



Seven Churches and the Feasts

Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.

Background for this study. You will need to have a general understanding of the meaning and purpose of the seven feasts outlined in Leviticus Chapter 23. You will also need to have your Bible open and ready to go through Revelation chapters 2-3 as I have not included the scriptures in this document.

The Feasts represent that plan of God and the fulfillment of that plan through Jesus Christ. These feasts are set times and in a specific sequence which provides a step-by-step process for drawing closer to God. In this study, I attempt to make a comparison between the seven churches outlined in Revelation and these seven feasts. I believe there is some basis for a connection here. If so, then we have a greater revelation and application through the Bible for how to better understand how these scriptures can work for our good and God's glory.

The table below outlines how the feasts may connect with each of the seven churches.

Feast	When Fulfilled	7 Churches	Church Message
Passover	Jesus dies	Ephesus	Go back to first love
Unleavened Bread	Jesus is buried	Smyrna	Be encouraged during persecution
First Fruits	Jesus is resurrected	Pergamos	Hold on to the true word
Pentecost	Outpouring of the Holy Spirit	Thyatira	Works to be pure and with right motive
Trumpets	The Rapture	Sardis	Be watchful
Day of Atonement	Jesus comes again	Philadelphia	Be encouraged to remain holy and endure
Tabernacles	Millennium reign of Christ	Laodicea	Don't let riches lessen the passion for the things of God

1. Ephesus – when you are starting to work for the Lord. Start hating the things that God hates, don't forget the first love. How do I return to the first love, go back to your Passover moment. When you first submitted and realized you needed Him. Christ is your light. The reward is rights to the tree of life. Everlasting life.
 - a. Told to go back and do the first works. The first works or steps in association to the feasts would be Passover. This represents humble submission to God.
 - b. It is the step that recognizes we are out of alignment and proper relationship with God and that we need to turn once again to Him.
2. Smyrna – when you are broken, poor on the outside and when you are going through tough times; don't be afraid, you are rich inside. Christ is your example for how you will recover from this. Be faithful to the end. Reward is a crown with everlasting life. Keep moving forward. Example – Ex 14:14, don't freak out. ***“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”***

- a. There is a clear feast connection here. The second Feast is Unleavened Bread and it was fulfilled at the burial of Christ.
 - b. When it appears all hope is lost and tough times arrive, this church is encouraged to remain faithful and the reward is life after this trouble.
 - c. There is a promise of life after this step which is consistent with the sequence of the feasts.
 - d. We also see a correlation with the Exodus process and the Children of Israel. After they celebrate Passover and prepare to leave Egypt (sin and bondage), they are faced with the oncoming attack from Pharaoh who is a representation of the devil in trying to persecute and take them out before they can cross the Red Sea and escape (Feast #3, First Fruits). However, God protects them and delivers them from certain death.
 - e. The crown of life protects them from the second death which is far worse than the first or physical death.
3. Pergamos – when you are hanging in there and still proclaiming His name, still have faith; be careful that you don't fall into the trap of false doctrines that lead you to sin and idolatry.
- a. Nicolaitans – so called Christians who practiced indulgence in adultery and sacrificed foods. Compromising doctrine.
 - b. Balaam – caused Israel to sin through sex and idolatry all for money. Num 25:1-3, Num 31, 2 Pet 2:15, Jude 1:11.
 - c. Christ is the word of truth to them. The reward for their overcoming is forgiveness (symbolized by the white stone), adoption and a new name. This is a clear example of being born again. Eating the hidden manna is the truth of the word (Rev 2:17).
 - d. The feast connection is with First Fruits. This was fulfilled partially at the crossing of the Red Sea and completely fulfilled at the resurrection of Christ which occurred around the set time of this Feast day.
 - i. When looking at the feasts and the sequence of key furniture in the Tabernacle, we see the third major piece of furniture is the Table of Shew Bread. This represents the Word of God. See Jesus' references in John Chapter 6:

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6:51-58 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven-- not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

- ii. So the references to the Church of Pergamos of being provided hidden manna and a new name, is a reminder of being born again and a new name and new outlook that comes with a spiritually resurrected Christian. This to me points to the true word of God and not the false doctrine which seems to have been a problem for this church.

