

ARE WE SURE THE HOLY DAYS ARE FOR US TODAY?

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The Biblical Holy Days are already upon us!

Not many people keep God's Holy Days. We tend to be set apart.

Most churches "keep" Easter ... Christmas — and often accuse us of being "Jews" or being "Legalistic".

People say that the Bible's Holy Days are "Old Covenant" — whereas genuine Christians live under the "New Covenant".

It is good at this time of year — as the bulk of the Holy Days stretch before us — to have a review. We look at the specific meanings on the actual days on the days themselves — but today it is worth reviewing: should we keep them at all? Can the majority of believers and church-goers really be wrong? We're a tiny minority. Could we be right?

There is a hint of the Holy Days all the way back ...

Genesis 1:14-19

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.

16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,
18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

"Seasons" = Moedim in Hebrew. It doesn't mean "seasons" as in summer ... winter etc. Rather it equals AN APPOINTED TIME.

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.

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

It looks like even on the 4th day — did God have special days in mind for us?

Psalms 104:19

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

The sun knows its going down.

Psalms 104:19 HCSB

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

The Hebrew calendar is based on the moon’s cycle. For example: Trumpets is Day 1 of the new moon. Atonement is Day 10 since the new moon. That’s how we determine the Holy Days.

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.**

4 'These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

“Feasts” is not accurate! The same word appearing 4 times = Moedim. Leviticus Chapter 23 lists the Appointed Times of Jehovah. The same word as in Genesis Chapter 1. Several of the Moedim are Feasts too — but not all.

We can’t 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.

And it may be that God has adapted His Holy Day Calendar since the days of the Garden of Eden? Some suggest that there were fewer Moedim in the period before Noah’s flood ... and that God modified His plan and Holy Days after that. Possible and plausible?

Genesis 26:1-5

1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.

3 "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

4 "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

5 "because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**"

Abraham kept God's commandments ... statutes ... laws.

Which? This was a long time before the 10 commandments!

"Statutes" in Hebrew = Chuqqah. Leviticus Chapter 23 refers to Pentecost ... Atonement ... Tabernacles as Chuqqah/statutes of God. Was Abraham aware of them?

Irrespective of how far back they go ... once given ... it looks like God expects them to be observed thereafter?

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 — not to keep The Passover — not to observe the memorial of a slain lamb? You would think that would include us today.

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?

Note: Both of these Moedim (Passover and Unleavened Bread) were given **MONTHS PRIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT AT MOUNT SINAI!**

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.

Yet future!

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 ... so why not continue to observe the Holy Days? They would still be looking forward to the Last Great Day ... the Great White Throne Judgment.

But what happened in the New Testament Church? Did they suddenly stop?

What do we read in the New Testament ... do we see Christmas ... Lent ... Easter ... Feast of the Assumption?

Or ... do we simply see a quiet continuation of what was already established and understood?

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 which of course is one of the Appointed Times. It is also a Chuqqah/statute. No surprise that the disciples would be meeting together to keep the Holy Day! God Himself backed it up with miracles and wonders on this day. 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 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 no believers kept the Biblical Holy Days it would be a meaningless or confusing reference.

The simplest explanation is: 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 great surprise. One of Jehovah's Moedim ... a Chuqqah/statute ... 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? Who says you get to choose Pentecost ... but you'll ignore Trumpets ... Unleavened Bread etc. God doesn't say that!

Luke's travelogue continues.

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? Corpus Christi?

It seems to be important to Paul to keep This Feast? As a Statute of his God (Chuqqah) — again no surprise.

This Feast is not specifically identified. Standard commentaries suggest it might be Passover or Pentecost (perhaps because those are the only two Feast Days modern commentators are prepared to acknowledge?). It was probably neither of these.

An old Ambassador College Bible Course Lesson goes through the chronology of previous verses in Acts ... and comes out at Autumn ... so most likely the "Big" Feast — Tabernacles.

We've seen some references in the Book of Acts as to what the early New Testament Church was doing.

Let's look at some of Paul's letters.

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.

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

Incidentally ... Paul is keeping This Feast in the Gentile city of Ephesus — not Jerusalem ... “The place where God had chosen to place His name”.

It was no longer necessary to keep the Feasts in Jerusalem. Jesus told the woman in Samaria “The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship The Father ... the hour is coming ... when the true worshippers will worship The Father in spirit and in truth”.

However ... it seems evident that at times Paul liked to visit the home church for Feasts — and meet up with family and friends.

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.^{fn}

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!! A quarter of a century into the New Covenant?

We will 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 ... over 30 years after The Crucifixion — after all the statutes of God were allegedly "done away" — why refer to "The Fast" — unless it meant something to Theophilus and was useful to identify the timing.

If you sent an email to some friends or family members and said you'd be visiting their area "after The Fast" and were hoping to pop in and see them ... meaningless ... unless they're Holy Day keepers!

Luke doesn't even make a fuss of his comment. Just dropped it in nonchalantly!

So ... if we just read the New Testament naturally — all is really just as we'd expect.

New Testament brethren happily keeping The Holy Days — Moedim — without any fuss. God's Word is consistent.

We may be in a minority among Bible believers and Christians. But it's a right one!!