

DATE: 01 OCT 2023 | SPEAKER: PASTOR BEN KC LEE
TOPIC: GOD WILL RETURN | SCRIPTURE: [LEVITICUS 23:23-44](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the significance and symbolism of the autumn feasts.
2. See the importance of the Jewish festivals in God's divine calendar

SERMON SUMMARY

The final 3 feasts are critical in order to understand God's divine calendar. All 3 of these feasts are yet to be fully fulfilled. The return of Christ will kick start the full fulfilment of these 3 feasts. The 3 feasts begin with the sounding of the trumpets – this brings Israel into a time of prayer and fasting, as they approach The Day of Atonement, 10 days later. The Day of Atonement symbolises what Christ has done at His first coming and what will fully do at His second coming. The feasts end with the Festival of Tabernacles, signifying the coming of God's presence in Christ on the earth.

SERMON RECAP

Last week, we examined the 3 Jewish springtime feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits) and Pentecost that were fulfilled at Jesus' first coming and the outpouring of the Spirit. The final 3 Jewish feasts occurred during the Autumn months and are collectively called Tabernacles ([Leviticus 23:24, 27 & 34](#)). The feasts of the Tabernacles involved great rejoicing in the ingathering of the fruit of the land. This is a prelude to the joyous last days where the nations will flow into Jerusalem to worship Christ in the Messianic age as prophesied in [Zechariah 14:16](#).

1. **Trumpets** ([Leviticus 23:24](#)) – This is the first of the autumn feasts. The only Scriptural command for the Jewish people is to blow the trumpets. The blowing of the trumpets was an alarm of sorts ([Joel 2:1](#)) and marked the beginning of 10 days of consecration and repentance before the Lord in preparation for The Day of Atonement which fell on the 10th day. This feast also marked the end of the agricultural and festival year. The Feast of the Trumpets foreshadows the 2nd coming of Christ what is accompanied by the sound of a trumpet, ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)) as well as the future Day of the Lord ([Joel 2:1](#)).
2. **Day of Atonement** ([Leviticus 23:27](#)) – The Day of Atonement was the most solemn of all the Jewish festivals and feasts. Described in detail in [Leviticus 16:1-34](#), the High Priest on this day will undergo an elaborate purification ritual as well as put on special garments as this is the only day in the whole year he is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. The High Priest will then bring two goats. The 1st goat will be sacrificed as a sin offering and its blood sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant. The High Priest will then place his hands on the head of the 2nd goat and confess the sins of the whole nation before the altar of the burnt offering. The 2nd goat will then be released outside of the camp into the wilderness. Symbolically, this "scapegoat" would carry away the sins of the people.

The 2 sacrifices brought reconciliation between Israel and God. The Day of Atonement is associated with the redemption of the entire nation of Israel ([Revelation 1:7](#), [Zechariah 12:10](#), [Daniel 7:13-14](#)). While Jesus fulfilled many elements of the Day of Atonement at His 1st coming, The Day of Atonement will be ultimately fulfilled when Christ returns to bring judgment on His enemies, forgive and save the nation of Israel, and completely pour out His wrath upon the wicked.

3. **Tabernacles / Booths** ([Leviticus 23:34](#)) – The Feast of Tabernacles or Booths or Sukkot, is the last feast that the Lord commanded Israel to observe. This feast takes place 15 days after the blowing of the trumpets. This feast was a time of joyous celebration as the Israelites celebrated God’s continued provision for them in the current harvest and remembered His provision and protection during the 40 years in the wilderness. During this feast, Jewish families construct a hastily built hut/booth (Sukkah) in which meals are eaten in throughout the 8 days of the feast. The huts/booths were not to be nailed or built in any way that suggests permanence. The tabernacle of God symbolises God’s very presence and the feasts of the Tabernacles symbolises the global restoration process which will start with the return of Christ. This feast will be fulfilled at the 2nd coming of Christ when there will be literal rest for the earth and all its inhabitants.

The final 3 feasts will only be fully fulfilled when Christ returns again. Our posture should be one of solemn examination of our lives, and anticipation of His glorious return. God will return!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **The feasts and festivals marked a time of celebration and remembrance of God’s provision for the Jewish people. Likewise, what have you harvested this year? What has the Father given you to be thankful for?**

Leader’s Notes

This is a reflection question. In busy Singapore, we often times fail to stop and acknowledge God’s hand in our lives. Encourage your members to reflect on God’s fingerprints in their lives this year – how have they experienced God’s goodness and hand on their lives? It may be something that we often take for granted. Or, it may be something that is very evident in our lives this year. Take the time to acknowledge God’s hand in our lives and to once again depend on Him as our Source.

