

THE APPOINTED TIMES הַמוֹעֲדִים

Sh'mot (Exodus) 35:1

שלום החברים והמשפחה שלי

Shalom, khaverim v'mishpokhah sheli.

Shalom, my family and friends.

Our parashah this week starts with Shabbat, the first of Adonai's mo'edim. We often think of the mo'edim as just the Biblical feasts, but the word refers to an appointment, a fixed time, a set time, an exact time, an appointed time. The daily times of prayer, Shabbat, the new moons, and the festivals comprise the daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal mo'edim.

This word first appears in the very first chapter of the Bible in the creation account.

God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years;

Beresheet (Genesis) 1:14, CJB

וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וְשָׁנִים

The Lexham Hebrew Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ge 1:14.

The sun, the moon and the stars were created by God to serve as signs and to designate His appointed times. He has set the appointments, and He will show up, whether we do or not. But, we have no idea what we are missing if we ignore them.

They are an essential component of the divine worship system that God set in motion for His people, and they continued to be observed faithfully throughout

the Apostolic times, even after His ascension, as well, as the Scriptures prove. We continue to observe them today.

Leviticus 23 describes:

- The Sabbath
- Four Spring Feasts - His First Coming
 - The Feast of Passover- Pesakh
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread- Khag haMatzah
 - The Feast of FirstFruits- Yom ha'Bikkurim
 - The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost- Shavuot
- Three Fall Feasts - His Second Coming
 - The Feast of Trumpets- Rosh haShanah
 - The Day of Atonement- Yom Kippur
 - The Feast of Tabernacles- Sukkhot

The mo'edim reveal God's plan of Redemption for us, bringing us out of the kingdom darkness and into His marvelous Light, into the Kingdom of God, born again, redeemed, filled with the ruakh ha'kodesh. And all of that is expressed in the celebration of just the Spring Feasts! For us the four Spring Feasts are an annual remembrance or a memorial of His First Coming. The Fall Feasts, Scripture tells us, are annual rehearsals for His Second Coming and Eternity - the rest of our Redemption Story!

This is our story!

Cycle of Sanctification

The entire plan of redemption is revealed in the Biblical Feasts. Every major event in the life of Yeshua occurred during the mo'edim. And all of it is captured in a fascinating way by the living experience of participating in these celebrations.

God, in His wisdom, wove this marvelous story of love and grace into His calendar, so that as we cycle through each year, we are reminded of what He has done, and what He has promised to do! When the Biblical calendar was laid out and the Feasts of the Lord were commanded as yearly observances "forever"

they were, at that time, all rehearsals for future events that He would bring about.

Learning about these Feasts is interesting and informative - But actually celebrating them is fascinating and eye-opening, because they depict our redemption story! All the traditions, the foods, the music, the readings, the dances, the prayers, are unique teaching tools object lessons, if you will, that portray our journey from darkness to Light! From here to Eternity!

Purim to Pesakh

We just finished celebrating Purim; which was excellent. The whole weekend was fantastic, and I'm sorry if you missed it because we had a incredible time. You may be wondering, "Did Yeshua celebrate Purim?" I certainly think so. The events of Purim occurred 400 yrs before him, so the remembrance of Purim was well established. Like Hanukkah, the story of deliverance would have been meaningful to the Jewish people living under Roman oppression. It was probably celebrated WELL, but there's more...

After this, there was a Judean festival; and Yeshua went up to Yerushalayim.

Yochanan (John) 5:1, CJB

This is the story where Yeshua heals a man at the pool of Beit-Zata on Shabbat. The festival was on Shabbat, and the only feast day to fall on a Sabbath between the years of 25 and 35 CE was Purim of 28 CE. So, Yeshua was in Yerushalayim for Purim. His Mishloakh Minot was the gift of healing.

With Yeshua, we see that the story of redemption of Purim is still being played out. Esther foreshadows the Messiah's redemption.

But Purim was last week, and now we are preparing for Pesakh. Pesakh is the first of the spring feasts, and it is the first of the Lord's annual appointed times mentioned in Leviticus 23.

These are the designated times of Adonai, the holy convocations you are to proclaim at their designated times. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month,

between sundown and complete darkness, comes Pesach for Adonai. On the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of matzah; for seven days you are to eat matzah... this is a permanent regulation through all your generations, no matter where you live.

Leviticus 23:4-14

Pesakh and Chag HaMatzah, Passover and Unleavened Bread, appear back to back both in scripture and on the calendar, and it is common to hear people refer to these combined times simply as Passover. In fact, on every Jewish calendar I have seen these times are referred to as the eight days of Passover.

Passover is a remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt by the hand of God. All of Sh'mot, of Exodus, tells the story of God's deliverance. Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy explain many of the details of the observance of Passover. 3,500 years of tradition and annual observation have resulted in the Passover seder that we have today, and the seder that is traditionally followed today is almost identical to the one observed in Yeshua's day.

