

PART ONE



THE FEASTS OF YHWH. The Feasts of YHWH are perhaps the most misunderstood element of Scripture. Many Christians have casually dismissed the feasts as products of Hebrew history and culture that have been fulfilled in the Messiah. While this is true in a certain sense, the feasts nonetheless remain an integral part of the Scripture and are an integral part of being called the people of YHWH. Not to understand the truth about these feasts is ignorance that a believer cannot afford to keep. It is frustrating and delaying the mandate of the Kingdom. We sincerely believe that the reason why Christians have never experienced the set-apartness of the presence of YHWH and the fullness of the power of YHWH as it was in the early Kahal (the early Nazarene congregation or assembly) is that these feasts are in fact the key. The reason why the Messiah, the Apostles, and early believers were so successful at the mandate of the Kingdom is that they ALL understood the reasons for the feasts, so they diligently observed the feasts; therefore, they lived out the meanings of the feasts. Today, the Church practices feasts and observes days that are "historical precedents" created by Pontifical rulings and are not a command of the Scripture. They are based on Roman/Greek institutions that revolve around the Julian calendar. It is not our purpose in this exposition to refute or challenge these Church precedents but to bring you into familiarity with the Scriptural Feasts that the Messiah and the Apostles observed and practiced as it was in the Gospels and the book of Acts. The fact will always remain true; it is not possible to be "Holy" (Set-Apart) and enter into the Kingdom of YHWH without observing the Feasts of YHWH. Holiness is not an option for the believer! *"For I am YHWH your Elohim: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be you Set-Apart, for I am Set-Apart.....For I am YHWH ... that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim: you shall therefore be Set-Apart, for I am Set-Apart"* Wayiqra (Leviticus) 11:44-45. *"But be Set-Apart in all your ways, as that One who called you, is Set-Apart, Because it is written, Be Set-Apart, as also I, am Set-Apart"* Kepha Alef (First Peter) 1:15-16. The journey into set-apartness and into His Kingdom begins with understanding and correctly observing the Feasts of YHWH. **THE MOEDIM.** The Hebrew word for feast is *Chag*, but when applied in the context of a Set-Apart gathering, it is called *Moed* in the singular and *Moedim* in the plural. Some of the Chag are, in fact, festivals, while others are times of mourning and fasting, but they all share the same purpose, being they are all "the appointed times" that YHWH chose to meet His covenant people. The Torah teaches ten feasts that we are all called to observe. They are: 1. The Shabbat. 2. Rosh Chodesh (New Moon). 3. Pesach/Passover (Day of Preparation). 4. Chag haMatzah/Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matzah). 5. Yom haBirkurrim/Day of First Fruits (Birkurrim). 6. Shavuot/Pentecost/Feast of Weeks (Shavuot). 7. Yom Teruah/Day of Blowing (Yom Teruah). 8. Yom haKippurim/Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). 9. Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). 10. Shemini Atzeret (The Eighth Day). The Shabbat is a weekly reoccurring feast, while Rosh Chodesh is a monthly reoccurring feast that is tied to the lunar cycle of the moon, and the rest of the feasts are annual reoccurring feasts that are celebrated once every year. The yearly feasts occur in clusters and are commonly divided into three categories because they are tied to the agricultural cycles of Yisra'el, i.e., spring, summer, fall, and winter and because they occur within close proximity of each other. They are referred to as the: PASSOVER (PESACH) - Pesach, Chag haMatzah and Yom haBirkurrim. PENTECOST (SHAVUOT). TABERNACLES (SUKKOT) - Yom Teruah, Yom haKippurim, and Sukkot. The Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot are called "ascension feasts" as the Scripture required that these three feasts be celebrated in Yerushalem (Shemoth (Exodus) 23:14-1, 34:23-24). Therefore, they are

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distinctly referred to as *Chag*, whereas the rest of the feasts are called *Moedim*. A person is not exempted from observing the feasts if they cannot travel to Yerushalem, or they cannot obtain the necessary requirements of the feast, or be unable to because of a death in the family. The Torah allows room for these circumstances. See Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:24-26; Wayiqra (Leviticus) 5:7-11; 12:8; Bamidbar (Numbers) 9:5-12. The first three feasts occur in the spring during an eight-day period. The second feast Shavuot, comes by itself fifty days after the waving of the First Fruits in the early summer. Many know this feast by its Greek name Pentecost, meaning fifty. It is also sometimes called the Feast of Weeks (Shemoth (Exodus) 34:22). The long, dry summer culminated in a collection of the three final feasts that occurred in the fall. These later feasts cover a period of 21 days, which are collectively referred to as the fall feast or Tabernacles. Shemini Atzeret is celebrated on the eighth day after the seven days of Tabernacles and is not considered to be part of Sukkot. These three clusters or groups of feasts generally correspond to the three divisions of the Temple area: Outer Court, The Holy Place, The Holy of Holies. These three divisions also help us to see the three roles played by the Messiah: Priest (Kohen), Prophet (Navi), King (Melech). The number three is very significant in the Scripture. It stands for completeness or perfect testimony. These feasts are, therefore, a perfect testimony of YHWH and are designed to complete His people. **We have seven main points to say about these feasts:**

