

The Fall High Holy Days and the Feast of Tabernacles

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ *Yeshua*:

It is impossible to understand the festivals (feasts) and high holy days of the Lord without knowing God's Hebrew calendar and His biblical prophecies. We must also have a heart for understanding God's Kingdom purposes for the nation of Israel, for *Yeshua* said, "*Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near*" (*Matthew 24:32, NKJV*).ⁱ

Many Christians ask, "Why should I celebrate the feasts in the Old Testament? Are we not under a New Covenant?" Yes, but since most of Israel has not yet received her Messiah, the Jewish people are still under the Law of Moses and its veil for her Messiah. And since the gentiles are grafted into Israel, what the Lord does with His people directly influences what He does with the nations.

Yeshua's ministry in Israel lasted for three and a half years, and God's dealing with Israel concludes with another three and a half years at the end of the age (the great tribulation and time of Jacob's sorrow), for a total of seven-years.ⁱⁱ The church therefore, will be actively engaged in God's prophetic plans for the restoration of the nation of Israel, and she is commissioned to both establish and ultimately administer God's earthly Kingdom—the center of which is the nation of Israel and God's holy city, Jerusalem.

The Lord has divided our days and years into intervals of seven. Seven days is called a week, and seven years is also called a week. The seventh day is the Sabbath (*Shabbat*), and the seventh year is a Sabbatical year (*Shemittah*). Therefore, seven is the number of Divine completion. We also see there are seven annual festivals and high holy days that are ordained in scripture.ⁱⁱⁱ The Lord declared these holy convocations (*Moadim*) to be His feasts and ordained times of prophetic fulfillment.^{iv}

The fall festivals that coincide with the Hebrew month of Tishre (September and October) are comprised of two high holy days—the Jewish New year (*Rosh Hashanah*; biblically called *Yom Teruah*—the Day of Blowing) when the *Shofar* (ram's horn) is sounded one-hundred times, and the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) when the *Shofar* is blown one last time. Thirty days leading up to the Jewish New Year is the observance of the month of Elul—traditionally a time of

introspection and repentance to take evaluate one's deeds and spiritual progress over the past year, and to prepare for the upcoming "Days of Awe" (repentance) of *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur*. During these thirty days, the *Shofar* is blown once during the Morning Prayer services, except Saturdays and the morning before the Jewish New Year. The third fall festival is the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*). These three convocations prophetically point to Christ's Second Advent, and are simply understood as follows:

The Day of Blowing Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*) aligns with the seventh seal in the book of Revelation where it says, "*Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"* (Revelation 11:15).

The rabbis teach that *Rosh HaShanah* is known as "the holiday when the new moon is covered" and not seen. In a spiritual context this implies that the source of the light is withdrawn and concealed.^v They consider the light of the moon to be that which animates the worlds and its created beings—this light being the prince of this world who we know is Satan. But after the *Shofars* are blown, the rabbis further go on to say that a new and superior light is elicited. Who could this light possibly be? It is none other than the light of the world who is the Son of God. This day therefore prophetically represents the coronation and revealing of our King—*Yeshua*.

The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) represents the day when *Yeshua* physically returns to the earth, as it is written, "*In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east...*" (Zechariah 14:4). It is the day when the Lord makes atonement for His land and for His people, Israel, as it says, "*Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people*" (Deuteronomy 32:43); "*And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB; FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS'"* (Romans 11:26-27).

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) represents the marriage celebration of the Lamb where all the nations come up to Jerusalem to worship the King. As it is written, "*In this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken*" (Isaiah 25:6-8). This feast therefore, initiates the Messianic age and the Millennial Kingdom.

