

The Feasts of YHWH

This will be a basic simplified overview of the Feasts of YHWH, found in Lev 23 to help those who have just been awakened to the Hebrew roots of their faith. As I have written before, often times when one becomes aware of their Hebrew roots, they desire to learn quickly all they can to make up for those lost years of unintentional pagan influenced worship. Their natural inclination is to go to someone who has been observing Torah for years for instruction. Sadly, many of them go to Brother Judah for answers and will come away deceived. Judaism does not hold the answers we are seeking as it is deficient of truth in many areas. Knowledge of Torah without Yahshua is not a true understanding of Torah. So, I will also try to expose some of the erroneous traditions that the Jews apply to the Feasts of YHWH that most of us have just tended to accept.

I will try to be as concise as possible to keep the length of this paper to a minimum and still cover the important aspects of the Feasts we are commanded to observe. These Feasts are called Moa'dim in Hebrew and mean "appointments or rehearsals". They are found in the 23 rd chapter of Leviticus and are called shadows of things to come (Col. 2:16-17). They represent YHWH's plan of salvation for mankind.

Four of the Feasts have already been fulfilled during the first coming of Yahshua, the Messiah. The remaining three will be fulfilled at his second coming.

The four spring festivals are:

- **Passover** – observed in the first month of the biblical calendar on the 14th day of Abiv.
- **Unleavened Bread** – observed immediately following Passover on the 15th day of Abiv.
- **Feast of First Fruits** - observed the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- **Pentecost** – observed fifty days from the Feast of First Fruits.

The 3 remaining festivals are the fall feasts. They are:

- **Feast of Trumpets** – observed on the first day of the seventh month.
- **Day of Atonement** – observed on the 10th day of the seventh month.
- **Feast of Tabernacles** – observed on the 15th day of the seventh month.

We will now look at each of the festivals, their Hebrew names, what they symbolize and what we are supposed to do to observe them.

Passover (Pesach)

The story of the Passover is found in Exodus chapter 12. There is controversy today as to when the New Year Abiv 1 occurs. Some believe Abiv 1 is the first new moon closest to the Vernal equinox, others, which include myself, believe it to be the first new moon after the Vernal equinox. Then there is the question as to whether the new moon is defined as the sighted sliver or the totally dark moon (conjunction). I lean toward the latter. This insures that the full moon feasts will indeed be on a full moon.

A lamb without spot or blemish was removed from the flock on the 10th of Abiv and was kept and cared for at the home of each family that would sacrifice it. They would carefully inspect it to make sure it was free of any blemishes.

Exo 12:3 *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:*

Exo 12:4 *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

Exo 12:5 *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

The lamb would be inspected for 4 days. Often, it would almost become a family pet which made the sacrificing of it heart wrenching.

Yahshua was our sacrificial lamb without spot or blemish. He was also examined for 4 days when he entered the temple in Jerusalem on the 10th of Abiv and was condemned to die on the 14th (Passover). No fault was found in him – see Luk 23:4; 23:14; Joh 18:38; 19:4; 19:6.

Exo 12:6 *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

After ensuring that the lamb was free from blemish, it was taken between the evenings (הערבים - Ha Erevim) on Abiv 14 and slaughtered. Yahshua was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He was taken on the 4th day (4,000) years and was slain as our Passover lamb on Abiv 14.

Again, there is controversy as to the meaning of “between the evenings.” When the Jews were in Babylon, they had combined Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread into one festival and simply called the whole 7 day observance Passover. This is why the account in the New Testament is hard to understand. Most translations have the Passover lamb being sacrificed on the first day of unleavened bread. The Passover lamb is never sacrificed on the first day of unleavened bread; it is already eaten by then.

Mar 14:12 *And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?*

This should read “And Before the first day of unleavened bread...” The word translated “first” is protos in the Greek, Strongs # 4413 and should be translated “before” which makes it harmonize with the rest of scripture. John 13:1 is translated correctly. The lamb had already been sacrificed before the first day of Unleavened Bread.

The Rabbinic Jews maintain that what is meant by “between the evenings” is from when the sun begins to dip from noon going toward sundown until sundown itself. This is what puts them a day off in their observance of Passover. The Karaites and Samaritans take the position that it is from 6 PM to 7:20 PM. I agree somewhat with this in that I believe that “between the evenings” is the period from sunset until total darkness, a period of about 45 minutes.

A careful review of the Passover account in Exodus 12 will show that the death angel passed over at midnight on the 14th of Abiv. The only night time portion of the 14th is at the beginning of it as the Hebrew days begins at sunset and ends at sunset the following day.