- 1. The Torah calls these feasts THE FEASTS OF YHWH.** These are not Jewish or Israelite festivals, but they are YHWH's feasts. Many have made the grave mistake of calling these feasts Jewish or Israeli feasts. *"Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and say to them: 'The feasts of YHWH which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts'"* Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:2. These feasts are loving invitations from our Creator to rejoice and dwell in His presence, a season of gathering for families and friends to experience His faithfulness, His forgiveness, His deliverance, His healing, and abundance.
- 2. The Torah calls these feasts EVERLASTING.** YHWH places the observance of the feast in Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23 alongside the weekly Shabbat. In fact, these feasts are also a Shabbat as the word Sabbath is plural in the Scripture. *"Every Shabbat he shall set it in order before YHWH continually: it is from the children of Yisra'el; an everlasting covenant"* Wayiqra (Leviticus) 24:8. The prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) shows us that these feasts will be kept as a memorial or a reminder of what our Master Yeshua has done for us during the millennial reign.
- 3. The Torah calls these feasts SET-APART. CONVOCATIONS.** The feasts are called Set-Apart convocations (from the Hebrew word *Kodesh*, meaning Set-Apart). The Prophet Yeshayahu (Isaiah) spoke against Yisra'el because they had profaned YHWH's feasts by not keeping them Set-Apart. *"Bring no more vain oblations: it is an offering of abomination unto Me--new moon and sabbath; the holding of convocations. I cannot endure, iniquity along with the solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed seasons, My soul hates; they are a burden unto Me: I am weary to bear them"* Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:13-14. That is why Sha'ul (Paul) said that we are to keep the feasts with sincerity and truth, in other words, without hypocrisy (Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 16:8).
- 4. The Torah calls these feasts YHWH APPOINTMENTS.** The feasts are appointed by YHWH! *"These are the appointed seasons of YHWH, even Set-Apart convocations, which you shall proclaim in their appointed season"* Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:4. No person in their right mind would consider missing an appointment with the President of the United States or the Queen of England, how much more the Creator of the Universe?
- 5. The Torah calls these feasts CELEBRATIONS.** The word "*moedim*" also can mean a celebration or a festival because they are associated with the agricultural harvest of Yisra'el. These feasts are intricately tied to the land of Yisra'el and her seasons. They unfold YHWH's plan for His creation. They all involve sacrifices and offerings, which come from the land. They are meant to be holidays for Eloah's people (Wayiqra

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(Leviticus) 23:32, 41). **6. The Torah calls these feasts REHEARSALS.** The word convocation comes from the Hebrew word "*miqra*," which also means rehearsals (Shemoth (Exodus) 12:16). When we celebrate them, we rehearse or depict our entire walk with YHWH. The Passover (Pesach) speaks about personal redemption, Pentecost (Shavuot) infilling of the Spirit, and Tabernacles (Sukkot), the restoration of the Kingdom. **7. The Torah calls these feasts The BLESSINGS.** In Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:26-27, it states, "*Behold, I set before you this day, a blessing and a curse: **The blessing**, if you shall hearken unto **the commandments of YHWH your Elohim, which I command you this day...***" The Feasts are an integral commandment of the Torah, in fact, inseparable from the Torah. Therefore, they carry all the blessings of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28. **What these feasts were designed and created to do:**

- 1. They convey spiritual truths.** The Scripture teaches, first, the natural, then the spiritual (Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 15:46-50). These feasts are rich with spiritual truths that are conveyed to us in natural settings. They convey principles of mercy, love, and forgiveness and illustrate laws of sowing and harvest, curses and blessings, etc.
- 2. They create the identity of YHWH's people.** These feasts became the traditions of His people; they were designed to make Yisra'el a cultured people – unique and distinct from other nations. In Bamidbar (Numbers) 23:9, Moses said this of Yisra'el, "*For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Behold, it is a people that **shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.***"
- 3. They are sacred signs marking out YHWH's Set-Apart people.** The words "appointed season" in Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23 also convey the picture of an assembly of people who are Set-Apart in every way. When we observe these feasts, we become YHWH's signs to the world that we belong to Him because He has marked us out as a special people. In Shemoth (Exodus) 31:13, YHWH calls these feasts His sign (notice the plural word "Sabbaths" – indicating that all the feasts are signs).
- 4. They are designed to be road marks.** The Scripture speaks of ancient roadmarks that the remnant will come to see as their pathway back into the family of Yisra'el. See Yechezkel (Ezekiel); 37:16; Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:16; 31:20-21. These feasts were created to be roadmarks to point the remnant back to their identity as YHWH's chosen people. Countless non-Jews are returning to keep the feasts because they see the ancient road marks.
- 5. They are designed to heal and restore.** The Passover was designed to heal us spiritually and physically, Pentecost was designed to empower us, and Tabernacles was designed to restore to us the authority of the Kingdom. This also applies to healing the divide between the house of Yahudah (the Jews) and Ephraim (the Church). Each feast is a self-perfecting pathway designed by YHWH to prepare and qualify us to enter His Kingdom.
- 6. They are designed to point us to the Messiah.** All of the feasts speak about Yeshua and His life and ministry. They foreshowed our Messiah and what He would do for us. The feasts showed us that the Messiah would tabernacle among men, live a sinless life, and be executed as our Passover lamb. These feasts were all fulfilled in His life, death, and resurrection, but they were not abolished. Something we will explain shortly.
- 7. They are designed to foreshadow the eight Millenniums of Scripture.** All of the feasts speak about the eight-thousand-year time period in which YHWH has appointed for human history. Each millennium is representative of a feast. The first thousand years represent Yom haBirkurrim, the 2nd Yom Teruah, the 3rd Pesach, the 4th Chag haMatzah, the 5th Yom Kippur, the 6th Shavuot, the 7th Sukkot, and the 8th and final millennium Shemini Atezerets.

