

God's Appointed Times

Part 1

We must understand that those of us who are in Christ... are new Creations in Christ Jesus our Lord. We must also understand... that Jesus Christ... is really God in Human Flesh... and is the Israeli – Jewish Messiah. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies regarding the Messiah... from Adam and Eve... through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel)... and their descendants... the Israeli people.

All the Apostles of Jesus were Israeli or Jewish, the writers of the Old and New Testaments (the Holy Bible) were Israeli's **except** for Luke, who wrote Luke and Acts. But Luke was commissioned by the Apostle Paul (Rabbi Shaul) of Tarsus, so in essence from cover to cover – the Bible is an Israeli book. Not Jewish only, because Moses was not Jewish – but Israeli - Hebrew. Jewish refers to the southern Kingdom of Judah, after the split of the Kingdom into two Kingdoms... after Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). After the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah were established ... the southern Kingdom was referred to as the Jews or Jewish Kingdom... Judaic, Judaism, Judea, etc. The

Word “Jews” [יהודי] yah-hoo-dee ... Occurs first in **2 Kings 16:6** in KJV if you are a Bible Scholar.

The tribes of Benjamin, Levi, and Judah, composed the Southern Kingdom of Judah... those after the Split of the Kingdom into two Kingdoms... those in the South were called “Jews” from that time onward. So, if you are descended from any of these three tribes, from that point forward, you could rightfully call yourself a Jewish person. If you are descended from any of the other tribes of Israel... you would be called Israeli or Hebrew. A Jewish person could also be called Israeli, Hebrew, or Jewish.

So the Book – the Bible is Israeli... of the descendants of Israel...

Romans 3:1-2 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? (2) Great in every respect. First of all, that they were **entrusted with the oracles of God.** [NASB]

You see... then that God's Revelation of His Word and of Himself would come through Israel and His descendants... and we see that even with the Messiah... the LIVING WORD OF GOD... was Israeli, and so were the Apostles... who were responsible for the writing of the New Testament.

The early church for about 60 years after Christ rose from the dead, was mostly composed of Jewish – Israeli descendants. Thus God fulfilled His promise to give the Gospel to the Jew first, then to the Gentiles (through the Jews) (see **Romans 1:16**)

Paul (Rabbi Shaul of Tarsus) talking to mostly Gentiles in Rome says the following:

Romans 11:17-21 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive *tree*, were **grafted** in among them and became partaker with them of **the rich root of the olive tree**, (18) do **not** be **arrogant** toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is **not** you who supports the root, **but the root supports you**. (19) You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." (20) Quite right, they were broken off **for their unbelief**, but you **stand by your faith**. Do not be conceited, **but fear**; (21) for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. [NASB]

What is the Apostle Paul saying?

Rabbi Shaul of Tarsus is saying that ethnic / people groups not of Israeli origin can be grafted into the Covenant family of God, through Jesus Christ. The main stock is Israeli, **not** Gentile... we must not get arrogant... we must always remember this. We only stand by Faith... not by **genetic familial** relationship. From this **point forward** that is how it works... standing by Faith in Christ (the Messiah) and in His Finished work (crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection... for our sins).

Acts 17:30-31 (Paul – Rabbi Shaul – speaking in Greece at Mars Hill)
"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is **now** declaring to **all** mankind that **all** people (people groups) everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." [NASB]

No matter who you are, today, you can only have this kind of relationship with God, in and through His Messiah, Yahshua H'Meshiach (Jesus Christ).

So our roots, spiritually, are Hebrew/Jewish/Israeli... and we can call Abraham our father – in the faith (not as Father God... but father in the faith...) we follow in **the faith of Abraham** (Galatians 3).

Today, in Christ... we do not have to follow the rituals of washings, animal sacrifices, tabernacle or Temple worship, or following certain feast days, etc... to maintain our relationship with God as ancient Israel had to in the Old Testament – the Old Covenant → established through Moses, the servant of God.

Today – we are free **not** to do those things, since Christ **fulfilled** all of this for us.

But we find out, that the early church for a couple of centuries, **including Gentile church fellowships**, continued to follow **the feast days**... but in a **new light**... the light of their fulfillment in their Messiah, Jesus Christ... the Hebrew/Jewish/Israeli Messiah who was (and still is) also the Savior of the whole world, including our world... the world of the Gentiles.

In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? (7) Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact **unleavened**. For **Christ** (Messiah) our **Passover** also has been sacrificed. (8) Therefore let us **celebrate the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the **unleavened bread** of **sincerity** and **truth**.

