

GOD'S TIME & SEASONS

Careful study of one of the other topic pages within this web site ("Paganization of the Church") should convince you that the Church has lost much of its foundations since the first generations following the Apostles. One of the major things that has been lost is God's times and seasons. In their place, pagan worship and traditions had been substituted. There is little question that the Messiah, His Apostles and the early church recognized and observed the holy convocations of Leviticus 23, including the seventh day Sabbath. In fact, the whole world recognized the seventh day of rest until Constantine, Emperor of Rome, issued a command that the first day of the week, Day Solis (day of the sun god, Sunday), would be the day of rest. He also began the tradition of Sunday religious services in keeping with the existing pagan practice.

God's times and seasons are cyclic, they are important times personally and historically, and they are HIS commandments. In Leviticus 23 and elsewhere in scripture, God says that we are to observe these holy days of convocation (rehearsal) through out our generations. Now, there are those that are going to come forth and cry out **legalism**, but where is the legalism in loving God? Did not God say that through Messiah He would write HIS Torah (Law) upon our hearts? When we follow Messiah our hearts yearn to be faithful to the commandments of God, not for our salvation, but because we love Him and know that His word is good, righteous and alive. The Torah (law) of God is not dead as some would suppose, but is alive through Messiah Yahshua and in the hearts of those who trust Him. The only portions of the Torah that have obviously passed away with Messiah is the need for blood sacrifices and the Levitical Priesthood.

A new Priesthood has come into existence with Messiah Yahshua as our High Priest. As we are now Priest of God within the renewed covenant, should we not celebrate the blood of the Passover Lamb and observe and officiate at all of God's Feast days? When a follower of Messiah hears the voice of GOD and begins to recognize and observe His times and seasons, accept the priestly calling and forsake the pagan ways, wonderful and dreadful things begin to happen. God blesses with great revelation, fellowship with Him and shalom (peace). But the world, primarily through your family, friends and the "Christian" community, will bring great condemnation. Be prepared, because a price will have to be paid for loving God and being faithful to His word.

Obeying the commandments of God should not be a burden to us. It is written in 1 John 5:3-5 *"For loving God means obeying His commands. Moreover, His commands are not burdensome, because everything which has God as its Father overcomes the world. And this is what victoriously overcomes the world: our trust. Who does overcome the world if not the person who believes that Yahshua is the Son of God."*

It was stated earlier that God's times and seasons are cyclic. This much we know. The full revelation of His times and seasons I am quite sure we have only begun to understand. However, the mystery, wonder and blessings afforded by what we do know about the seasons

of God should encourage us to ask God for more. The following is a short identification and description of the times and seasons of God that bless us so:

Daily Cycles – Except to say that we know that they exist, we are not as aware as we should be of God’s daily cycles. We do know that consistent with scripture and historical and present Hebrew practice, the day in God begins and ends at sundown. Since this is the case, the weeks, months and years also begin at sundown. Numerous scriptures in both the old and renewed covenant writings tell us that this is indeed the case. It is entirely fitting that an old day would end and a new day would begin in that twilight that is neither day nor night, but is rightly both. We also know that we have observed in scripture and in our own lives that often in God, the darkness must come before the light. Out of that darkness will come a dawning of glorious light as the Son rises before us.

Weekly Cycles – And God said that six days we would work, but on the seventh day we were to rest (Sabbath) as He had rested from His work. This is the fourth Commandment. It is also a simple weekly cycle, but it’s understanding is so important to our walk with God. In it are hidden mighty truths concerning our Creator and His instructions to us as His people. It is written in the book of Hebrews that a Sabbath rest await the people of God and that we should be in terror of not entering into it. Many will say that this scripture refers to the millennium reign of Messiah. While this may be true, it is not the whole truth about the Sabbath rest. Eons ago at the dawning of time, God spoke out in a manner that we have no concept of, every thing, situation and circumstance comprising all of time and space. Scripture says that HE then rested (not that HE was tired) and HE now invites us to enter into that rest through something called trust. And not in just any trust, but **trust in Yahshua the Messiah**. God has everything covered so to speak and He does not need our works (which are filthy rags and an abomination to God) to do anything for Him. We can, however, allow Messiah to do mighty works through us that were ordained before the dawning of time, if we remain in that trust. God gave us the Sabbath as a weekly reminder to remain in His rest through trust in Messiah. Messiah said that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”.

