

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introduction: Jesus—Lord of the Calendar	
1.	Jesus—Lord of Time	9
2.	The Fall Feasts	13
	Part 1: Rosh Hashanah	
3.	The Biblical Institution of Rosh Hashanah	21
4.	Rosh Hashanah in the Time of Christ	29
5.	Jewish Observance of Rosh Hashanah	43
6.	Death and the Afterlife	57
7.	The Akedah: The Binding of Isaac	65
	Part 2: Yom Kippur	
8.	The Biblical Institution of Yom Kippur	77
9.	Yom Kippur in the Time of Christ	91
10.	Jewish Observance of Yom Kippur	109
11.	Atonement Without a Temple	125
12.	Forgiven Finally and Forever: The Christian and Yom Kippur	141

Part 3: Sukkot

13.	The Biblical Institution of Sukkot	155
14.	The Observance of Sukkot in Biblical Times	165
15.	Sukkot in the Time of Christ	173
16.	Jewish Observance of Sukkot	187
17.	Tabernacles Tomorrow	205
	Conclusion: The Lord of Your Life	216
	Glossary	220
	Bibliography	226
	General Index	231
	Index of Rabbinic References	246
	Index of Apocryphal References	248
	Index of Hebrew Terms	248
	Index of Scripture	250

1

Jesus—Lord of Time

In the beginning, God created time. He made light and darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night: “And there was evening and there was morning, one day” (Genesis 1:5). Yet the Holy One is eternal and lives beyond the limitations of time and space. He created time—the sequence of events—to serve as the arena where the heavenly meets the temporal, where God meets man. By His act of creation, the Sovereign of eternity was also crowned Lord of time.

The apostle John supplies additional knowledge on the Genesis record and tells us that the pre-incarnate Christ was the architect of creation. John wrote, “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:3-5). The world of time and space were to become the special domain of the second Person of the Trinity. He is Creator, Redeemer, and King. Ultimately, His kingdom will include all that He has made, for heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool (Isaiah 66:1).

God intended events on earth to reflect heavenly realities. “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), Jesus taught us to pray. It is God’s desire that our lives be characterized by heavenly values, that the

temporal reflect the eternal. As God the Father ruled over the heavens, so man, created in His image, was to rule for Him on the earth. The natural beauty of the world declared the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), but that was not enough for the Lord of the universe. He desired that every man and woman reflect the beauty of His holiness through the moral quality of their lives. But that was not to be.

Early in history, Adam and Eve revolted and ripped away from God the mantle of leadership, enthroning themselves in His stead. Adam's rebellion would turn man's walk through history into a path of thorns. But God, moved by love for His creation, would not allow the anarchy to continue. Along with Adam's Fall and the judgment came a ray of divine hope in the promise of a Redeemer, a seed of the woman, who would conquer the rebels and restore the rightful Lord of time to His throne (Genesis 3:15). But until that wonderful day when Christ rules His creation, time remains a battlefield between good and evil.

The apostle Paul tells us to redeem the time, for the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). The battle waged to redeem time, to sanctify our days as holy unto the Lord, is a critical one for believers in the Messiah. The day will surely come when every knee shall bow to Him (Philippians 2:10), but until then we must spend every moment in service worthy of the Lord.

The sanctity of time and the Lord's sovereignty over history were lessons that God sought to teach His chosen nation, Israel. Through the holy calendar given at Mount Sinai, the Lord of the Universe ordered the days of His people, focusing their attention on the heavenly realm. The feasts of the Lord were not given to enslave the Israelites but to free them to reflect on the Person, plan, and attributes of the Holy One of Israel. Through those special days, they were to recognize that He is Lord of every moment and must rule over every second of their lives.

The feasts and laws of the Lord were a tutor (Galatians 3:24) to lead the Israelites to the Savior. The apostle Paul described the Hebrew calendar as a “mere shadow” of what was to come. He wrote, “Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17). The apostle was not condemning those Jewish Christians who wished to continue celebrating the Jewish holidays. Rather, Paul asserted that the festivals lead to Christ.

It is appropriate, therefore, for a Jewish believer to celebrate these holidays in a way that is consistent with the apostolic faith and that exalts the Person of Jesus. Non-Jewish Christians as well must recognize that the festivals of Israel find their fulfillment in Christ and His new covenant. Jesus Himself said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). Christians who follow the church calendar will find that understanding the Levitical feasts adds a new depth and dimension to their lives. The feasts of Israel point to Jesus Christ as Lord of time and history.

In Leviticus 23, God calls the feasts of Israel “My appointed times.” It was important for the Israelites to remember that behind the intricate details of each feast stood the God who ordained them, to remember that He created time, and to remember that history bears the image of His presence. The feasts of Israel were God’s appointed times to remind His people that He was Lord of the calendar, the King of creation, and that He was to be worshiped every day. The feasts of the Lord have a great deal to teach all who have crowned Him Lord of their lives.