

AS NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS — SHOULD WE KEEP THE BIBLE'S HOLY DAYS?

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The Spring Holy Days are almost upon us!

Not many people keep them. Most churches “keep” Easter and Christmas — and often accuse us of being “Jews” or Legalists.

But if we want to live by The Truth ... we should look to scripture — not traditions of men or denominations.

What Holy Days do we find in God's Word? And if they are there — should we keep them today as “New Covenant” believers?

Surely all of these churches who ignore the Biblical Festivals can't be wrong?

Let's have a quick review!

There is a (slight) hint of God's Holy Days in the first chapter of the Bible.

Genesis 1:14-15

14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;** (*seasons = Hebrew: Moedim — appointed times*)

15 "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

“Seasons” = Moedim in Hebrew. It doesn't mean “seasons” as in summer ... winter etc! Rather — **“APPOINTED TIMES”** set apart by God.

So **it seems that God set the sun and moon in the sky to establish certain appointed times (Moedim)** — as well as for light and warmth.

We generally refer to Holy Days — or Feasts — but **in Hebrew ... MOEDIM — APPOINTED TIMES is the most common term.**

What we call “Holy Days” or “Feasts” are many times referred to in scripture as Moedim.

So ... even on the 4th day of Creation — God may have had Holy Days in mind?

Psalms 104:19

19 **He appointed the moon for seasons;** (“seasons” = *Moedim* ... *Appointed Times*)

Psalms 104:19 HCSB

19 **He made the moon to mark the festivals;** the sun knows when to set.

The Hebrew calendar is based largely on the “cycles” of THE MOON. The Appointed Time of Passover is on the 14th day after the first new moon. Trumpets is the first day of the 7th month. (All of the Holy Days follow the “cycle” of the moon with the exception of Pentecost).

Leviticus 23:1-2,4

1 And **the LORD spoke** to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: **The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.** (*Moedim*)

4 **These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.** (*Moedim*)

“Feasts” is not really accurate! The same word appearing **4 times = Moedim.**

Leviticus Chapter 23 lists the Appointed Times of Jehovah God. The same word as in Genesis Chapter 1.

Several of the Moedim are “Feasts” too — but **not** all — Atonement.

We can't quite prove conclusively that the Holy Days we keep go back to Genesis Chapter 1 — but it's certainly strongly hinted. **Remember — Genesis 1:14 says that God established the sun and moon for Moedim. Leviticus Chapter 23 then lists the Moedim.**

Irrespective of how far back they go ... once given ... **God expects them to be kept!**

After all ... there are important lessons for us ... regarding our salvation.

Exodus 12:21-27

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "**Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.**

22 "And **you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.** And **none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.**

23 "**For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.**

24 "And **you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.**

25 "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.

26 "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'

27 "that you shall say, **'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'** " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Is there any reason for believers and followers of Jesus Christ — The Lamb of God — not to observe the memorial of a slain lamb for deliverance?

Exodus 12:14-17

14 **'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. (Day 15)**

15 **'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.** On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For **whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.**

16 **'On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you.** No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat — that only may be prepared by you.

17 **'So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread,** for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. **Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.**

Unleavened Bread. An everlasting ordinance (Chuqqah).

Is putting leaven/sin out of our lives no longer relevant for believers?

Note: Both of these Moedim (Passover and Unleavened Bread) were given in Egypt — MONTHS PRIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT BEING ENTERED INTO AT MOUNT SINAI!

So the Old Covenant coming to an end wouldn't affect these days? **THEY ARE STILL VALID TODAY?**

How long is “everlasting” ... or “forever”. Well — at least until The Millennium.

Zechariah 14:3-4

3 Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,

As He fights in the day of battle.

4 **And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, (Jesus' return)**

Which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,

From east to west,

Making a very large valley;

Half of the mountain shall move toward the north

And half of it toward the south.

Zechariah 14:16-19

16 **And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.**

17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

19 **This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.**

People keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in the Millennium.

It shouldn't surprise us. **God's plan is still underway during the Millennium ... with the Final Harvests.**

The Last Great Day ... the Great White Throne Judgment — is still to come.

The meaning of the Holy Days will be as valuable for people in the Millennium as it is for us today.

But what does the New Testament reveal? Do the Old Testament Holy Days just disappear?

When we read in the New Testament — do we find celebrations for Xmas ... Easter ... various saints? Or ... do we simply see a continuation of what was already established?

What does the Book of Acts — the early history of the Church — show?

Acts 2:1-4

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost.

No surprise! Just what you'd expect?

Acts 20:6

6 But **we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread**, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Sailed from Philippi after **the Days of Unleavened Bread!!**

It doesn't state explicitly that they'd kept them. But why would Luke choose to use that language — writing to a Gentile convert (Theophilus) in the 60's AD?

If believers didn't keep the Biblical Holy Days it would be a meaningless or confusing reference.

The simplest explanation: New Testament Christians still observed the Holy Days and this was a handy way to identify the time period.

Acts 20:13-16

13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.

14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

15 We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus.

16 For **Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.**

Paul was hurrying to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost (in 54 AD).

No surprise! He's keeping it!! One of Jehovah's Moedim since the days of Moses — possibly even before.

Today there are a number of orthodox churches who do keep Pentecost ... in memory of "the Birth" of the Church in Acts Chapter 2 ... but **who says you can cherry-pick among God's Holy Days?**

Acts 18:18-21

18 So **Paul** still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent,

21 but took leave of them, saying, "**I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem but I will return again to you, God willing.**" And he sailed from Ephesus.

Paul said he must keep "This Feast" in Jerusalem. Which Feast? Christmas? Easter?

It seems to be important to Paul to keep This Feast?

This Feast is not specifically identified. Standard commentaries guess it might be Passover or Pentecost (probably because these two Festivals are the only ones the commentators actually acknowledge?).

I've seen a detailed chronology of this portion of Acts ... it comes out at a Feast in the Autumn ... so most likely the "Big Feast" — the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let's leave Acts and look at some of Paul's Epistles.

1 Corinthians 16:5-9

5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).

6 And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go.

7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.

8 But **I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.**

9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

Paul is staying in Ephesus until Pentecost.

The Apostle Paul is writing to a largely Gentile Church in 56AD.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little **leaven leavens** the whole lump?

7 Therefore **purge out the old leaven**, that you may be a new lump, **since you truly are unleavened**. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8 Therefore **let us keep the feast**, not with old **leaven**, nor with the **leaven** of malice and wickedness, but **with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**.

Which Feast is associated with Passover and Unleavened Bread? ☺

Written about 25 years after The Crucifixion!!

Let's conclude in Acts.

Acts 27:9-10

9 Now when much time had been spent, and **sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over**, Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

Most commentaries identify this "Fast" as the Day of Atonement.

It doesn't explicitly say they kept the Day. But Luke is writing to a Gentile convert 30 years after The Crucifixion. **Why refer to "The Fast" — unless it meant something to Theophilus and was helpful to identify the timing of this journey.**

Just dropped nonchalantly into Luke's narrative — almost "in passing".

So ... if we just read through the New Testament naturally — we see various of **the Holy Days** popping up here and there. Just as we might expect if they remained valid for God's people. They **contain the LESSONS OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION!!**

And note: often occurring in Gentile contexts!

GOD'S APPOINTMENTS WITH HIS PEOPLE STILL STAND!

We might be in a minority in keeping them — but it's a right minority!