Transition

The feasts and festivals we ordained by God for Israel so that they will always remember that God is their Source and that He is a good Father to them, in spite of them not fully understanding the magnitude of what God has done and was going to do in their lives.

2. **After going through this and last week’s sermons, why do you think the Jewish feasts and festivals are so critical for us Christians today?**

Leader’s Notes

The festivals and feasts points to the 1st coming of Christ as well as to His future coming where He will make all things new. It also points to a coming time where judgment will come on the earth. As shared during the sermon, the final 3 feasts are yet to be fulfilled. Therefore, while grace has been lavished on us at Christ’s first coming, we must never take that grace for granted. We must constantly examine ourselves and live lives that are worthy of His return. We must not hold on too tightly to our earthly homes and possessions (booths). There is a more glorious home and hope that is coming at His return. God will return! And we say, Maranatha!

Transition

It is one thing to understand the significance of these feasts and festivals. The more important thing for us is to translate that knowledge into practical living – what does that mean for us today?

3. **One big theme that arises out of the feasts and festivals we have studied so far is the return of Christ. Two questions arise as a result of this theme:**
 - a) **Are you ready to give an account for how you have stewarded your life and the resources God has given to you on judgment day?**
 - b) **Do you look forward in anticipation for the Lord's return? Or are you indifferent about it?**

Leader's Notes

This is a practical question for members to translate the knowledge into practical living. If you scroll through the news today you will discover a few things – the decay of morality, the abundance of lawlessness, the fragility of relationships between nations, extreme climate changes, radioactive pollution in the seas, extreme drought and famine, etc. All of these can be seen as indicators of Scriptural prophecy (trumpet call) pointing to one thing – the coming of Christ. What if we are the generation that experiences His return? Will we be ready to meet our Bridegroom and Judge? Guide your members to a time of reflection on the attitudes of their hearts as we approach the impending return of Christ.

Closing

Jesus is coming again. This is not a wish but a coming reality for everyone that declares Him as Saviour. May the posture of our hearts and lives not be one that makes this world our permanent dwelling place. Rather, let us constantly examine our ways and live in light of eternity. Jesus is our coming hope and salvation. He is also our coming Judge. Therefore, may we all learn to live in light of that!

PRAYER

Consider dividing the group into sub-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Ask the Lord if there are any areas of your life that seems to want to build a permanent home here on this earth. Surrender that area of your life to the Lord.
- Ask the Lord to fix your eyes on His return rather than what is fading away here on this earth.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that as we have concluded the 21 days of prayer and fasting, we will determine to live in a new normal – one that follows after the example of Christ.
- Pray for our mission teams that are heading to the nations in this season.

3. World

- Pray for Koh Samui that is experiencing chronic water shortages.
- Pray for New York that is experiencing flash floods.
- Pray for the situation in Japan as more radioactive water is being released into the oceans.
- Pray for God's protection on Singapore as there is a recent increase in hotspots all over Sumatra.
- Pray for Canada's rocky relationship with India in light of the murder of a high-profile Sikh figure.
- Pray for the situation in Pakistan where a suicide bomber killed 50 people and wounded many others.
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. Current Pulpit Series – In the Wake of Awakening.

- Part 1 – Roots (3 Sep – 1 Oct). We return to the Biblical foundations of our faith. From consecration and purification to Jewish feasts pointing to Jesus' first and second coming, we will rediscover parts of our spiritual heritage that have been lost so that our faith is found strengthened in light of His return.
- Part 2 – Revivals (15 Oct – 26 Nov). We survey seasons of awakening in Israel's history throughout the Old Covenant. From restorations of relationships to spiritual warfare, we will glean from Israel's obedience and failures following seasons of renewal.

2. Serve in SuperLife. Serve in SuperLife as a Teacher or Tech Support Crew!

- Teacher's role:
 - Support the running of weekly SuperLife services for preschool children
 - Care for and manage the children during service
- Tech support crew role:
 - Serve at our children's services for Kindy (aged 5-6) and Nursery (aged 3-4) levels
 - Operate the Pro-Presenter software on a laptop for videos and slides support
 - Operate the sound panel and microphones for audio support No prior experience needed as training will be provided.
- Sign up to serve: rlc.sg/serve

3. Discipleship@Home - Our Bodies, God's Story (For Parents of Primary & Preschool Children)

- Preschool Session: Sun, 8 Oct | 9am-11am | Faith Chapel
- Primary Session: Sun, 5 Nov | 9am-11am | Grace Chapel
- Content: What is God's design for our bodies that are made in the image of God? How can we love God through knowing how to take care of ourselves as male and female image-bearers?

