

# LITTLE GEMS

## Emor

Shalom children! Today we will look at more of the instructions that Yahweh gives to the Yisra'elites through Mosheh. This parsha begins by describing the special jobs He has for His priests; but these instructions are meant only for them. So for now, let's jump ahead to learn about His appointed times, which are special feasts that He wants *all* the Yisra'elites to celebrate. **(Place Mosheh and happy Yisra'elites on board.)**

The first celebration we see in this chapter of the parsha is one that we get to do every single week. Can anyone tell me what that is? Yes, it is the Shabbat! **(Place Shabbat table on board.)** Yahweh tells the Yisra'elites to rest on Shabbat and NOT do any work. Every 7<sup>th</sup> day, we take this special time to get together, relax, and learn about Yahweh.

Now, how many of you have ever celebrated one of Yahweh's Pilgrimage feasts, like Passover or Sukkot? **(Let children answer.)** Pilgrimage feasts are one type of appointed time that Yahweh gives to the Yisra'elites, and there are 3 of them in each year. We have a lot of fun celebrating those feasts, and once one feast is finished, we have weeks or even months to look forward to the next one!

So the first of Yahweh's yearly appointed times is Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which begin together. **(Place matzah on board.)** Yahweh tells His people that they are to celebrate this festival by eating only bread that is unleavened. Unleavened bread, or matzoh, is really flat, because it didn't have time to rise before it was baked. When the sun goes down to begin the first day of Unleavened Bread, the Passover meal is eaten with matzoh. Then, when they wake up in the morning, they are NOT to do any servile work that first day. They are supposed to gather together and to bring to Yahweh an offering made by fire for each of the 7 days. Then, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, they are told to have another gathering, and to do no servile work on that day, either.

Now, once the Yisra'elites have settled into the land of Kena'an and begin to raise crops, there is a special offering that Yahweh's people are to bring during this time. It is called the Offering of First-Fruits, or the Wave Sheaf offering. **(Place wave sheaf on board.)** In Hebrew, it is called Bikkurim. They are also to bring a portion of the first-fruits of their harvest to the priest, along with offerings of a lamb, a grain offering, and a wine offering. **(Place first-fruits basket, a lamb, bread and wine offering on board.)** And they are NOT to eat bread, roasted grain, or fresh grain until they have brought this offering. Yahweh's offering comes first!

Yahweh then tells them about the Festival of Weeks, which in Hebrew is called Shavuot. This is the second pilgrimage feast. To get to Shavuot you must have 7 completed Sabbaths, over a period of 49 days. Then on the 50<sup>th</sup> day, a new grain offering was

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brought to Yahweh. He wanted them to bring offerings of 2 loaves of bread made out of fine flour and baked with leaven, so they will be nice and puffy. **(Place 2 loaves of bread on board.)** He also told them to bring several lambs, a bull, 2 rams, and a goat. **(Place animals on board.)** Whew, that's a lot of animals! They are told to bring them to the priests, who are given special instructions on what to do with them. They are also told to have a set-apart gathering and NOT to do any servile work.

**(Remove all characters off board.)**

Now we are going to talk about the fall feasts. Several months after Shavuot comes the next appointed time of Yahweh: the Festival of Trumpets. You may have heard this one called Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashanah. This is the day that we get to hear lots and lots of shofar blasts! **(Place man blowing shofar on board.)** Yahweh tells the Yisra'elites that this day is for resting and remembering Yahweh by blowing trumpets. He also tells them to bring another offering.

Ten days after the Festival of Trumpets comes the Day of Atonement. It is a very solemn day, when the Yisra'elites are to gather together and afflict themselves. We practice this by fasting, which means that we go a whole day without having anything to eat or drink. **(Place plate of food with 'X' on board.)** Yahweh tells them to bring another offering, and then He reminds them again to afflict themselves, and tells them NOT to do any work. And boy, is He serious! He says that they must remember this commandment forever—to afflict themselves and NOT to do any work on this day. And their children and their children's children, for all generations are to remember it too, no matter where they live.

Finally, we come to the Festival of Booths, or Sukkot, which is the Hebrew word for "booths." It is the third yearly Pilgrimage feast, and lasts for 7 days, with a special 8<sup>th</sup> day festival added at the end, called Shemini Atzeret. Sukkot is a joyful time that takes place when they have gathered in the fruit of the land. All the native Yisra'elites are to gather together and spend time living in booths during this festival. In the land of Yisra'el, harvest time always brings beautiful, sunny weather, so living in booths is like the best camp-out you could ever imagine! **(Place sukkah on board.)** Have you ever helped build or decorate a sukkah? Yahweh explains to them that living in booths is meant to remind them how they lived in booths out in the wilderness, after He brought them out of the land of Mitsrayim.

On the first day of this festival, they are to gather together and rest. Yahweh tells them to bring an offering for 7 days, and then on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, on Shemini Atzeret, they are to have a final special gathering, bring another offering, and rest from work. It is a time of dancing and joy! **(Point to happy Yisra'elites on board.)**

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Well, we are at the end of Yahweh's list of all the appointed times He gave the Yisra'elites, and you may think that's a lot of gatherings and celebrations. But Yahweh wants His people to delight in Him and in His goodness, and I enjoy each one of them! If you get confused about which one is which, or need help remembering something about one of them, you can just ask your parents or one of the leaders in your congregation. These are all special times that are set apart for us to rest, think about Yahweh, and gather together to enjoy each other's company. **(Point to happy Yisra'elites on board.)**

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next week for another exciting Little Gems story!