Were YHWH's Feasts Abolished? Many Christian Scholars argue that the feasts were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah Yeshua; therefore, we are no longer

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required to observe them. Furthermore, they argue that the feasts are symbols that represent and point to the Messiah's life and work, which have all been fulfilled. Yeshua is the sacrificial lamb that satisfies all of the feast's requirements. But what does the Scripture teach? The answer to this question is both Yes and No. Yes, in that Messiah Yeshua is our sacrificial lamb, and therefore we have no need of another sacrifice (Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 5:7; Ivrim (Hebrews) 9:26-28, 10:1-26). Yeshua has fulfilled all the sacrificial laws to their completeness. And No, YHWH's feasts are NOT abolished because of six irrefutable reasons: **First**, they foreshadow Yisra'el's Messiah (Qolesayah (Colossians) 2:17; Ivrim (Hebrews) 10:1). He is the very substance to which they point. While such yearly sacrifices could never make men perfect (as can His shed blood), we nevertheless cannot separate these shadows from their substance, for they will then cease to be shadows! **Second**, the feasts we saw earlier in Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23 are an eternal decree because they are placed alongside the Shabbat as everlasting. Anything eternal in Scripture cannot be abolished, but certainly, it can be fulfilled! It is both arrogant and prideful to call what YHWH has called "everlasting" abolished or obsolete. **Third**, the word fulfilled does not mean that it is abolished. Take, for example, Christmas, which Christians observe as the day of Christ's birth. Just because it is fulfilled does not mean it is abolished. Otherwise, why should they continue to observe it? Similarly, all Americans celebrate the 4th of July as their Independence Day, which was fulfilled in 1776. Still, it does not mean that it is abolished; therefore, should it no longer be observed? **Fourth**, the feasts are pivotal to our identity as YHWH's people and our apartness as the people of YHWH. We have already mentioned this point. The feasts become our culture and traditions that make us uniquely Israelites, who are the heirs of all the promises and covenants! Speaking Hebrew does not make you an Israelite, but observing Hebrew feasts does. **Fifth**, the feasts are foretold as being continued in the millennial reign. Both Zechariah and Zephaniah and many of Israel's prophets foretold the full restoration of the feasts in the Millennial Kingdom (Zecharyah (Zechariah) 14:16-21; Tzephanyah (Zephaniah) 3:18; Echah (Lamentations) 1:4-7; Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 45:17, 46:3). **Sixth**, the Messiah observed these feasts as these passages show - Mattityahu (Matthew) 26:17; Luka (Luke) 2:41-2; Yochanan (John) 5:1 leaving us an example. A pattern we should follow according to Kepha (Peter) and Sha'ul (Paul). *"For to this, you were called! Because even the Messiah died for us, and left us this pattern: that you should walk in His footsteps"* Kepha Alef (First Peter) 2:21. *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Yeshua"* Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 11:1 (Restored Version). If it were not a requirement that we observe these feasts, the Messiah would have been the first to set the example by not observing them. **Seventh**, according to the Scriptures, the Apostle Sha'ul (Paul) and his disciples were keeping the feast days of YHWH many years after Yeshua's resurrection. Here are the Scriptural proofs: Maaseh Shlichim (Acts) 13:14, 17:2, 18:4, 20, 20:16, 43-44. Paul even went to great lengths to dispel any doubts among the early believers may have had that he was abandoning the Mosaic Law - the very foundation of the feasts (Maaseh Shlichim (Acts) 21:17-24) that if that were not sufficient, he clearly instructs believers to celebrate the festivals *"with sincerity and truth"* Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 5:7-8. So abundantly clear was the pattern that the Messiah and the Apostles had set, which scholars are in general agreement with, that they did not abolish the feasts, but they kept the festivals in the manner the Torah commanded them. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th edition), under "Festivals," states that it is *"abundantly clear that Christ and His disciples observed the appointed Jewish feasts."* What is stopping you?