

HOLY CONVOICATIONS



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*Created: August 29, 1999

Introduction and Overview – Part 1

“Yeshua said to them, **“This is what I meant when I was still alive with you and told you that everything written about me in the Torah of Moshe, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled”** (Luke 24:44, CJB).

Next to Isaiah 53, nowhere else is this statement of Yeshua’s more vividly demonstrated than in the Holy Convocations of Leviticus Chapter 23. The opening few lines of this chapter clearly teach that the Biblical Feasts, including Pesach (Passover) to Sukkot (Tabernacles), are “designated times of ADONAI “ (verse 4 below):

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
 דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרָאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֵלֶּה הֵם
 מוֹעֲדֵי:
 שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שַׁבְתוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ
 שַׁבַּת הוּא לַיהוָה בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם: פ
 אֵלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרָאוּ אֹתָם בְּמוֹעֲדָם:

1 ADONAI said to Moshe, 2 "Tell the people of Isra'el: 'The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times. 3 "'Work is to be done on six days; but the seventh day is a Shabbat of complete rest, a holy convocation; you are not to do any kind of work; it is a Shabbat for ADONAI, even in your homes. 4 "'These are the designated times of ADONAI, the holy convocations you are to proclaim at their designated times."

Historically, the Nation of Isra'el was to act as a repository of the wisdom and Word of HaShem. With his Called-out Ones acting as a “fishbowl,” the surrounding nations were to learn about the Creator, the One True God of the Universe, from the everyday activities of the offspring of Avraham. This is one of the primary reasons that the Torah was graciously given to Isra'el.

In both Biblical¹ and Modern Hebrew², the word for “appointment” is מוֹעֵד “mo'eyd,” translated as “designated times” in Stern’s translation above. Interestingly, the root of the related word מִקְרָא “mikra,” translated as “convocations” by Stern, is קָרָא “kara,” and this root word conveys the sense of “rehearsals.”³ I like to think that in this way, HaShem masterfully designed the mikra'ey kodesh to act as sort of dress rehearsals for his children. “Of what?” you might ask.

The Feasts of ADONAI are dress rehearsals of Messianic Redemption.

Our LORD Yeshua has literally and prophetically fulfilled the first four of the seven feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23; it is my belief that the Torah teaches that he will, likewise, literally and prophetically fulfill the final three at his soon to be second arrival. As the children of Avraham willingly and faithfully lived out HaShem’s yearly cycle of “mo-eydeem,” the Spirit of the Holy One graciously opened their hearts to understand that, as his treasured possession, they were responsible to actively pursue a genuine, personal, loving relationship with their Heavenly Abba. It is this type of personal relationship that HaShem has always desired from the nation of Isra'el, and through the grace poured out to Isra'el, the surrounding Gentile nations might also see the goodness and mercy of ADONAI, and seek to become one of his treasured possessions as well (read Deut. 4:5-8). Today, our covenant responsibilities to our Holy God have not changed any more than the covenants made with his Treasured People have changed. He is our God and we are his people!

History has demonstrated that in the fullness of HaShem’s timetable he sent his Only Begotten Son Yeshua into the world, to redeem fallen man, and make it possible to have a right relationship with our Heavenly Abba. This Messianic Redemption of ours, which was accomplished through the sacrificial death, burial, and miraculous resurrection of Yeshua our Savior, has been prophetically and historically displayed through the teachings of the Holy Convocations of Leviticus 23. It is, therefore, HaShem’s desire that these teachings become an integral part of our everyday lives, as we walk out the truths of our new identification in Messiah. To be sure, the Torah has demonstrated,

¹ Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT), מוֹעֵד

² <http://www.morfix.co.il/en/מוֹעֵד>

³ <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/4744.htm>, citing Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance on קָרָא

“Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the TaNaKH” (Luke 24:45)

Introduction and Overview – Part 2

“ADONAI said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el: ‘The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times.’” (Leviticus 23:1)

The verse quoted above will act as our theme verse, as I take you on a Messianic understanding of the Feasts of HaShem. The complete study will serve as a primer to the reader, encouraging and challenging him to study further into the pages of the Torah to mine the rich blessings that lay in store for him there. Perhaps the study might even pique your curiosity concerning the area of shomer mitzvot, that is, Torah-observance.⁴

The time has now come for all of God’s children to begin to have a unified voice when it comes to the Torah. For too long, we, HaShem’s olive tree (Romans Chapter 11), have been divided over this issue of “Who should follow the Torah? And why?” I’m not ashamed to answer authoritatively up front: **the Torah details the lifestyle of a genuine follower of HaShem as correctly interpreted (fulfilled) by Yeshua HaMashiach!** This means that all genuine believers have been given a divine, covenant responsibility, as it were, to follow as much of God’s Word (‘Older’ Testament and ‘Newer’ Testament) as they can press into, empowered to walk, not by the flesh of course, but by the power of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit).

