

Messianic Rabbi: He That Has an Eye, Let Him Hear

It is interesting that, as a Messianic rabbi the question I am asked most often by Christians is if I believe that they as Christians have to celebrate, or observe, the biblical Holy Days. They are usually asking about those days listed in Leviticus 23: Shabbat, Yom Teruah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesach, Unleavened Bread and Shavuot.

I know that the majority of those asking me this question as asking from a pure heart with a desire to truly obey G-D's Word as they walk out their faith. I also know that as they ask this question, most of the Christians who ask me this question are asking me, "Are these days something I *have* to do?"

My answer to this question is that if you are asking the question do I *have* to, you are misunderstanding the intention and purpose for which these days were established. From the very first page of the Bible, G-D begins to establish His "Moedim," or Appointed Times, as we read in Genesis 1:14:

"Then God said, 'Let lights in the expanse of the sky be for separating the day from the night. They will be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.'"

The word translated into the English word *seasons* in Hebrew is the word *Moedim*, which means Appointed Times. In other words, time was established so that we as humans would be able to know when G-D's Appointed Times were to be marked and observed. We know from this verse that G-D used His creative word to establish these Appointed Times. The next thing we need to know is why He created these days.

I don't believe that G-D created the biblical Holy Days just so He could have a checklist of dates to mark us present or

absent, and then either bless us or punish us based upon our attendance. I believe that the Bible teaches us that our observance of these days is a part of our testimony of faith. Let me explain.

The Bible provides a commandment to remember and keep the Sabbath day, but it also provides reasons why we remember and keep the Sabbath. Let's look at the reason we are provided within the Bible, first from Exodus 20:8-12:

"Remember Yom Shabbat, to keep it holy. You are to work six days, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you shall not do any work—not you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor the outsider that is within your gates. For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Thus Adonai blessed Yom Shabbat, and made it holy. "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which Adonai your God is giving you."

In Deuteronomy 5:13-15, we read:

"Six days you are to labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you are not to do any work—not you or your son or your daughter, or your slave or your maid, or your ox, your donkey or any of your livestock or the outsider within your gates, so that your slave and your maid may rest as you do. You must remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Adonai your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore Adonai your God commanded you to keep Yom Shabbat."

You will notice reading in these verses that we are told to keep the Shabbat for two reasons: first, because G-D created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, and second, because G-D redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt.

So, when you or I observe the weekly Sabbath, we are, with our actions, proclaiming that we believe that G-D created the world in seven days and that we believe He delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt.

You see, when we obey G-D's words by keeping and observing these Appointed Times and times of remembrance, our actions shout out our faith. James 2:18 says it powerfully this way:

"But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without works and I will show you faith by my works.'"

When we choose to observe these biblical days, we are making a public proclamation that we believe what G-D's Word says. After all, when we consider that Yeshua died on Passover, arose on First Fruits, sent the Ruach on Shavuot and we have an expectation of Yeshua's return on Yom Teruah, judgment on Yom Kippur and His reign to take place fulfilling Sukkot, it makes sense that of all people who would observe these Appointed Times, those who believe in Yeshua would be the *most* committed to share their testimony of our faith and belief in exactly what the Bible says.

So, you see that keeping these Holy Days, or Appointed Times, isn't about legalistic obedience out of fear of punishment. Not at all! Keeping these Appointed Times is a way to shout our faith loudly with our actions.

As we approach the fall Appointed Times, I hope you will choose to observe them this year—not out of legalism, but as a way to demonstrate your faith in a way that all can see. By doing so, you will be shouting loudly, "I Believe!" so that everyone around you can listen with their eyes.

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