Now, how *do* we recognize and celebrate the Sabbath? God will show you the way. My family and many in the fellowship follow the traditional Jewish Sabbath. We gather at sundown on Friday evening and the mother or wife lights two candles that we believe represent the two houses of Israel. Then we break bread and have the wine (juice) as we celebrate the body and blood of Messiah. Normally, the wife or mother will also pray as the candles are lit, and the Father will bless each of his children. Various family members may read scripture or weekly Torah readings. Then we have the evening meal. The Sabbath is a family thing. My family normally refrains from doing any ordinary work on this day or engaging in serious shopping or commercial contacts, although we are not “legalistic” about it. I hope that we just recognize that it is a day set apart for God and it is a day made for us. Many believe that the Sabbath is the day that believers should meet. This is not necessarily true.

The Messianic community of believers can meet at any time. There is considerable scriptural evidence that the early believers met in fellowship at a time called ***Motza' ei-Shabbat*** (Corinthians 16:2) which literally means “going out of Sabbath” or Saturday evening. Most bible translations erroneously translate this word as Sunday. Our fellowship has adopted this practice and normally meet on Saturday evenings. However, we did not come to this practice through bible study and knowledge. We knew that we were being led into something and met at various times during, after and before the Sabbath each week and trusted God to show us the way.

It was only after we had been meeting for some time on Saturday evening did God show us the scriptural references and begin to confirm for us that we were on the right track. However, as stated before, the Messianic community can and should meet at any time the Spirit of God might lead.

Over and over again in scripture we are told that the early believers met at ***Motza' ei-Shabbat*** to break bread. By breaking bread at the going out of the Sabbath they framed the Sabbath day by the breaking of bread. First, as families in their homes at sundown on Friday and finally as a fellowship at the end of Sabbath. Our fellowship has adopted this practice and believe that there are several reasons that the early believers did this. The family gathering and the first breaking of the bread on Friday evening is a celebration of GOD (and Messiah) as our creator. The second breaking as a fellowship is a celebration of GOD and Messiah as our Savior. This is the table of remembrance of Messiah's sacrificial death on the execution stake and HIS finished work. It is also more. It is a priestly duty that we as a nation of priests (Israel) have been charged by GOD to complete. The type and shadow of this duty is abundantly described in scripture as the Levitical priests were charged by GOD to remove the old elements from the table of shewbread at the end of each Sabbath and consume them. They would then replace the old with new elements (bread and wine)

Several scriptural references can be found indicating the priest replacing the old bread with “hot” bread and consuming the old at the going out of Sabbath. As priests of GOD we are to minister in the Holy Place that is located in the real temple of GOD in the spiritual realm in the heavenlies. We believe that the early trusters in Messiah were well aware of their priestly duties in this realm as instituted by Messiah himself at the last supper. Unlike the mundane traditions of the Church in celebrating “communion”, the breaking of bread in fellowship is a priestly duty and function and contains within it all of the promise and power of Messiah's high priestly prayer found in the book of John for oneness with GOD, Himself and the Priestly nation (Israel) that would follow. The location, furniture and items that are present in the Holy Place within the real heavenly spiritual temple contain much revelation and teaching for GOD's people. They also provide the setting and instruction for the conduct of our lives and our worship of GOD under the renewed covenant. Additional teaching about this subject can be found elsewhere on this web site.

