

# Tonight We Feast, But First We Dance

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     So, this is a talk on the Feast of the Bible, and the title might be a little bit humorous when you see the whole thing. It's called, well, I'll just tell you.

Some of us might remember a TV commercial with Dave Thomas, the owner of Wendy's. Anyway, he's the owner of the hamburger chain. He travels the world looking for the best food.

He goes to all these different countries. And he ends up in some taverna, you know, in the Middle East or Mediterranean, and is very hungry, waiting for his food.

And then all these men in their flamboyant ethnic garb come in with platters of food, and they shout out, tonight we feast! And...

Oh, too fast. But first we dance. And they put down the food and they start dancing, and he's very disappointed because he's very hungry.

[ 1 : 0 1 ]     So, we all like a feast. Hope nobody's hungry now. Thank you, Harvey, for prayer. But, I mean, along with that, I like to give a little prayer myself.

Heavenly Father, in the lengthening of days, the new shoots emerging from what was the wintery ground, we see the Creator's hand. In the sight of tiny lambs and calves joyfully bounding across the farms and meadows, we see the Creator's hand.

Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude, the blindness that prevents us from appreciating the wonder that is this world, the endless cycle of nature, of life and death, and rebirth.

Forgive us for taking without giving, reaping without sowing. Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise, our hands to share, and may our feet tread lightly in the road that we travel together.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, I have to confess I'm not an avid reader of books, but I do read a lot.

[ 2 : 1 1 ]     And this is a subject that's kind of been in my mind for years, and it'll be simple and plain and not too much.

And I hope I make everything digestible for everybody. Okay, so looking at the Merriam-Webster definition of feast, an elaborate and usually abundant meal often accompanied by a ceremony.

Am I in the way? Maybe a bit. Ceremony or entertainment banquet, like a banquet. Second definition is periodic religious observance commemorating an event or honoring a deity, person, or thing.

So, you can have 20 people over for a potluck, but if there's no entertainment or ceremony after, it's not a feast. It's a meal with other people. Second is periodic religious observance means that it's something that happens regularly, could be weekly, monthly, yearly, but regularly.

Food can happen here, but not guaranteed to be abundant and could be quite austere. Sometimes it's fasting. Now, let's look at when feasts are mentioned in the Bible.

- [ 3 : 34 ] There are six feasts commanded by God to Moses, or probably seven feasts, and at the same time, the Sabbath is also mentioned. So, some call that eight. So, we can see a symmetry if we look at seven days of creation.
- So, what we'll do is look at where feast is mentioned. So, the first place where the word feast comes up is in Genesis 19.
- This is a lot when the angels come to his home, and he's very particular that he wants them to stay.
- And he says, My lord, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may raise up early and go on your way. They said, No.
- We will spend the night in the town square. But he pressed them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.
- [ 4 : 38 ] So, I don't think this was necessarily the first time there was ever a feast in that time. And if you look at the time around Moses, the first page I just drew a purple line, because it was easy.
- 2450 BC. Is that what it says? Yeah. 24, sorry? 27? Okay. 2750.
- Thank you. And then if you look at the following pages around 2750, you can see that there is a lot of other cultures, you know, in that area and around the world at that time.
- And I'm sure they all had feasts. Okay. We'll look at another example. Well, there's actually a couple more examples before we go into Exodus.
- In Genesis, Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. So, you can choose any kind of occasion to celebrate. And then also in Genesis, Isaac throws a feast.
- [ 5 : 53 ] I believe it's the commander of the Philistine army because they come to some peaceful understanding and not fight over wells and things. So, he made them a feast and they ate and drank.
- In the morning, they rose early and exchanged oats. And Isaac sent them on their way and they departed from him in peace. Then we have Jacob wanting his wife, Rachel, and Laban.
- And, well, it's an uncomfortable kind of story. But there's a feast that Laban throws for Jacob who wants his wife and substitutes Rachel's sister who has weak eyes.
- But we don't know who had the weaker eyes because in the morning he woke up and there was Leah. So, he had to get married again the next day.
- So, this is the effect of feasts, maybe. So, in Genesis, this is during Joseph's time, the Egyptian pharaoh throws a feast on his birthday.
- [ 7 : 10 ] And includes many of his servants and it ends badly with someone dying as Joseph predicted. And now we come into Exodus and Moses. Just read the verses.
- Afterwards, Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Let my people go that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.
- So, interesting. You wouldn't think of feast and wilderness going together. Exodus 10. Moses said, We will go with our young and our old.
- We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the Lord. This is interesting. Okay. So, we go into Leviticus.
- Order of the Bible. This is where God explains the feasts or commands the feasts. I might even say the secondary commandment.
- [ 8 : 19 ] The Lord spoke to Moses saying, 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. It talks about the Sabbath. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of holy solemn rest, a holy convocation.