- iii. Finally, the reference of the one speaking to this church is the one who has the sharp sword with two edges. This immediately reminds me of the passage in Hebrews 4:12. There is a connection between this sword and the true word of God:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

4. Thyatira – when you are a Christian and practicing charity to others, faith and other works....and have made progress, beware of false teachings that allow you to be seduced to commit fornication and idolatry. Christ is the one who searches your heart and influences you to make the right choices....purity seems to be an important part here.
 - a. Again, I see a connection to the sequence of the Feasts here as this reminds me or the work of the Holy Spirit. Feast #4 or the Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled partially at Mount Sinai in Exodus Chapter 19 with the Children of Israel coming into covenant relationship with God through the Ten Commandments and giving of the Law. It was completely fulfilled in Acts Chapter 2 with the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the actual Day of Pentecost.
 - b. The feast connection for me is not suffer or tolerate sin at this stage of the journey or relationship with God. It is the Spirit who helps us to search our hearts and our motives to ensure we are doing those things which bring honor and glory to God. See 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 as a reference to the Spirit of God searching hearts.

“But God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of man except his own spirit within him? So too, no one knows the thoughts of God except he Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

5. Sardis – They have a name but God says they are dead. They are called to watch, strengthen what you have. Remember how you have come this far and watch. The reward is they will have white garments and name found in the book of life. This is a picture of the rapture and Bema Seat Judgment. Christ is perfect in spirit and confesses us before God.
 - a. Historically, I heard Sardis was conquered twice and both times because they were overconfident and didn't set a watch at night.
 - b. There is a feast connection here for me as well. The Feast of Trumpets is the fifth feast. It occurs after the first set of feasts or the Spring Feasts. There is a gap between the Spring Feasts and Fall Feasts. Interesting that there is a chapter break between the first four churches and the last three churches.
 - c. The Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled at the time of the rapture. At the rapture there is said to be the believer's judgement or what is referred to as the Bema Seat Judgment.

This is the judgement of those who held the faith as referenced in 1 Corinthians Chapter 3.

- d. As believers, Christ tells us to watch for that day (rapture) is coming. Our works and good-will toward others should be perfect or led by the Holy Spirit for His glory.
6. Philadelphia – they still have strength and kept the word, and are encouraged to hold on to their reward and crown. They will be kept from temptation that will come, false believers will come to worship and understand how much God loves them. They will be pillars of the church and carry His name. Christ to them opens doors and creates access that no man can.
- a. There is very clear references to the Day of Atonement or the sixth Feast. The fulfillment of this feast in end time prophesy will be the second coming of Christ when he battles and defeats the enemy and rescues the Jews. The feast was known as being face to face with God as it was the only time during the year that the High Priest could enter into the Holy of Holies in the temple.
 - b. Christ is holy and true and opens doors...this can be a reference to Day of Atonement.
 - c. Notice what they are commended for keeping His word and not denying His name in the face of temptation.
 - d. Enemies will know that He loves them and fights for them. See Exodus 14 how God fights for Israel and the enemy knows this. The same picture will be revealed again at the second coming of Christ.
 - e. The reference to the city of God and New Jerusalem is outlined in Revelation Chapter 21. This is connected to end time prophesy and the victory of Christ over the enemy. So this church example in particular seems to have a strong correlation with the feasts.
7. Laodiceans – they are lukewarm. They are rich on the outside but are poor on the inside. The great danger here is that they don't know their inward condition. They are called to be pure, and open their eyes. They are to receive Him again....let Him dwell in their house. The reward promised if they repent is they will sit with Him in power. Historically it is said they were a very wealthy city. But being lukewarm.....they compromise. Played the middle or both sides.
- a. Again, there seems to be a very strong feast connection as the final Feast of Tabernacles represents the 1,000 year reign of Christ. So the seventh church mentioned here has an invitation to sit with Him on His throne which is not fulfilled until the time of the seventh feast which is the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - b. The Feast of Tabernacles is a time of peace, joy and prosperity. It appears this church was enjoying good times but had become complacent and lost the need of Christ. In their over confidence, they have lessened the need to acknowledge and to rely on God. They were rich in stuff and things of the world but poor in the things of God. They are invited to go back to the first steps which is to humble themselves and receive the invitation of letting Christ who is at the door, come in and have communion. Tabernacles represents God communing and dwelling with us.
 - c. Interesting, in researching the history of the city, it is said the city was proud of three things; their financial wealth, textile, and a popular eye salve that was exported around the known world. Interesting that these are the same three areas which the Bible calls out in verse 18, try His gold, put on His clothes, and fix your eyes so they can see clearly themselves.



