

Jewish Celebrations

Sabbath	Lk 4:16, 6:6, 23:56	Weekly
Passover	Jn 18:39	Spring
Feast of Pentecost	Acts 20:16	50 days after Passover
Feast of Tabernacles	Jn 7:2	Fall
Day of Atonement and fasting	Acts 2:1; 27:9	Fall
Hanukkah or Feast of Dedication	Jn 10:22	Winter
Panegyris	Heb 12:22	Other special occasions
New moon	Col 2:16	Monthly
Birthday	Mt 14:6	Herod's

Jewish Celebrations

Explanation

As chart 1-5 shows, many of these Jewish holy days are mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus went to Jerusalem to observe Passover, Tabernacles, and other sacred festivals. Early Christians gathered for the feast of Pentecost, and other days in the life cycle of the people of the day play a role in the texts of the New Testament. The birthday of Herod Antipas is mentioned, probably reflecting Greek or Roman influence, for most Jewish people did not celebrate birthdays. For the pious Jew, life began with circumcision, not birth, and perhaps for this reason, birthday parties do not figure in the New Testament and the birth of Jesus narrative culminates with the account of his circumcision (Lk 2:21).

References

- Abraham P. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days* (New York: Ktav, 1978).
- James C. Vanderkam, "Weeks, Festival of," *ABD*, 6:895–96.