You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places. Now, there are three feasts.

Now, the first three feasts of the Bible all happen within an eight-day period. Okay. The feast of Passover in Leviticus, it says, In the first month on the 14th day of the month of twilight is the Lord's Passover.

Now, the Hebrew calendar is a lunisolar calendar, meaning that the months are based on lunar months, but years are based on solar years.

[ 9 : 25 ] So each month starts with a new moon, reaching to a full moon, in the midst of a 28-day cycle. The Hebrew lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year, and they reconcile it every 19 years.

It gets very complicated. Now, the first day of spring is around March 21st, which is easy to remember because it's my daughter's birthday.

Therefore, the first moon of spring is typically, you know, late March or very early April. Thus, Passover always falls on a full moon. The first full moon of spring.

Now, the second feast begins on the next night after Passover. God told the Jews to eat only the pure, unleavened bread during the week following Passover.

But I'll read the Passover about that. Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to your Lord, your God. For the month of Abib, the Lord, your God, brought you out of Egypt by night, and you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to your Lord, your God, from the flock of the herd, at the place that the Lord will choose to make his name dwell there.

[ 10 : 43 ] You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days, you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste, that all the days of your life you may remember the day when he came out of the land of Egypt.

I hope you don't mind. I'm going to do some Bible reading in it because the Bible explains itself very well. And I'll pull things together as we go. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrificed on the evening of the first day remain until night the next morning.

You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord, your God, is giving you, but at a place that your Lord, your God, will choose to make his name dwell in it.

There you shall offer the Passover sacrifice in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt, and you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord, your God, will choose.

In the morning you shall turn and go to your tents for six days. So this is a one-week feast. You shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to your Lord, your God.

[ 12 : 09 ] You shall do no work. Now, in Israel, this is kind of like a male retreat, we'll call it that, or a male Christian burning man.

So every able-bodied man was required to go and follow these instructions. So I'll just leave it like that.

Okay. And continuing on. On the fifteenth day of the same month is a feast of unleavened bread to the Lord. For seven days you shall not eat unleavened bread.

On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. I might be repeating it. No, I'm not. You shall not do any ordinary work, but you shall present a food offering to the Lord for seven days.

On the seventh day of the holy convocation, you shall not do any ordinary work. So, I'm trying to stab it there. So, then comes the next feast, the Feast of First Fruits.

[ 13 : 33 ] It's held on the Sunday following unleavened bread. So, God wanted a special feast during which the Jews would acknowledge the fertility of the fine land he gave them.

They were to bring the early crops of their spring planting, first fruits, to the priest at the temple to be weighed before the Lord on their behalf.

Leviticus 23, verse 10. Then, 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 first fruits of your harvest to the priest, 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. And on that day when you waved the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb, a year old, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord, and the grain offering with it shall be two-tenths of an ephah, a fine flour mixed with oil, or a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a ephah, and you shall eat neither bread nor grain, parched nor fresh, until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God.

It is a statute forever throughout your generations and all your dwellings. So, I don't know if you pick up anything, there.

[ 15 : 18 ] What's happening? Well, I'll pull it out. The sheaf, is that wheat? Is that a wheat? Yeah, it would be a bunch of grain tied together, I think that would be.