Monthly Cycles – God’s monthly cycles are based on the lunar calendar (which the Jews presently utilize) and begin at sundown on Rosh Kodesh which is the first sighting of the new moon. Ancient practice among the Hebrews, which has recently been reinstated in Israel by a group there, required the sighting to be made by two witnesses which was reported to the priest and followed by a blast on the shofar. The Rosh Kodesh was a day identified by God with animal sacrifices required. It was, however, not a Shabbat, or one of the holy days of convocation. Many of the holy days of convocation spoken of in Leviticus 23 either begin on the 1st. or 14th. Day of the month. The 14th. Day is the time of the full moon in the middle of the lunar cycle. Astronomically, the lunar cycle is slightly over 29 days. It has become apparent to many within our fellowship that God indeed has a monthly cycle. Often the Spirit and revelation will wax and wane with the moon. The peak of revelation will often come with the full moon. Becoming aware of God’s monthly cycle and the lunar month brings much shalom (peace) as we can rapidly get to the place that a glance during the evening or day when the moon is visible tells us exactly what day of the Hebrew month it is.

Annual Cycles - The book of Exodus shows us that God ordained that the first month of the year was the Hebrew month of Abib. The word means “ripe” and refers to the barley harvest. Two barley loaves were to be waved before the LORD during the Feast of First Fruits or unleavened bread during Passover which God commanded was to occur during the first month.. Accordingly, if the barley was not “Abib” the Hebrews would wait until the next lunar month to begin the year. When the Jews returned to the land following the Babylonian captivity they had renamed this month “Nissan” and presently recognize the seventh month of the lunar calendar as their “new year” (although many in Israel refer to the seventh month as the business new year and the first month as the Spiritual new year). Through out scripture, God normally refers to the months of the year by number rather than name based on the month of Abib as the first month. Leviticus 23 utilizes this practice and identifies seven holy days. The first as stated before is Shabbat. The other six are designated as holy convocations (or rehearsals) and are scattered through the year coinciding with the harvest times in the land.

We know that God gave these as rehearsals and that the first three have been full filled with the sacrifice of Messiah as our Passover Lamb, His resurrection at First Fruits or Unleavened Bread and the coming of the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Weeks or Shavuot in the third month. We also know that Israel in the land at the first coming of Messiah was a very scriptural literate people and had rehearsed for these events for hundreds of years, but sadly, in most part missed it. The Lord now asks us to rehearse for the next three holy days which occur in the seventh month. The first day of the seventh month is the Feast of Trumpets. The tenth day of the month is the day of atonement (Yom-Kippur), and the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the beginning of Sukkot, or Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. The Feast of Sukkot lasts for seven days and on the eighth day a Feast of Completion is observed. Many believe that these days designate the coming of Messiah on the Feast of Trumpets, judgment on the day of Atonement and the wedding feast or His living among His people (Tabernacle) on Sukkot.

Christians are generally completely ignorant of these holy days set apart by God and instead celebrate the civil and pagan holidays that are now deeply entwined within our society and the world. There is much revelation to be found within the Feast Days of Israel and much has been written and is available for study. Many of the sources can be found on the links page of this web site. The annual cycle that God has given us to observe and celebrate reveals so much about HIM and HIS plan for His people and they are HIS commandments to us to observe "through out your generations".

Careful study of scripture will lead you to understand that Messiah observed the Feast days even in His conception, fetal development and birth. He was conceived at Hanukkah (the Festival of Lights) and born on the first day of Sukkot. For His first seven days He lived in a booth (manger) and on the eighth day (Feast of Completion) He was circumcised. In His fetal development, at day 108 which is Passover, the primary change is in the **blood**. He now had a completely functional circulatory system. At day 158 which is Shavuot or Pentecost the primary change is the ability to recognize and understand **sounds** (such as God speaking from Mt. Sinai or the Spirit speaking in the upper room).

Other Cycles – In scripture God also identifies other cycles. These include the Sabbatical year (every seven years) and the Jubilee (every 50 years). Revelation abounds within these commandments as God further reveals Himself and His plan for His people. Much has been written regarding these cycles of God and links are provided within this web site to many of these sources.