Many object saying that since Yahshua was crucified during the day time portion of the 14th of Abiv, that the Pharisees observance of Passover is correct. However, Yahshua did observe Passover with his disciples the night before, even though he was slain during the day portion of the 14th. He still died on the 14th and both observed Passover with his disciples and was the Passover lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The Jews eat their Passover on the 15th which is actually the first day of Unleavened Bread. That is not scriptural. The blood of the lamb was applied to the door posts in the Exodus account on the night of the 14th. Yahshua observed Passover on the 14th as did the Sadducees. This is when I personally observe Passover.

The Passover supper is called a Seder which is a ceremony full of symbolism of the Messiah. Besides being the lamb that was slain, he is also represented by the “Afikomen”, the middle portion of the unleavened wafer (Matzah) that is broken and wrapped in a linen cloth and hidden at the beginning of the ceremony. This represents the burial of Yahshua and is usually redeemed toward the end of the ceremony. The leader of the ceremony, usually the father of the household, will send the children out to look for the hidden Afikomen. When one finds it, the Afikomen is redeemed by a gift called the “promise of the father.” A small book of liturgy called the Haggadah (the telling) is used at the Passover Seder. Messianic believers have adapted the Haggadah to include scriptures from the Brit Chadashah. Passover is all about the Messiah, the false festival of Easter is not.

Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah)

This feast immediately follows Passover and begins on Abiv 15. It is a 7 day festival in which no one is allowed to eat leavened bread. The account can be found in Exo. 12:14-17. This symbolizes the leaving of Egypt which to us today is a type of the world. We are to purge all the leaven out of our lives during this time. Leaven represents false doctrine which does lead to sin.

This first day of this Feast is also referred to as a high Sabbath. It was this Sabbath that the Jews had to get Yahshua's body down from the cross before it began at sundown. A misunderstanding of this has led to the false doctrine of a Friday evening crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection of Yahshua. When Yahshua was asked for a sign by the Pharisees, he replied that the only sign he would give was the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for 3 days and 3 nights, so shall the Son of man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth. (Mat 12:40; 16:4; Luk 11:29). Anyone claiming to be the Messiah and not being in the grave 3 full days and nights prior to his supposed resurrection is not the true Messiah. Yahshua was crucified on a Wednesday afternoon and laid in the tomb before sunset which would have begun the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He arose 3 days later at the end of the weekly Sabbath.

The first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are Sabbaths in which no servile work is allowed (Lev 23:7-8). The keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be:

Exo 13:9 *And it shall be for a **sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that YHWH's law** may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath YHWH brought thee out of Egypt.*

Exo 13:16 *And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand YHWH brought us forth out of Egypt.*

Deu 6:8 *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*

Deu 6:9 *And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

The above scriptures remind us to remember the Law (Torah) of YHWH always. The keeping of the weekly Sabbath is also a sign between the children of Israel and YHWH forever (Exo. 31:16-17).

These scriptures are the basis of the Jewish practice of "laying tefillin" in which they bind a leather pouch containing several scriptures to their forehead and wrapping leather straps on their arms and shoulders. The last two scriptures above (Deu 6:8-9) relate to what is known as the "Shema" (Deu 6:4-5) in which is stated we are to love YHWH our Elohim with all our hearts, souls and might. If we love Him, we will keep His Commandments which are found in His Torah. All

of these signs have to do with keeping YHWH's Torah. The Jews take this literally by "laying tefillin" whereas we look upon this as something we do by obeying His Commandments. The mark of the beast may be something similar, such as what we think in our minds and put into practice with our hands.

Keeping the weekly Sabbath is a test to see if we will obey the rest of YHWH's commandments.

Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim)

The day following the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread is called "First Fruits" (Lev 23:9-14). It is always the first Sunday after Passover.

Lev 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Lev 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Lev 23:12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto YHWH.

When the grain crops were ready to be harvested, an omer (about 2 quarts) would be brought to the priest who would then wave it before YHWH. This was the first fruits of the harvest and Israel was not allowed to eat of the harvest until the omer had been waved.

The Messianic fulfillment in this is the resurrection of Yahshua from the dead as the first fruit or the first born of many sons and daughters to be also raised. There are many verses in the Brit Chadasha (New Testament) that support this idea (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:20,23; Col 1:15; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5).

When Yahshua arose and appeared to Mary, he told her to touch him not for he had not yet ascended to his father (Joh 20:17). He was the wave offering before the Father and was also our high priest. This was on the first day of the week (Sunday), the day after the weekly Sabbath.

The Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot)

Pentecost is also called the "Feast of Weeks". From the time of the offering of the omer (wave sheaf offering), seven weeks are counted unto Pentecost, a period of 50 days. (Lev 23:15-21; Exo 34:22; Deut 16:9-10)

Lev 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete:

Lev 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto YHWH.