Sheaf. So, next is the Feast of Weeks. It was to take place exactly 50 days after the first fruits, usually late May or early June.

The Feast of Weeks is also known as the Feast of Pentecost, and the word Pentecost is derived from 50th. It marks the summer harvest. Summer and tropical and subtropical countries often have two harvests a year.

So, it's the summer harvest. Is that the one that we see evidence of celebration when they put a little house up?

The local synagogues do it. Yeah. So, they call it the Feast of... What did you call it? Feast of Weeks or... I think Christians sometimes... No, something you said before that.

[ 16 : 28 ] The Feast of Pentecost? No. Oh. I've never heard of you. The Feast of Booths? Booths. Booths. That's later. That's it. Thank you. That's Tabernacle. Yes.

The Feast. That's the one. They all have the little house. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think that's the last feast. Oh. Yes. Yeah. So, 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 kneaded with leaven. It's different. This one, you're allowed to use leaven. As firstfruits to the Lord. 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. And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offering.

And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits, which are leaven, as a wave offering before the Lord with the two lambs.

[ 17 : 47 ] They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. Now, leaven or yeast is sort of symbolic of sin. So it's a different kind of sacrifice here.

And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It's a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to the edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and the sojourner, the traveler.

I'm your Lord, your God. Deuteronomy also goes in, but I'll talk a little bit.

So here the two loaves, the wave loaves of equal weight are baked with leaven. And this is the only feast that uses unleavened bread.

[ 18 : 52 ] And so it's representing so sinful man, and yet despite, it's called firstfruits, thereby representing redemption.

Like other Jewish feasts, the Feast of Weeks, foreshadows the coming Messiah. Each and every one of the seven Jewish feasts signifies an important aspect of God's plan of redemption.

Jesus was crucified as the Passover lamb and rose from the grave at the Feast of Firstfruits. In Romans chapter 11, you can read that. Fifty days after the resurrection, the promised Holy Spirit arrived on the day of Pentecost, which is another name for the Feast of Weeks.

On the day of Pentecost, the firstfruits of the church were gathered as some 3,000 people heard Peter present the gospel. With the promised indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the firstfruits of God's spiritual harvest under the new covenant began.

So in Deuteronomy, I'll read that. You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing ring. Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, and you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you.

[ 20 : 18 ] And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your town, the sojourner, the fatherless, the widow who are among you, at the place that the Lord your God will choose to make his name dwell there.

You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt. You shall be careful to observe these statutes. So this is a feast where we see that Gentiles are quite welcome.

Any traveler welcome. there's no specification that it's for Israelites only.

And you shall tithe... Actually, I'm gonna... Well, let me see here. Oh. Okay, this is a little bit more on the Feast of Weeks.

And you shall eat there before the Lord your God. Rejoice you and your household and you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns for he has no portion or inheritance with you. At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns.

[ 21 : 43 ] And the Levite because he has no portion or inheritance with you and the sojourner the fatherless and the widow who are within your towns shall come and eat be filled that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

So. And Deuteronomy spells out tithes more clearly. Sometimes when you read things over things jump out at you I hope you glean something from this.

You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year and before your Lord your God in the place that he will choose to make his name dwell there.

You shall eat the tithe of your grain of your wine of your oil and the firstborn of your herd and flock that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

And if the way is too long for you so that you're not able to carry the tithe when the Lord your God blesses you because the place is too far from you for which the Lord your God chooses to set his name there then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand go to the place that your Lord chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink whatever your appetite craves.