The sessions will discuss biblical sexuality with children and parents, providing age-specific handles so that we can be effective ambassadors of Christ in His grand story. *More in-depth discussion on pressing issues such as purity and the influence of media will be covered at the Primary session.* If you have children in both preschool & primary levels, we encourage you to attend both sessions as content will differ.

Speaker: **Carol Loi** is the International Director of *Generations of Virtue*, a ministry committed to teaching sexual wholeness and integrity, building family relationships & transforming culture. As a mom to two young adults, Carol is also a certified digital wellness educator and a Fellow of the Center for Media Literacy. She has served in the Singapore public service for over two decades, including EDB, MOE and IMDA.

- Sign up to attend: rlc.sg/dah

4. The Parents Gathering. The Parents Gathering is held once a quarter for parents to come together to learn, connect with and support one another through the journey of parenting. As we discover more about ourselves and our children, may we grow to become the parents that God intended us to be. This platform is suitable for parents of all ages, including grandparents. Our time together will comprise:

- A short 30-min video teaching segment
- Group connection time
- Personal / couple processing time
- Light refreshments

Our first gathering: Sat, 28 Oct. 2-6pm. Victory Chapel.

Register by Sun, 22 Oct to join us at our first meetup: rlc.sg/pg

Workbooks can be purchased at \$16 each. Details to be released at a later date.

About the Curriculum Used

'The Art of Parenting' is designed to help parents make faith the core of their parenting with intentional, Biblical teaching and Christ-centered plans. Parents will gain renewed confidence, fresh insights on raising children at different ages, and a parenting plan unique to each child's personality and gifting. Inspired by Psalm 127:4, this eight-session study is video based and covers the following topics:

The Goal of Parenting • Forming Character • Applying Discipline • Building Relationships • Understanding Identity • Nurturing Identity • Preparing for Mission • The Power of Family

Preview the Curriculum here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7ZJ31DbGag>

5. **Missions Carnival.** Thank you for your support at our Missions Carnival (10 Sep) which was organised by SuperLife Children's Ministry in partnership with RiverLife Missions.
 - 139 of our children rallied together
 - A total of \$17,125.87 was raised
 - Proceeds will cover construction and start-up costs of a student care centre in Sarangani, as well as one year of operational expenses including meals for children at the centre and salaries for teachers.

6. **Call for a Suitable Liver Donor.** Father of RiverLifer Beverly Lim is calling for suitable donors for his son, Ryan, who is in need of a liver transplant. Ryan was diagnosed with Autoimmune Hepatitis (AIH) that affected his liver and bile duct. On 22 May 2023, Ryan was brought in to see the doctor due to his bloated stomach and the doctor concluded that a liver transplant was needed for Ryan as his liver was failing. The donor needs to be of blood type A+ or O+, with no prior illness and someone with a healthy diet. Read more about their story in this salt and light article here. Should anyone wish to enquire or volunteer, do contact Ryan's dad, Lim Cheng Kwan, directly at +65 9768 4748.

7. **Marriage Retreat.** We had a powerful time with 27 married couples in March as we piloted our first Marriage Retreat. It was a powerful time of learning, rejuvenation, healing and restoration for our couples. No couple left unimpacted. We would like to encourage married couples to join us at this retreat and experience God's hand on your marriage.
 - For more information, download the eBrochure here: rlc.sg/mrBrochure
 - Highlights from previous retreat: <https://youtu.be/csHrCtBsuWg>
 - Link to signup: rlc.sg/mr

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

Quarter 4

- Baptism Class – 7 Oct
- Parents Gatherings – 28 Oct
- Leaders Huddle – 5 Nov
- Water Baptism Service – 12 Nov
- Equipping Series - Leviticus: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
- Marriage Retreat – 24 to 26 Nov

2. **YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).** The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are currently in a cell, register your attendance with your cell leader. If you are currently not in a cell, do register online: rlc.sg/YAgathering-apr-reg.
3. **RiverLife Prayer Meetings.**
RiverLife Prayer Room. Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel.
RiverLife Revive Nights. Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel (livestream: rlc.sg/revivenights)

CHURCH MINISTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

1. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.
 - Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
 - Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve
2. **Missions Microsite.** Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.
3. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcar>.
4. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>

RESOURCES & CONNECTING WITH US

1. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp
 - 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
 - 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
 - Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)
2. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
3. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
4. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.
5. **Stay Connected with RLC.** Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.
 - **WhatsApp Broadcast:** Text 'Subscribe' to 8923 1939
 - **Telegram Channel:** t.me/RiverLifeChurch

- **Facebook & Instagram:** @riverlifechurchsg

GIVING LINKS & QR CODES

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