Sequence of Christ

Walks among us with light – He is my light

Died and came back to life – He is my hope of resurrection from my current state

The word – He is the word of truth

Searches the heart/mind – The Holy Spirit to search my heart and mind and ensure my motives are for His glory

Perfection in the Spirit – a more perfect ministry and work in dealing with others

Holy and opens and shuts access – He opens doors and encourages me to hold on to what I have in Him

Beginning of creation – He is my peace and His desire as in the beginning is to dwell with me.

Note: The second and sixth churches the only ones not rebuked but instead encouraged. These are the steps where opposition and trials are significant. Where the enemy steps up his attacks, our hope and victory is in Him and His promises.

So what if the Feasts line up with these seven churches. How can I use this?

These passages of scriptures are instructions for these churches. However, it can also apply to churches today. Let's go even further, since the Bible in several passages explains that we are also temples and that the Spirit of God dwells inside of us, these instructions can also apply to us. I think the value of comparing the sequence and instructions with the feasts may help us better put into practice these instructions for each church. Let's review some examples.

Church at Ephesus – their point of failure is that they have left their first love. They are instructed in Rev 2:5 to remember from where they have fallen from, to repent and do the first works. So here is the question...what first works is he talking about? This may be unclear to some but if this first church lines up in sequence with the Feast of Passover, the first of the seven feasts, then it becomes pretty clear what the first works might be. It may mean to recognize you are in a state of need. It may mean to go back to that place where we first were in such need that we had to humbly submit to God and trust in Him rather than trusting in ourselves and sin. In feast terms, this is the first step. Perhaps the application for the Church at Ephesus is to return to the place of humble submission to God when we first received Him.

Church at Smyrna – they are encouraged to be faithful even unto death. They are told there will be tribulation from the devil. We may read this and wonder what to expect and how to respond and how to remain faithful. For my own application, if the second feast (Unleavened Bread) is connected, then I have a pretty good idea of how to follow the instructions for Smyrna. Through the feasts and historical examples, I know that the devil is mad that I have submitted my life and turned to God. The devil will



try and attack and discourage me from reaching the Promised Land. So based upon the second feast, if I can repent from having doubt and despair about the current trouble I may be facing and know with confidence that my resurrection from this trouble and state is just around the corner, then I can have greater confidence in overcoming and receiving life.

Church at Pergamos – they are told to repent in verse 16 because they were allowing the false doctrine of Balaam to be taught that was leading to sin. You may not be aware of this false doctrine, but using the feasts as an example, I know that I must review and understand the truth of the gospel. My new mind is to learn and have my hope in God and not in doctrines which join me to sinful traditions. At this stage I can easily remember the new person that I am in God and my identify is in Him and not in the false doctrines of man. Understanding the true word of God is key here. This may help us to apply the instructions to repent given to this church.

While the feasts may help us with the application for the word of God, the sequence and warning to these seven churches should alert us to conditions we need to be watchful of. You can be doing good things and still miss the mark God is asking and requiring of us at each step of our Christian journey.

Church at Thyatira – in Rev 2:19 they are commended for their works of charity and service. The problem here is again seen in verse 20 where they have allowed a false doctrine and teaching to introduce sin into the church and lead other believers astray. In my understanding of the feasts, it is at this stage that with the leading of the Holy Spirit, we begin to serve and minister to others which leads to the fifth feast. However, this fourth feast or Pentecost teaches that we have the power of the Holy Spirit to do those things which bring glory to God. It is the power to live right. Understanding this concept associated with the feast helps me to understand how to repent from allowing false doctrine from entering into my life.

You can follow this same line of thinking into the next three churches in Revelation Chapter 3. I could outline it for you, but will leave that exercise for you to pursue. The repeated warning for these churches is “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Likewise, you should read the word, hear what the Holy Spirit teaches about the word, test your understanding through the Spirit and let Him guide you. Even with this document and my teaching and understanding...test it via His Spirit.