But Ariel, if HaShem says to do something what room is left for arguing? Are you suggesting that an individual wait for a “warm and fuzzy feeling” to come over them? Not at all. What exactly am I getting at? Simply that God and God alone has the power to convince and convict a person in the area of sins of omission (I am suggesting that ultimately Torah disobedience, by default, can lead to sins of negligence). I can teach you about Torah observance until I am blue in the face, but I can NEVER force, coerce, entrap, or otherwise intimidate anyone into following Torah commands. Compulsion leads to legalism. For the individual coming out of a “Torah-less lifestyle,” HaShem will often lovingly challenge them to mature by giving them opportunity to express their love for him in terms of Torah submissiveness, specifically in the area of rediscovering their Hebraic roots. Either that or they will just plain read the objective Torah, apply Hebraic “s’bara”⁵ (common sense), and then “just do it!” This approach has been known to be effective as well.

Because the feasts are found in the older portion of the Bible, many Christians simply neglect the study of them. It is my wish that these commentaries will capture the attention of the average believer and ignite a spark of interest within him, spurning him

⁴ I recommend my ongoing series called “Shomer Mitzvot,” available at my website.

⁵ S’bara is a term found in the book ‘Not In Heaven’ by Eliezer Berkovits, specifically within a discussion about halacha and easing the plight of the abandoned wife.

on to further investigate the practical application of these wonderful Torah-truths. I am not prepared to conduct a thorough study of the feasts in the space provided here. I simply want to provide the readers with the Messianic framework necessary to properly appreciate the scope of HaShem's historical handiwork, as expressed in the feasts.

As we shall see, the feasts, which we will refer to as "**mikra'ey kodesh**" (holy convocations), were meant to serve as daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly reminders, of our identity and purpose, in the historical plans that HaShem has for all of mankind. The Torah teaches us that they are the "rehearsals of Messianic redemption." Properly understood, they tell the story of the birth and life, atoning work, death, resurrection, promise of power, assurance of dedication, promise of return, and promise of eternal abiding, of the Messiah Yeshua, in relation to all genuine followers. Surely it is in the mind of the Holy One, for his children to have an intimate knowledge of these aspects of his Son's ministry! Yet, for nearly two thousand years, our appreciation of these feasts has remained marginal at best and non-existent at worst.

The reader needs to familiarize himself with our main body of text, Leviticus Chapter twenty-three. Below is an outline and brief themes of the seven Festivals of the LORD (not counting the Sabbath) that the Torah has for us (The following list and brief definitions was supplied by First Fruits of Zion Publications):

- **Pesach (Passover)** – redemption, salvation, deliverance, freedom
- **Chag HaMazah (Unleavened Bread)** – sanctification
- **Bikkurim (Counting the Omer)** – sanctification, deliverance
- **Shavu'ot (Pentecost)** – the giving of the Torah, the giving of the Ruach HaKodesh, firstfruits, ecclesiology
- **Rosh HaShanah/Yom Teruah (New Year/Feast of Trumpets)** - eschatology
- **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)** – atonement, forgiveness, blood sacrifices
- **Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles/Ingathering)** – worship, praise, redemption, eschatology, thanksgiving, celebrating the harvest of righteousness in our lives

As we journey through our commentaries I will detail the times, dates and circumstances surrounding each feast. This will provide the historical framework to which we can apply the Messianic fulfillment of each feast. Ultimately, it is my intent to invite both Jews and Gentiles in Messiah to press into the covenant responsibilities and expectations of HaShem's divine mandate to participate each year in his feasts. Shomer mitzvot is a wonderful way to "walk out" the reality of the newness of life, found only in union with Yeshua HaMashiach! A Godly desire to obey the Torah, as non-Jewish believers, is evidence of the Holy Spirit's activity of "putting the Torah of HaShem within you, and writing it on your heart" (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10, paraphrase mine).

May the Holy One richly bless you as you seek to be obedient to his Word!

For further study, read: Genesis 1:14; Exodus 19:5, 6; 31:13; Leviticus ch. 23; Deuteronomy 4:5-10; Joshua 1:7, 8; Psalm 40:7; ch. 119; Isaiah 2:2, 3; ch. 62; Jeremiah 31:31-37; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Micah 4:1-7; Zechariah 8:20-23; Malachi 4:4; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 10:4; Hebrews ch. 4; 10:7; James 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1-3

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