

Even These Are My Feasts

"Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying: ²Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them: These are the appointed moadim of Adonai (concerning the feasts of the Lord, KJV), which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations (mikra) – My moadim (even these are My feasts, KJV)" (Lev. 23:1-2)

The Body of Messiah (His *ekklesia*) has not fully caught up or embraced the magnitude of this critical chapter in the *Torah* (Leviticus 23 in Scripture) while the *Prophetic and Intercessory* segments of the Body for the most part have. The *Holy Spirit* of *Adonai* (*Ruach HaKodesh* or *Ruach Elohim*) has been revealing the importance of His Feasts to *Adonai's* people and the prophetic nature of these in the last 40+ years. When this is understood by Believers, their lives are changed as they become connected (e.g., as the result of understanding the *being-grafted-into-Israel* concept elucidated by the apostle Paul in *Romans 11*) to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to His nation Israel. An awakening to the Hebrew Roots of the Faith ensues causing many to seek a lifestyle reflecting those roots – a lifestyle mostly found in the Messianic Movement. Such was the case for many of you in *KS*.

The first and most glaring truth is that these festivals or feasts are not the Jewish people's feast but *The Feasts of the Lord*. They belong to *Adonai!* The next word that impacts the would-be spiritual Berean is *appointed*. In other words, these are *Adonai's formal appointments*. This is formal and legal in nature, a set-aside time by the Sovereign Creator of the Universe – these are not suggestions. We are told to *proclaim them to be Holy Convocations (mikra kodesh)*. The Hebrew word *mikra* connotes a solemn and holy public assembly of His people. The Hebrew word translated *appointed festivals* is the word *moed*. This literal meaning is *appointed times*. This can be likened to *Adonai* telling Israel to get out their personal and national planning calendars and write in certain appointments to meet with Him. He already has them recorded in His calendar and He, the Sovereign Lord, instructed Israel to give time to Him accordingly. *Adonai* instructed Israel to set aside definite days during each year and some entire years that would serve as special times of worship, celebration, and rest. For on those *appointed times Adonai* desires to meet with His people in very special ways.

As we delve into the *appointed times* of *Adonai* we notice the use of the term *a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings*. If it is a statute forever for Israel, it is also an everlasting decree for His grafted-into-Israel people – for us who are *heirs according to the promise*. The impact of these Scriptural words is impossible to ignore once they are deposited in our spirit by *His Ruach*. This chapter is speaking to us, in particular. There aren't enough apologetics in Christianity to remove the *statute forever* impact to our lives. This is the starting point for so many that have come to our ranks to live by a Scriptural standard.

The *moadim of Adonai*, or *appointed festivals*, can be studied on many different levels. The most literal level is to examine them for what they reveal about Israel's history during the period of the Exodus. Beyond that, however, we can also look at the *moadim* for what they can teach us about our own personal salvation history and our own personal cycle of redemption and sanctification. And the *moadim* reveal volumes about the Lord of History and salvation – *Messiah Yeshua*. According to the Newer Testament, *Yeshua* is specifically connected to the *moadim*. Thus, with the precedent set by the inspired writers of Scripture, it is safe to look at all the *moadim* and see what they can teach us about the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. It is also important to note that the *moadim* are rehearsals, of the work and impact *Adonai* has ordained.

The *moadim* are a cycle, a circle dance. Every year they come and go. One leads to the other, is built upon the previous one, and prepares us for the next. If we were to look at the *moadim* from a *bird's eye view*, it would look like a dance circle. Some of the *dances* are happy, some are fast, some are slow, and some are more somber and introspective. However, there is purpose, rhythm, design, and meaning in them. We would see that the more the participants dance, the better they become at dancing because they grow in their understanding of the *dances*. There is also something else we see when the people dance the cycle of the *moadim*. Right in the center of the circle is the *Lord of the Dance, Yeshua!* They are dancing around Him, and He is dancing with them! Everyone

is having so much fun. When the dances become slower, more reflective, everyone begins to weep. When they are brighter and happier, they all begin to laugh. Moreover, whatever they do not understand about the *dance* they look to Him in the center of the *dance*, and He teaches them. When He is not teaching, He is delighting in them because of their dancing and because they delight in Him. *Yeshua* is bidding you to join the *circle dance*.