Paul was dealing with some immorality in the Church of Corinth... but he points to Christ, our Messiah... and calls Him “**our Passover**”. We know that Jesus was crucified on Passover, at the same time the National Passover Lamb was sacrificed for the whole nation of Israel. And then at sunset, Unleavened Bread started for 7 days. Paul uses this symbolic language to help the Corinthians understand the significance of those OLD TESTAMENT Feast days... how they related to Christ... and how **He took away our sins**... just like the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread **illustrated**. But even beyond that, Paul encouraged these Gentiles to **continue** in the **celebration** of that **feast** (Passover) to **remember what Christ did for us**... and how sin can get in and just like yeast, leaven the whole lump of dough. So he wanted them to get rid of the leavened (the yeasty) “bread”, and replace it with unleavened bread... just like what Christ does in our Lives... He cleanses us from all sin (symbolized by Yeast or Leaven) (1 John 1:9).

Why would Paul, who wrote that we are **free not to celebrate** these feast any more... **encourage** these **Gentiles** to **continue** celebrating them?

Because they **encapsulate** (**symbolize**) the Ministry of the Messiah and His future appointed times of intervention in our Future History. **Reminders...** and a looking forward to the **future**. That is what these feasts **represent, still to this day...** as they are fulfilled in Christ, His Ministry, and in His future interventions into the future timeline of events.

This was all preparation for the main part of this message.

So, Let's turn to Leviticus 23.

Lev. 23:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations -- **My appointed times** are these: " [NASB]

Lev. 23:4 "These are **the appointed times of Yahweh**, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times **appointed** for them." [NASB]

Yahweh's Appointed Times...

Yahweh said, "...**My appointed times...**" → These are **HIS appointed times...** **He owns them... they point to Him, His Work and redemptive activities, etc.**

"appointed times" or "Feasts" → Mo'edim [מוֹעֲדִים]

"feast" in Exodus 23:14 → Khagag [חַגַּג] (from which we derive Hagada)

God calls these Holy Convocations, Sacred Assemblies, Holy Gatherings, Holy Assemblies.

These gatherings would be in Large, medium, small, and family groupings... in public gatherings usually around or in the tabernacle or the Temple... or in homes or where a few families could gather together in a smaller gathering.

Let's just look at

Sabbath (shabbat)... **Leviticus 23:3** → You have six days when you can do your work, but the seventh day of each week is holy because it belongs to me. No matter where you live, you must rest on the Sabbath and come together for worship. **This law will never change.**

(also see...: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15)

In other passages, most of the time, families would just stay in their homes, sometimes a small group of families or some of the extended family... and they would gather together to sing, praise God, pray, have a light meal and reconnect with one another after a busy week of activities and work, etc. It was a time of Worship unto God and a time to connect with one another. It could be both public and in-home gatherings (public and from house to house... hmmm)

God calls these HOLY Convocations, gatherings, assemblies. Why are they Holy? **Because** these times were “set apart” for God’s usage, alone. Why is this so important to God?

1. God wants us to rest, and to look to Him as our Rest.

Part of what we call Faith or Trust... is Rest. If we truly Trust in God for all that we need, including our Salvation, our necessities of life, our family issues, our future, etc... then we will REST in Him and not WORRY or FRET.

Psalm 46:10-11 says...

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" (11) YAHWEH of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah. [ESV]

2. God wants us to remember we were create to **obey, know, and worship** Him. These “appointed times” remind us of how much this means to Him and He wants us to highly value our time with Him in the same way.
3. God wants us to Connect with Him. We must have CONNECT time with God.. daily and at regular times → personally, in families, in small groups, in medium groups, in larger group settings.
4. God wants His people to connect with one another → in families, in small groups, in medium groups, in larger group settings.
5. Prophetically these “Feasts” (or Appointed Times of Yahweh) all point to when God Himself would and/or will intervene in History through His Messiah and Spirit. (in the coming weeks we will explore this subject in more detail...)

Questions:

1. Is resting in God, through Jesus Christ, a difficult thing for you?
2. Do you worry about the future or are you Resting in God, trusting in Him about it? Do you look to Him as your REST?
3. How does it make you feel about how important you are to God, since He wants you to connect with Him on a regular basis?
4. Do you look forward to Connecting with God on a daily, weekly and other type of consistent basis? (Why or why not?)
 - a. Individually? (Why or why not?)
 - b. In small groups? (Why or why not?)
 - c. With your family? (Why or why not?)
 - d. In larger groups? (Why or why not?)
5. Do you look forward to worshipping, praising, singing to, singing about, and thanking God personally and with others on a regular basis? (Why or why not?)
6. What are some steps you can take, especially with the help of others, to improve your “connection” with God and with His children (your fellow brethren in Christ)?