Three times per year, all the men of Israel were required to come up to the Temple in Jerusalem and assemble before the Lord (*Aliyat Ha'regel*). The Hebrew for assembly is *Kahal*, and in Greek is *Ecclesia*. This is the same word translated into English as "church." These assemblies took place on the Passover (*Pesach*), Pentecost (*Shavuot*), and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*). It is interesting to see how the Lord assembled His people to witness the first two significant

events—the crucifixion of Christ on the Passover, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And He will gather His people yet again from the ends of the earth to witness and join in with the marriage supper of the Lamb.^{vi}

The answer to the above question, *“why should I as a Christian celebrate the festivals of the Lord,”* simply is this: God has a calendar and a prophetic timeline. He has determined that Israel is His prophetic timeclock,^{vii} and it is therefore, our responsibility to align with His time and His purposes, and not the other way around. While the festivals were given specifically to the nation of Israel as part of the Mosaic Covenant, we learn from scripture that the early church (which included gentile believers) actually celebrated the feasts.^{viii} The Lord also spoke prophetically of a time when “all” the nations would come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles,^{ix} as it says, *“For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7)*. Thus, it is clear the feasts were not solely for the Jewish people.

The Feast of the Passover was ordained by God during the exodus from Egypt before the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The Passover, along with three other holy convocations (Pentecost, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles) are specifically referenced in scripture as eternal. This implies that God’s convocations are neither established, nor can they be annulled by the Old Covenant. In other words, they are transcendent. Just as God’s moral law is eternally one with Him, so is His law of atonement, for it says, *“The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8)*. Therefore, we understand that *Yeshua* was crucified before Adam was created, before Abraham was born, and before the nation of Israel came into existence.

All of the festivals and high holy days, including the Sabbath, were given to the nation of Israel as a gift as part of the Mosaic Covenant. Paul asks us, *“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1-2); “For salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22)*. Yes, the Jewish people are still to keep God’s commandments, including His written word and His ordinances (His feasts and high holy days). Therefore, it remains Israel’s calling to teach the nations how to walk in God’s laws, as it says, *“Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3)*. This is God’s instruction to the gentiles.

The Lord warned the church to be watching with great expectation for His return.^x The church was never intended to become separated from Israel. It was always God’s intention that the gentiles would be grafted into “true” Israel, the natural descendants of Abraham who by faith have received their Messiah. Thus, the gentiles and Israel become joined together into “one” cultivated olive tree and “one new man” in Christ.^{xi} As it says, *“For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10)*.

The Jewish people by-in-large are still living in blindness to their Messiah. The culmination of God's wrath against Israel's sin occurs during the great tribulation, as it says, *"For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city"* (Zechariah 14:2).

But the church is called to provoke Israel to jealousy,^{xii} and more importantly I believe she has been chosen to intercede for the nation of Israel. As we read in biblical prophecy how one day all the nations of the earth will approach the remnant of the Jewish people on the Day of Atonement with evil inclination to destroy them, the church will cry out from heaven and intercede for Israel, as it is written, *"Gather the people [Israel], Sanctify the congregation.... Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, 'Spare Your people [Israel], O LORD, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them.' Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people"* (Joel 2:16-18).

At that moment, *Yeshua* will return to the earth with the armies of heaven (His angels and His church) to destroy the nations that have come up against His people, Israel, as it says, *"Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle"* (Zechariah 14:3).

The church has been called to provoke Israel to jealousy, to intercede for her on behalf of the Lord, and ultimately to restore and rebuild the nation of Israel itself, as it says, *"Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, And set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders"* (Isaiah 49:22); *"The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you"* (Isaiah 60:10).

It is the church, and predominantly the gentile Christians who will rebuild God's Kingdom and restore His heritage, Israel. And for this, the church has been promised the kingdoms of the earth as an inheritance, as it says prophetically, *"I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me"* (Isaiah 45:3-4).

My prayer is that we all come to understanding everything that God has purposed for our lives, and that we walk in humility and obedience to fulfill His calling. And this centrally includes the salvation of the Jewish people and the restoration of Israel. Will you join me?

ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ *Jeremiah 13:7, Matthew 24:21.*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Leviticus 23.*

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg. Translated from Yiddish by Rabbi Levy Wineberg and Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg. Edited by Uri Kaploun. Published and copyrighted by Kehot Publication Society. Chabad. Org.

^{vi} *Jeremiah 23:3.*

^{vii} *Matthew 24:32.*

^{viii} *1 Corinthians 5:8.*

^{ix} *Zechariah 14:16.*

^x *Matthew 24:42, Mark 13:35, Luke 21:36, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Peter 4:7, Revelation 3:3, 16:15.*

^{xi} *Romans 11:25, Ephesians 2:15.*

^{xii} *Romans 11:11.*