot) - Living in Heaven - Jesus may have been born on Sukkot (Sukkot means "God tabernacled among us." - Rev 21)

**VIP Time related differences in the culture of Jesus.**

(why it is sometimes difficult to reconcile times and dates in New Testament accounts)

- a. Jews used a *lunar calendar* rather than our current solar calendar. Consequently they lose approximately 11 days each year. They instituted a type of "leap month" approximately every 3 years to make up for the discrepancy. A Hebrew month began in the middle of a month on our calendar today.
- b. In keeping with Gen. 1:5 *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.* *KJV* The Jewish day begins at dusk. Thus, if tonight at dusk begins our Sunday evening, a Jew of Jesus' day would have consider it Monday evening.
- c. Jews consider that any part of a day is counted as a full day. They also consider a person who is age 32 to be 30 until he turns 40.
- d. The original Jewish lunar calendar was lost with the destruction of Solomon's Temple; the Jews endeavored to reconstruct it years later.
- e. Jews, being Eastern in their thought, are not as concerned about chronology as are we Western thinkers.

**A Frame Work of Key dates in the OT History of Israel:**

1. Abraham born 2166 BC
2. the Exodus from Egypt 1446 BC
3. David becomes King 1050 BC
4. Solomon's Temple completed 959 BC
5. Judah falls to Babylon and Temple is destroyed 586 BC
6. New Temple completed in Jerusalem 515 BC
7. Malachi becomes a prophet 430 BC