The revelation of God's festivals is among the most basic and persuasive truths in Scripture that have captured the minds and interest of the non-Messianic world. These festivals are being celebrated throughout Christianity as the Holy Spirit reveals them to those desiring His Truth. Along with *Shabbat* and the *Mitzvot*, the High Holidays are being understood and apprehended by serious Believers. The *moadim* are much, much easier to grasp and implement than the *Shabbat and Mitzvot* because of their very inherent worship nature and because they have an undeniable connection with the Messiah while He was with us. We note that the *moadim of Adonai* are also a *prophetic clock*. All major events in Scripture (past and future) are associated with a *moadim*.

The first *moed* listed in Lev. 23 is *Shabbat*: *"³Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You are to do no work—it is a Shabbat to Adonai in all your dwellings."* In Jewish thought the first *moed* listed is also the most important (the Law of First and Last Mention). It is a day of cessation from all regular work. The pattern for this day was set by the Holy One when He created everything. We are told that when God completed all the work which He intended to do in the creation: *"³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God created for the purpose of preparing"* (*Genesis 2:3*). Thus, the pattern for rest and completion for the 7th day was set from the very beginning of creation. The *Torah* enjoins Israel to do as God did and abstain from all their creative work on *Shabbat*. There is at least one *Shabbat* included in each *moadim* in Lev. 23. Finally, by establishing a *Shabbat Year (sh^emitah)* and another *Shabbat Year (yovel)* after seven sets of seven years we see something futuristic and prophetic about celebrating the 7th day rest.

In the *Torah*, *moadim* are associated with times of harvest in the land. The farmers of Israel would begin their spring harvest with the barley crop at *Pesach* (Passover), the first grain crop beginning in the month of the *Aviv*. The harvest continued for seven weeks as the other crops and fruits began to ripen. As each crop ripened, the first of each type would not be eaten but instead the farmer would tie a ribbon around the branch. This ribbon signified that these fruits were *Bikkurim* (first fruits). At *Shavuot* the farmers would gather the *Bikkurim* into baskets and bring them to the city of Jerusalem where they would be eaten in the Holy City. The farmers living close to Jerusalem would bring fresh fruits, while those who had to travel a long distance carried dried raisins and figs. This joyful occasion was celebrated with the music of fifes, timbres, and drums. As the pilgrims approached the city walls the inhabitants of the city greeted them. Sometimes the king himself would join the procession to the Temple Mount. The *Bikkurim* ritual is no longer practiced in present day Israel.

On *Shavuot* the People of Israel concluded the barley harvest and commenced the wheat harvest, since in *Eretz Yisrael* the third month (*Sivan*) signals the end of spring and the beginning of summer. We note that *Yeshua* died on the Day of *Pesach* (Passover) on *Nisan 14*, was entombed just before the eve of *Chag HaMatzot* (Unleavened Bread) on *Nisan 15*, and after three days and three nights, resurrected on the evening of *Yom HaBikkurim* (the Day of *Firstfruits*) on *Aviv 18*, on a *Yom Rishon* (a Sunday). We also note that the Immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh happened on *Shavuot*. The Spring *moadim* were all fulfilled specifically by *Yeshua*. The fall festivals of *Yom Teruah*, *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot* are yet to be fully fulfilled but both the prophetic and the *moadim* clock are pointing to a time in the not-so-distant future, perhaps even in our lifetime. Like the Israeli farmers, we already know the fate of the grain crops, but we have no guarantee for the success of the fruit that grows in the summer, that is us. We are all to be *ingathered* at *Sukkot*, the festival of *Living Together with the Messiah* for more than a thousand years. As our time unfolds, let us be *firstfruits* of the later day harvest and grow to maturity so we can be gathered as an offering to the Lord. This is our time, and this is our season. Equip yourself on this coming *Shavuot* so you can be ready for the Fall Festivals. *Shabbat Shalom!*