If you want to know more about Passover, come to our seder here at Or haOlam (tickets available online).

The Biblical concept of observation is *action*, not knowledge or understanding. So, if you want to know more, come to Passover. The whole story of love and grace and mercy that is demonstrated in God's deliverance is retold and given even more meaning and context by participation in the service and meal. It is a beautiful thing.

WWJD

Why to observe Passover is what I would really like to talk about today. I think we can address the heart of this question one simple phrase.

Seriously. This is way more than a 90's era Christian catchphrase.

What. Would. Yeshua. Do.

We could talk about systematic theology and doctrine and tradition and all of these other man-made constructs by which we try to understand God and his word, but, really, this phrase trumps all of that. How did our Messiah walk? What was His halakha? Is there still more to learn and experience about God than you know today? Do we want to be people who follow those who have come before us, or are we going to follow Yeshua?

What. Would. Yeshua. Do.

This is important because the principal task of a disciple is to be like his rabbi in every aspect of their life. We should walk like, talk like, believe like, be like, and teach like our master. Yes, we are supposed to be the weird, unique individuals that God made us to be, but we oddballs should be walking through this life trying to follow the example that God gave us. Our example for how to live this life according to God's will is Yeshua's life.

Well, a good way to find out what he would do is to look at what he did do. Thankfully, we have 4 separate records of the life of Yeshua recorded for us in the Bible. In each of these accounts of Yeshua's life we see him observing the Passover, and his last observance of the Passover is recorded in what we usually refer to as 'The Last Supper'.

On the first day for matzah, the talmidim came to Yeshua and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare your Seder?" "Go into the city, to so-and-so," he replied, "and tell him that the Rabbi says, 'My time is near, my Seder?'" "Go into the city, to so-and-so," he replied, "and tell him that the Rabbi says, 'My time is near, my talmidim and I are celebrating Pesach at your house.'"

Matityahu (Matthew) 26:17-19, CJB

He sent two of his talmidim with these instructions: "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him; and whichever house he enters, tell him that the Rabbi says, 'Where is the guest room for me, where I am to eat the Pesach meal with my talmidim?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations there." The talmidim went off, came to the city and found things just as he had told them they would be; and they prepared the Seder.

Markos (Mark) 14:13-16, CJB

When the time came, Yeshua and the emissaries reclined at the table, and he said to them, "I have really wanted so much to celebrate this Seder with you before I die! For I tell you, it is certain that I will not celebrate it again until it is given its full meaning in the Kingdom of God."

Lukas (Luke) 22:14-16, CJB

It was just before the festival of Pesach, and Yeshua knew that the time had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. Having loved his own people in the world, he loved them to the end.

Yochanan (John) 13:1, CJB

Each of these accounts talks about different aspects of the seder. They focus on different aspects of their conversations and of Yeshua's teachings. You can read more about it in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 13. The context of these accounts, however, is undeniably a Passover seder.

Sure, we can spiritualize it and decontextualize it and still learn a lot from it. That has been the tradition that some of us have inherited, to our detriment. Communion is not the last supper. A Passover Seder is. We lose an incredible amount of the meaning that the context brings to these accounts.

We lose that meaning because this is not a common day. This is one of the Lord's appointed times. This is a specific appointed time. The bread and wine are specific components of the service of this appointed time. The dipping of matzah is part of this appointed time. We know when Judas dipped in the dish with Yeshua and what that dip meant because we still dip the Matzah when we have a Seder today. Yeshua's intention, his understanding, is that Passover would be a regular part of the cycle of our lives because it is one the Lord's appointed times. His appointed times.

Again, remember that the entire plan of redemption is revealed in the Biblical Feasts. Every major event in the life of Yeshua occurred during the mo'edim.

What would Yeshua do? One of the things he did was observe the Lord's appointed times, and the Passover was one of those times.

What should you do? You should walk in the way of your rabbi, the messiah Yeshua. Our lives should be ordered by the mo'edim as was His life. These pockets of time are set apart, sanctified, by Adonai as opportunities for us to enter into His space. When we remember God's grace and deliverance of our physical beings, we also remember God's grace and deliverance of our souls through Yeshua.

So, I invite you to jump into the cycle of redemption and learn more by observing the Pesakh with us at Or haOlam this year.

Annotations

- PURIM AND THE HIDDEN MESSIAH: <https://www.umjc.org/commentary/2017/9/18/purim-and-the-hidden-messiah>
- Faulstich, E. W. 1986 Computer Calendar: IBM Software. Spencer, IA: Chronology Books.
- From Purim to Passover: <https://hallel.info/purim-2025/>
- HaYesod, 2nd edition