[ 23:17 ] it's right there go ahead I'm not sure how to trace this question but we've been through Exodus where people who had been in Egypt for what seven generations if I got that right not sure about the length of time long enough to forget whatever they had learned from Abraham Isaac and Jacob it's almost like retraining the children of Israel after they left Egypt and went through wilderness and all of that have I got that right does that make any sense I mean the degree of specificity is crippling right right so God repeats a lot of things that he's trying to emphasize sure yeah yeah and how much a portion of wine will be it's a lot to digest so it suggests that they're having to learn from scratch mm-hmm yeah one of the things

I wondered was the wine because you know when I it wasn't a Anglican Sunday school I went to when I grew up but they said it's grape juice you know but it's quite yeah okay and it says here any wine or any strong drink and I tried to I did a little bit of research around that and one of the challenges in those times and even in some places today is safe water to drink and one of the things that was very safe to carry to drink was probably wine you know unless you were able to stop and start a fire and boil some water and so on so wine was a safe way of hydrating I I just wonder what you know what it was like you know travelers were you know I'm not saying they were drunk but they would have had some effect

I read that strong drink is actually is beer because I had beer back then okay yeah and so in the middle ages where the water was bad yeah always but they would drink ale or beer instead of wine instead of water and it's the same thing so any kind of fermented drink it kills all the bacteria also of course soups and stews because of course it would be cooked that's right that's right yeah absolutely so I I mean wine is also a symbol of joy I don't think the the Bible anywhere encourages drunkenness at all but it's perfectly okay okay to have it part of a feast and the feast where God is the person of honor right so now did I read all that

I think I probably did yeah I think I have a little bit more on Deuteronomy I'll read that you shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year no I did read that okay no that's good no that's good that's good so in the seventh month usually September on the first day of the month they had a memorial of blowing of trumpets so I'll read here and the Lord spoke to Moses saying 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 blasts of trumpets a holy convocation you shall not do any ordinary work and you shall present a food offering to the

[ 31 : 41 ]    so that you will be altogether joyful. Why do you think the wives are excluded from that list?

Able-bodied men. Yes. And for women and girls it was optional. Samuel's mother, for example, when she's given birth, she stays home from her usual travel until he's weaned, for example.

So it could be different each time. And until, you know, David's time and the temple being built in, then I think may be different.

At the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks, at the feast of boots, they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

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For seven days, all Israel moved out of their homes and lived in temporary shelters called Sukkah as a reminder of their wanderings in the desert for 40 years. The branches cut from the palm, willow, and other trees were to be waved in celebration of the Lord during the first seven days of the feast.

This final feast of the year is a celebration of ingathering at the end of the harvest and is a time for rejoicing and fellowship. It symbolizes the gathering or harvest of God's people who leave earth for a week-long marriage supper of the Lamb to be celebrated at the Father's house in heaven.

[ 34 : 08 ] No. That's it. Okay. I just want to say that the feasts have never been revoked.

You know, they haven't been revoked. So, that's how we take it. I know one Passover, our small group, we decided to, that we wanted to do a Seder, you know, Passover Seder, right?

And, this is a very spiritually moving experience, you know, and I can't say that I've experienced any of these other feasts, but it's just something to think about, right?

To mark the time, mark the seasons, and, yeah, acknowledge God. So, it sounds like about half of the year is a festival desert, is that right?

Yeah, I mean, I don't think the Bible says, see, it says wilderness, they were in the wilderness. No, but I mean, no festival, a half of the year, no festival.

[ 35 : 15 ] Yeah, you have to work, I mean, no festival or, you know, feast as a nation, right? But you'd have your own feasts. Fall, and then from fall to spring, nothing. Right. No holidays.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's the way to, I guess. Traveling would be more difficult in the winter, of course. Remember Christ saying, pray that this regulation will not occur in the winter or on a Sabbath.

Right, right. And he also mentioned that the difficulty of travel for women, how terrible it would be for them. Yeah. Well, one thing is, in Europe, they actually have a lot of festivals during winter, and it helps winter go by very quickly, and it's all outside.

You know, your body gets acclimatized, and goes by. There's something to be said about, you know, a block party, you know, people in your neighborhood.

I mean, we have celebrations, national holidays and such, but I'm not sure if they're necessarily a feast. And the feast had a lot of generosity.

[ 36 : 22 ] People gave a lot, right, and invited everybody. And I think for the Gentile or the foreigner, it's like, wow, you know, God's blessing you, and you're sharing his blessing with us.

And I think that was certainly an outreach. someone over here have a handout. Yeah. Some of the synagogues in town, I know I get emails from them because I've been to Israel and I'm interested in it, and they have celebrations quite often.