Pentecost will always fall on a Sunday. But, Pentecost on a Jewish calendar will vary wildly due to their faulty interpretation of the phrase “morrow after the Sabbath” of Lev 23:15. They conclude the Sabbath in question is the first day of unleavened bread which can occur any day of the week. Therefore, their 50 day count will begin the day after that and can fall on any day of the week. However, we know that the Sabbath in question is the weekly Sabbath. The day following the weekly Sabbath is Sunday; therefore 7 complete weeks later will also be on a Sunday.

Two loaves of leavened bread are to be waved before YHWH along with 7 sheep of a year old, 1 young bullock and 2 rams. The two loaves are thought to represent the two houses of Israel.

Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and is also the giving of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) 50 days after Yahshua ascended to the Father as the wave offering, being the first fruit from the dead. The Ruach is a promise of betrothal in which we are given the earnest of the spirit until the day of our redemption. The keeping of the weekly Sabbath is our wedding band.

Pentecost (Shavuot) is also a high Sabbath in which no servile work is to be done. It is a statute to be observed forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

The giving of the Torah in reality was a betrothal contract in which YHWH proposed to Israel. Their acceptance is recorded in Exodus 19:8. They were to be a kingdom of priests, but they played the harlot with the molten calf. This was even before Moses could bring back the details of the marriage contract written by the finger of YHWH upon the tablets of stone. YHWH had the right to put His betrothed to death because of adultery, but only the intercession of Moses saved them. Instead of Israel becoming a kingdom of priests, the Levitical priesthood was created to mediate between them and YHWH. At our final redemption, we will become the kingdom of priests YHWH desired.

The above are all the spring feasts that were fulfilled at the first coming of Yahshua. They were fulfilled on the exact date to that which they represented. Is there any reason to think that the fall feasts will not be fulfilled on the exact date to that which they also pertain?

FALL FEASTS

Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah)

The fall feasts begin with the Feast of Trumpets, also known as Yom Teruah and by the Jews as Rosh Hashanah. The name Rosh Hashanah means “head of the year” or “new year” which is an erroneous description of Yom Teruah. It is a result of the pagan influence the Jews picked up in Babylon when they began using pagan names for months. The scriptural beginning of the year is Abiv 1 and occurs in the spring.

According to Jewish tradition, Yom Teruah begins a 10 day period (days of awe) of repentance and forgiveness culminating on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. However, scripture only specifies one day for Yom Teruah and one for Yom Kippur. There is no special scriptural significance given to the 8 days between them. This is another reason that we should not follow Jewish tradition, but to study these things for ourselves.

This memorial of shouting and trumpets begins on the first day of the 7th month. It is the only new moon festival. It is a day for a miqra qodesh (Holy convocation), a day in which no servile work is to be done.

***Num 29:1** And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.*

This festival is observed by the Jews, according to their tradition, for two days because of the difficulty in ascertaining exactly when the new moon is occurring. It is the only festival that is observed for two days in Israel. It is often referred to as the day only the Father knows. However, according to scripture Yom Teruah only lasts one day and it can be ascertained by the occurrence of the conjunction of the moon (New Moon).

Yom Teruah is the day of the awakening blast. Teruah means to shout, clamor, a blowing of the trumpets. It will be the time when Yahshua will return with a shout at the last blowing of the shofar on Yom Teruah.

***1Th 4:16** For Yahushua himself shall descend from heaven with a **shout**, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trump** of YHWH: and the dead in the Messiah shall rise first:*

This is when the graves will be opened and the resurrection of the just takes place. The resurrection is not just a New Testament theme; it is also found in the Tanakh (Old Testament). See Isa. 26:19; Dan 12:2 and Eze. 37:12.

The Jews admit that the Torah does not specify the purpose of Yom Teruah, only that teruah means to shout in a loud voice or in unison. Could this be the time when the Jews cry out in a loud voice “Baruch Haba Be’Shem YHWH” or “Blessed is he who comes in the name of YHWH? (Mat 23:39)

The following is another example of Jewish tradition concerning the period from Yom Teruah to Yom Kippur which is not found in Torah. This is all purely Jewish speculation and imagination.

Jewish belief is that the gates of heaven are opened on this day and will stay open for the 10 day period ending on Yom Kippur. A review is made of all mankind at this time. Three sets of books are opened and men are inscribed into one of those three books during this period. The books are the book of the righteous, the book of the wicked and the book of remembrance or memorial. The righteous are inscribed in the book of righteousness, the wicked are written into the book of the wicked and those that are in between are written into the book of remembrance. They are given another year to repent. The gates of heaven are closed on Yom Kippur and the books are closed. This is why it is a time of repentance and to right all wrongs. Jews will call upon their neighbors during this period to ensure that all is well between them. If it isn't, it is a time to ask forgiveness and to forgive any wrongs, perceived or otherwise.

