

Romans 5:11

A Brief Look at Israel's Feasts for Historical and Dispensational Context

Romans 5:11

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

And not only so...

Not *only* shall we be saved by the life of Jesus Christ, but we also joy in God through Him. Our position before Him is fundamentally changed so that we are able to experience Him as a Father and have joy in Him.

We have *now* received the atonement.

This is a radical statement when considered in its historical and dispensational context.

When I say historical context, I simply mean when considered in the scope of human history, but when I say dispensational context, this adds another layer to the historical context. Now I'm speaking of what God has been *doing* in regards to mankind at any given point in history. The most basic example is when we consider the Old and New Testaments. That is to consider what God was doing in time in regards to man.

We have seen however that there is more to what God has been doing in time than simply the old and New Testament. And so when Paul says we have *now* received the atonement, that is a statement that no one historically could make up until the time when God began offer salvation in the dispensation of grace, of which, Paul was specifically made a minister:

Colossians 1:24-25

²⁴ *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

²⁵ *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God...*

The word atonement is a contraction of at-one-ment, meaning we have been made eternally at one with God.

The nation of Israel, having the Law, was prescribed a sacrificial system to produce temporary effects allowing God to stay His wrath towards sin. As discussed previously, they had “remission” of sins in the sense of temporary reprieve, but not the true payment. Similarly, they had temporary atonement through this system, but the system by nature, being covenantal and requiring the performance of the flesh, was not a true and lasting at-one-ment. The burden was upon the Israelites to keep up their end of the deal, which they couldn’t do indefinitely.

Now, by the performance of One, Jesus Christ, we have obtained that which historically no one has yet had, but which all justified men will one day share.

When I speak of the historical and dispensational context of this, we must understand that no one in the gospel accounts had this everlasting atonement, the believing remnant of the circumcision did not yet have this standing; thus, the audience of the Hebrew epistles Hebrews through Revelation do not yet have this atonement either. It is clear they are in danger of forfeiting their prophesied salvation and promises which will only be actualized when Jesus Christ returns as Deliverer and King.

The program for Israel’s salvation naturally has components to it much like ours. These components are pictured by the feasts the Lord gave to them back in Leviticus 23.

National redemption occurred at the cross, and is pictured by the **Feast of Passover** (Ex. 12:1-14, Is. 53:5-8).

- The burial of Christ's body and its not seeing corruption (for His flesh would *rest* in hope), is pictured by the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, during which the bread did not rise. Leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible (Acts 2:25-27, Ps.16:9-10, Ex. 12:15-20).
-

- The resurrection is pictured by the **Feast of First Fruits**, as Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, the first to resurrect unto eternal life (1 Cor. 15:23, Lev. 23:9-14).
-

- The giving of the Holy Ghost in Acts chapter 2 (50 days after the Unleavened Bread sabbath, or 3 days from Passover) is pictured by the **Feast of Weeks**, or **Pentecost**, where Jesus baptized the remnant of Israel with the Holy Ghost, to write His Law on their hearts according to the promise of the New Covenant (Acts 2:1-4, Lev. 23:15-22, Jer. 31:33). During this feast two loaves of bread baked *with* leaven are waved before the Lord, and then given as a burnt offering with seven lambs, one bullock, and two rams as a burnt offering. These two loaves signify the presence of sin still within the Kingdom of Israel and Judah. Although the redemptive work of Jesus was performed, they have not yet received the full benefits of that work. The giving of the Spirit is going to help them endure the time of trouble they're going to endure, before they receive their eternal inheritance as sons of God.
 - The future regathering of Israel into their own land by angels at Christ's return to the earth is typified by The Feasts of Trumpets (Matt. 24:29-31, Is. 27:12-13, Lev. 23:23-25)
 - Israel's national forgiveness and atonement is pictured by the **Day of Atonement**, which will also occur when the Lord returns (Lev. 23:26-32, Matt. 24:30, Zech. 12:10-13:1).
 - Finally, the rest that Israel is to enter into with the Lord in their Kingdom is typified by the **Feast of Tabernacles**, where God will tabernacle with men as Immanuel, *God with us*, as He rules the nations with a rod of Iron (Lev. 23:33-43, Zech 14:9-21, Heb. 4:9-11, Ps. 132:13-14).
-

The apostles understood the foreshadowing of these feasts and their implications.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰ *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

²¹ *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

²² *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

²³ *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Hebrews 10:1

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

Colossians 2:16-17

16 *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

17 *Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

The things contained in the Law were pointing to things to come; they were not the fulness of those things themselves but mere pictures.

And so we see Israel, according to their program, have not yet received the fullness of their promises. They have not yet received their *atonement*.

Paul alludes to this later in Romans 11:7: