



“WHY THE FEAST DAYS?”

*Overview on why Christians celebrate the Feast Days
by Jim Staley ~ Passion For Truth*

**The deep spiritual significance of walking in the footsteps of
our Messiah and doing Bible things in Bible ways!**

THE WHY?



If we believe in the Messiah, then we are instructed to keep His Commandments if we love him. During Yeshua’s (Jesus’) time on earth, every city had a **Torah Teacher** (Acts 15:21) and James, the brother of Yeshua, instructed the believers to seek them out and *do* what they taught. Throughout the scriptures we are admonished to ‘**hear and obey**’. When we hear and obey it shows that we love God with all our soul, heart, and

strength. How do we do that? One way is to keep **HIS** Feast Days, **HIS** Sabbaths, **HIS** convocations. These **Feast Days of the LORD** are found in Leviticus 23 and when we read those scriptures, we see that these Feast Days are not just for the Jewish people – they are for *all* believers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and are **HIS**.

Let’s read that verse again - Leviticus 23:4:

“These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.”

So, we can see that these special appointed days (Moedim in Hebrew) were for all people for all time.

THE DAYS OF CREATION

Let's start at the beginning, where we see that in Genesis 1:14 God said:

“Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.”

God said this on the fourth day of creation and these lights were markers for us to pay attention to. However, when we read this in the English, we miss something very important. The word ‘seasons’ is actually the word ‘moedim’ (מוֹעֲדִים). The plural for mo’ed is moedim and means ‘a set time’. In every other instance in the scriptures where this word *mo’ed* is used, it is translated as ‘festivals.’ Many scholars believe that it should also have been translated as such in Genesis 1:14.

Considering this, we can see that the appointed times were set forth at the beginning of creation and were for all His people, *for all times!* All seven moedim (set-apart times) have deep, spiritual meanings and are a *blueprint* for all mankind for this journey we call life. If we follow this God-ordained blueprint we will not only be worshipping Him as He wants, but we will also be enriching our lives beyond measure. Let's do a short study on each of these seven Feasts. There will be separate e-books on each of the festivals coming out soon examining each.

There are, as we stated, seven Feast Days in God's blueprint for life's journey. The first four feast days are in the spring and according to prophecy, have been fulfilled in Yeshua (Jesus). The fall Feast Days are still awaiting his return. Let's review them.

PASSOVER

Passover, or *Pesach* as it is called in Hebrew, is known as the ‘spring holiday’ or Chag Ha'Aviv. This festival lies at one of the core experiences of Israel and has been celebrated for thousands of years. It is called Passover because it commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt during the tenth and final plague when God ‘passed over’ the first-born of the Israelites.



This is the first of the spring Feast Days and was celebrated over 1200 years before Yeshua's first coming. We all know that he was considered the Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). The reason this is so, was because at the exact same time he was crucified, the Passover lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal held that evening (John 19:14).

The actual Passover is really the meal or *seder* held at twilight on Nissan 14 with Unleavened Bread following on the 15th day which corresponds to our Gregorian calendar of March or April. This feast is celebrated for seven days in Israel and eight days and nights outside of Israel.

This is a celebration of freedom – *freedom from slavery!* We, too, should observe this appointed time to celebrate being free from bondage and to reflect on our past and present. Our Messiah freed us from the penalty of death for our sins by his crucifixion and opened the way back to return to God and His ways. ***He is our Passover Lamb!***

UNLEAVENED BREAD

The Feast of Unleavened Bread follows in the evening beginning at twilight the 15th of Nisan and lasts one week, during which time the Israelites ate no bread made with yeast in remembrance of their haste in preparing for their exodus from Egypt.

This appointed time reflects the sinless life of our Messiah. It is wrapped in a holy convocation (Sabbath) on the first and last days. These beginning and ending Sabbaths are different than the weekly Sabbath and may occur on any day of the week, however the same rules apply as a normal weekly Sabbath. Unleavened Bread is eaten for seven days, and the command is to remove all leaven from your home before the feast begins.



The physical command of removing leaven is not only to be done in your home, but in your own life. Scripture uses 'yeast' or leaven throughout the Bible, and it signifies *sin* – so when we clean our physical house, we need to remember to look at the tiny crumbs of sin that have cluttered our own walk and to be holy like He is holy.

This season points to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Yeshua's

body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the Bread of Life.

In the New Testament, yeast is also associated with *evil* (1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9), and, just as Israel was to remove yeast from their bread, so are believers/followers of Messiah to purge evil from their lives and live a new life in godliness and righteousness. Yeshua, as our Passover Lamb, cleanses us from sin and evil, and by His power and that of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are freed from sin to leave our old lives behind, just as the Israelites did.

FIRST FRUITS

The third aspect of Passover Week is the appointed time of First Fruits found in Leviticus 23:10. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that Yeshua (Jesus) is the 'first fruits from the dead' – and from scripture we also see that he was resurrected on this very same day! *Coincidence?* Not at all! **Prophecy fulfilled.**

This moedim take place at the beginning of the harvest season for Israel and represent not only Israel's dependence on their God but symbolize their gratefulness of God's provisions. To understand the ritual procedures followed during temple times, read Leviticus 23:9-14. Here we see each person bringing forth their *first fruits* to the priest. While there is no standing temple in Israel, nor Levitical priesthood, the symbolism in each and every believer offering their gratitude to the Most High God for the provision in their lives should be paramount in our walk.



In the scriptures we see that we, as believers, are the *first fruits* of God, which is a beautiful yet humbling thought. In 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 it says as *sinner* we are *redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Yeshua (Jesus)*, which makes us **His** first fruits! If we dig a bit deeper and remember that in Romans 12:1 it speaks of us as living sacrifices, it also affords us the opportunity to offer ourselves up for the sake of the Kingdom!

PENTECOST OR SHAVUOT

The next appointed time is called the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost in Greek, or in Hebrew, *Shavuot*. We can read the description in Leviticus 23:16 and it occurs fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the natural, this feast was held as a celebration at the end of the harvest season and focused on Israel's gratitude to God for his provision and bounty.

It is also known as the festival of '*Reaping*' (Jeremiah 5:24, Deuteronomy 16:9-11, Isaiah 9:2) because of the harvested fields; however, we can also see a spiritual aspect to this physical event. At some point, there will be a great reaping of the harvest of souls of both Jews and Gentiles who will be brought into the kingdom of God, which we can read about in Acts 2!



Today, this Feast Day is more widely commemorated as the day God gave the Torah to the tiny fledgling nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. The Torah states that it took seven weeks for the multitude of people to travel from Egypt to Sinai and '*Shavuot*', meaning weeks, reflects that seven-week period. During those seven weeks, each day is counted and is

known as the *Counting of the Omer*. Each evening we reflect on our own exodus from our bondage of sin and look forward to knowing and serving the true God in the way He wishes to be served. One of the customs is to read the entire book of Ruth. Maybe our own cry could exemplify the words of Ruth as she cried out to Naomi: "*Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God*" (Ruth 1:16).

These conclude the SPRING FEASTS and now there is a time of rest...of waiting before the FALL FEASTS begin. Just as history and scripture have detailed Yeshua's sacrifice at Passover and his resurrection on First Fruits with the promise of a helper at Shavuot 50 days later, we are now in waiting for His second coming. His ministry and first coming was detailed in the spring feasts and the fall feasts remind us that his second coming will be no less spectacular!

ROSH HASHANAH OR FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Now we arrive at the fall Feasts, and many believe that this season represents the return of our Messiah and the catching away of the believers, *the bride*. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 we read that this event is always associated with a **'loud trump'** ... and that is what Rosh Hashanah, or in Hebrew *Yom Teruah*, is all about – **TRUMPETS!**

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD’” (Leviticus 23:23-25).

This Feast of Trumpets was to be held on the seventh month and on the first day – it was to be a **'day of trumpet blast'** (Numbers 29:1) and represented the end of the agricultural year. The blast was a signal to all of Israel that not only was this the close of the agricultural season, but now they were to ready themselves for the upcoming Day of Atonement when the books of **Life** and **Death** would be opened to see if your name was inscribed within.



Trumpets is an awakening blast associated with the coming of Yeshua and verses such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16 provide us with more detail, *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”*

While this Feast Day is an awakening call to the body, it is also a day filled with great spiritual revelation! It is the beginning of a ten-day period leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the holiest day of the biblical calendar. In Judaism, these ten days are known as *yomin nora'im* or Days of Awe. The awakening blast of the trumpet is a call to teshuvah, a call to repentance, and a turning back to the LORD.

This is an anointed time of examining our hearts, our lives, our motives, and agendas at a deeper and more profound level to make sure that all aligns with the will of God. This is the time to make amends, to ask forgiveness to those we have wronged, and to annul vows that have been broken. *It is a time of repentance!* It is a time to place your faith in the

Messiah and turn your heart towards God so that on the Day of Judgment we will find our names written in the Book of Life!

DAY OF ATONEMENT

This appointed time is also known as Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27-28) and was the most solemn holy day of all the feasts and festivals. It occurred on the tenth day of Tishri, which is the seventh month in the Hebrew calendar. During temple times, the high priest performed elaborate rituals to ensure that all Israel's sins would be forgiven. The high priest was only allowed to come up to the Most Holy Place on this special day once a year and it was to be taken very seriously. It was to be done as God commanded Moses, no other way was acceptable, or death would come to the High Priest.

All of Israel eagerly anticipated the ritual that the high priest performed on the two goats that would be sacrificed. In Leviticus 16:16 we read they were sacrificed *"because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been"* and while one goat was used as a sacrifice and the blood sprinkled on the ark of the covenant, the other goat was released as a scapegoat. Aaron placed his hands on the head of the goat confessing all of Israel's sins and sent the goat out into the wilderness. The goat represented all the sins of the people and symbolized the forgiveness that God had given the people for another year. (Leviticus 16:30)

All of this symbolizes to us, spiritually, that Yeshua came *'once for all'* and his sacrifice ended the old ritualistic cleansing ceremonies (Hebrews 7:27) where the blood of bulls and goats could only atone for sins once a year. With His sacrifice, *'It is finished'* (John 19:30) and we who follow and believe in the Messiah of Israel, the son of the Living God, are able to rest assured that we have been redeemed!

TABERNACLES OR BOOTHS

The last of the seven appointed Feast Days is a glorious celebration lasting seven days (or eight in the diaspora) and filled with rejoicing, feasting, and celebrating! This is because it is a time when believers will be reunited with the King of Kings and will once again *'tabernacle'* with Him as he returns to reign over the entire world (Micah 4:1-7).

This feast of Sukkot takes place five days after the Holiest Day of the Year (Yom Kippur) and for the entire week, one presents offerings to the Lord giving thanks for his provision and redemption! We are simply sojourners in this world, living in 'booths', and looking forward to the future when Yeshua rules and reigns on earth for the rest of eternity!



Tabernacles begins with a 'holy convocation' or Sabbath day when we are to set aside all work-related activity and simply worship our God. Scripture calls for an '*offering made by fire to the Lord*' to be offered each day and then on the eighth day a '*holy convocation*' is called to cease again from work! It begins and ends with a Sabbath of rest. The entire period we are

called to live in 'booths' so we can remember that we are not of this world, but of another.

This Feast Day, like all others is simply a way of reminding each generation that our God is Sovereign, and He will deliver us from our Egypt. It is up to us to understand and celebrate these appointed days of the LORD and to immerse ourselves in the deep spiritual meanings.

There are many that believe this is the time when Yeshua was actually born and '*tabernacled*' with men. Look what John wrote in 1:14:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

John chose the word '*dwelt*' when describing the coming of Yeshua, which in Hebrew is the word '*tabernacle*'.

As with all the Feast Days given to all His people, each one reminds us that *He alone sustains, He alone preserves, He alone redeems*. It is time for us to enter into the fullness of the covenant and be willing and able participants in these seven Feast Days! By doing so, our lives will not only be enriched by the fullness of what He has done and will do – but we will be a greater witness to all those seeking truth!

Shalom,

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