Jewish tradition also states that it was on Yom Teruah that Adam was created. They come to that conclusion by rearranging the letters of the first word in Genesis "Bereshith" to read "Alef b' Tishri" or the first of Tishri.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is called the Day of Atonement. It is observed on the 10th day of the seventh month. Yom Kippur is a Sabbath on which no work is to be done.

Lev 23:27 *Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH.*

Lev 23:28 *And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before YHWH your Elohim.*

Lev 23:29 *For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.*

Lev 23:30 *And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.*

Lev 23:31 *Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.*

Lev 23:32 *It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.*

Yom Kippur is the most solemn day on the Hebrew calendar. It is a time of soul searching and fasting. Atonement is translated from the Hebrew word "kaphar" which means to "cover over". Our sins are "covered over" by the blood of Yahshua. This was the time that the High Priest would go once a year into the

Holy of Holies and make 3 confessions; those for his sins, for the sins of the priestly tribe of Levi and lastly, for the nation of Israel. The confession on this date was the only time they actually called aloud upon the set apart name of YHWH. This was probably different before the Babylonian captivity, but afterwards the set apart name was prohibited to even utter, except at this one time per year.

The High Priest of Israel would make an offering of a bull and two goats. One of the two goats was known as the scapegoat (Azazel). It was selected by drawing lots; one lot, a white stone was marked for YHWH and the other, a black stone for Azazel. According to the Jews, for 200 years prior to 30 AD, the drawing was usually random. The black stone would come up as often as the white one. But after 30 AD and for 40 years prior to the destruction of the temple, the black stone for Azazel came up 40 straight times in the priests right hand.

The sins of the people were laid upon the scapegoat and it was sent off into the wilderness. Also, a scarlet ribbon was tied to a horn of the scapegoat and the other end tied to the door of the temple. It was cut when the scapegoat was sent away. When it died, the ribbon on the temple door turned white signifying that Israel's sins were forgiven. But after the crucifixion of Yahshua in 30 AD, the ribbon never again turned white.

Jewish tradition says that on the final services of Yom Kippur, it was believed that the gates of heaven were once again closed. When the great trumpet was sounded at the close of Yom Kippur, the gates were believed to be closed and the books were shut for another year. This is pure speculation on the part of the Jews as this is not found in scripture.

Sukkot

This is the last commanded Feast of the year. It is a pilgrimage feast of which there are three – the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Shavuot and Sukkot. It occurs on the 15th day of the 7th month. It starts on a full moon. It is also called Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. It was also known as the Feast of the Ingathering. It was during this time that Yahshua was born and tabernacled among us (John 1:14). This is a joyous celebration as the fall harvest is now over and it is time to enjoy the fruits of ones labors. It is a season of joy following the heaviness of Yom Kippur now realizing that our sins have been forgiven. It is a picture of the Messianic kingdom during the millennium.

Lev 23:34 *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto YHWH.*

Lev 23:35 *On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*

Lev 23:36 *Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto YHWH: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering*

made by fire unto YHWH: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.

During this 7 day festival, we are commanded to build and live in a Sukkah (booth). Sukkot is a time that commemorates the time of Israel in the wilderness when they lived in temporary shelters. We may have to once again live in temporary shelters before returning to the Promised Land.

Lev 23:39 *Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto YHWH seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath.*

Lev 23:40 *And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before YHWH your Elohim seven days.*

Lev 23:41 *And ye shall keep it a feast unto YHWH seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.*

Lev 23:42 *Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:*

Lev 23:43 *That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your Elohim.*

The first day of Sukkot is a high Sabbath in which no servile work is to be done. The 7th and last day of Sukkot is called Hoshanah Rabbah, the great salvation. There is an additional minor festival following Hoshanah Rabbah on the 8th day which is called Shemini Atzeret or the “last great day” and is also a Sabbath in which no servile work is to be done. The Rabbis interpret from the word Atzaret, the meaning to tarry one more day. From this, the Rabbis added an additional festival after Shemini Atzaret and called it Simchat Torah (rejoicing in the Torah). They deem this also to be a Sabbath, but Simchat Torah is not an observance found in scripture. It is only from the imagination of the Rabbis. Therefore, we can ignore it.

The next Feast day established by YHWH to be observed is Passover, beginning the cycle all over again. Hanukkah is not a festival we are required to celebrate.

This has been a very simplified overview of the Feasts of YHWH to help those who are just beginning to explore the Hebraic roots of their faith. These Feasts are to be understood as rehearsals in YHWH’s plan of salvation for mankind. They are types and shadows of things to come for the body of Messiah (Col 2:17).

Halleluyah! All praise to YHWH!

Brick Parrish