And people that have been blessed financially, often they'll put on the banquets. The banquets are free for anybody that wants to show up, you know, and it's part of their, these people's tithe is that they're blessing people at this banquet.

Yeah. And so they celebrate a lot of these feasts still, as you said. And, but I was thinking especially of the feasts of weeks, that list was very onerous, you know, I don't know, three lambs and a heifer and I don't know what all, a bull.

I'm wondering when you say you, is that one family or who's supposed to bring all that? Because it sounded very, very, very old. Sounds like a household, but some of these households were large, right?

[ 37 : 44 ] There were, people had a lot of children and grandchildren. I would imagine. Would you know? Professor, Tom Wright will emphasize in his scholarship always that throughout the scriptures, just beneath the surface, my language, but the Adam and Eve story is never forgotten.



It's always present to its interpreters and readers and do you sense that if that's true, I suspect that the learned it, Tom Wright has that, correct?

That these feasts also are remembering Eden, which was a feast. Right. You may eat of every tree in the garden. It's a celebration of flourishing, represented by feasting.

And there's any sense anywhere here, yeah, we're remembering Eden as we, our language, not theirs, salvation history. Yeah. And we're going from that feast and we're going to get to another one.

Absolutely. Sure. It holds the scriptures together. I like that what you're talking about. Yeah. It holds scripture together. Another way to see scripture together. The land of milk and honey is a feast place symbolically, isn't it?

[ 38 : 59 ] Yeah. A garden to a garden. The nature of this problem. There must be more questions. The feasts were open-ended. Yeah.

You wouldn't think, these are the only ones you can have. Think of Hanukkah, like the purine, extra fast days that Christ would have kept. Yeah. Right. They're open. There's always some new report coming out, but this one caught my attention.

It was about the wealth and happiness index. It looked at countries all around the world where wealth is going up and they gauge the wealth and then what happens to the happiness.

The only country where, I mean, almost every country where the wealth is going up, the happiness seems to be going the other way. The only, one, maybe there were two, but the one country that stood out was China and I go there regularly and I can tell you that any excuse to have a feast, they'll do it.

And one thing about Chinese people is the more prosperous they become, the more they celebrate. They celebrate with their friends, their family, and so on. And whereas I think in a lot of other countries, I mean, India is as populous as China, but no, it's going the other way, very much like Canada and the US.

[ 40 : 24 ] We want to protect our wealth, whereas I found the Chinese extremely generous. so I think there's something there.

Okay, thank you. Go ahead. a customer that she, excuse me, Italian origin, she went to the Portuguese festivals, so they're very happy people, but the majority would run the show on those things, they would have come from that country when it was very poor.

And I had a Jewish customer that took me to the Coel Synagogue at Broadway, and Mabel to the Seder Supper. It's very interesting how the whole thing operated there, and festivals too.

I live by the Portuguese Catholic Church, I've seen how they do all the foods and stuff. It looks like it's done by a catering company, but they all do it on their own. It's these abilities that people have from these quote-unquote poor countries, what they're able to do with basic resorts, it's amazing.

Yeah. Next week, I can't sit down yet, brother. Next week, James Wagner was speaking to us about the Christian and anxiety, and so we won't want to miss that.

[ 41 : 39 ] James this morning was preaching on the parable of the prodigal son, and of course, the call for a feast by the Father. Forgiveness and reconciliation is time for a feast.

So, yeah, so it's everywhere, isn't it? I like the fact that the, I'm happy not here, I like the fact that the first, you mentioned Pentecost, Peter and the speaking in tongues, the first hearers of the gospel said they're drunk.

No. They looked drunk to the world. Church of the Lord says they were divinely sober. That worldly, worldly sober-mindedness is the true drunkenness.

So that's a good comment from the tradition. Thank you very much. You're welcome.  
Where was... I should have. You have to wait until tonight.

There you go. Well, I'm sure we all have to say thank you for this. It's wonderful. You're welcome. Thank you.