



TNT Restoration Class
5. Restoring God's Festivals
June 2, 2015

FROM THE READING

(Quotes from Thomas Lancaster's *Restoration* Chapters 9)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. God's Daytimer

89-For Christians today, our true identity has been largely forgotten.

-Through our adoption into the family of God, we are partakers with the Jewish people in a great legacy.

-The biblical calendar is lunar. That means it is based on the phases of the moon.

90-Leviticus 23 is like God's day planner. He has made appointments on which to meet with His people.

-The festivals are the times for God to do business with us.

B. Yeshua: the Substance of the Festivals

98-Every shadow results from a shadow-caster. Messiah is the body; the biblical calendar is the shadow He casts. Paul told the Colossians (2:16-17) not to allow people to judge them in regard to things that are substantially about Messiah. Paul was encouraging the Colossian Gentiles not to allow others to judge them regarding the biblical feasts, the Sabbaths, and the dietary laws.

99-Those doing the judging might have been those criticizing the non-Jews for keeping Torah without first converting to Judaism....On the other hand, since Paul and the apostles did not require observance of specifically Jewish aspects of Torah from Gentile believers, it may be that the Colossian Gentiles were being judged by Jewish believers for their failure to observe those particulars, or for failing to perform them up to certain standards.

-We should not read this passage as a dismissal of the value of keeping the festivals.

-When we realize that the substance of the appointed times is Messiah we are more inclined to keep them. It becomes a matter of discipleship.

-But God's calendar does more than testify of Messiah; it changes our lives. It is a cycle of sanctification that provides an annual pattern of growth for healthy discipleship.

C. Hezekiah's Passover Invitations (2 Chronicles 30 & 31)

1. *Israel's Dispersion (722 BCE)*: Israel was conquered by Assyria in the early years of Hezekiah's reign.

2. *Israel's Invitation to the Festival*: Hezekiah sent forerunners to Israel to invite the members of that nation to join with Judah for the celebration of the Passover (2 Chronicles 30:6-10). Most of the Israelites laughed and made fun of the messengers, but a small remnant from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem for the festival (2 Chronicles 30:10-11). They joined in with the huge crowd from Judah and had a joyous, wonderful time.

3. *God Blessed Them*: Even though the people celebrated it a month late and not entirely properly, God blessed them and allowed them to experience great joy and renewal because they were headed in the right direction and hit the heart of what He wanted in this festival.

4. *Festival Afterglow*:

a. When the festival ended, the Israelites went throughout all the towns of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh and tore down the pagan shrines and altars before returning to their homes (2 Chronicles 31:1).

b. Then the people of Israel responded immediately and were among the first to obey Hezekiah's request to support the priests and Levites from their firstfruits. (2 Chronicles 31:5)

c. It also stated that there were Israelites (probably those whose hearts had been stirred by the revival) who had subsequently moved to Judah (2 Chronicles 31:6). Judah was a place of safety after (and during) the Assyrian's conquering (and dispersing) of the Israelites.

5. *Personal Applications*:

a. *Humbling Ourselves*: will we humble ourselves, and let God's calendar (and corresponding themes) change and affect our own?

b. *Obedience's Path*: Obedience to the step in front of us leads us onto a new path and into new adventures with God.

- c. *God's Blessing for a Heart Towards Him*: Just as in this story, the people of God didn't do it perfectly but they were moving in the right direction with a right heart and God blessed them for it.
- d. *Wholeheartedness*: Will we be wholehearted in our pursuit of God (like Hezekiah [2 Chronicles 31:21]) by obeying God's Word or will we worship Yahweh while mingling in our own idolatrous (and peripheral) practices? (see 2 Kings 17:27-40)

III. SPRING FESTIVALS

A. **Passover: Justification** - Saved by the Blood of the Lamb; Yeshua Our Passover Lamb

- 1. Yeshua is the starting point of our holy convocation
 - 2. We are to observe the Passover but are not commanded to have a holy convocation
- 2"Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. 3On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances." 4So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover.*
Numbers 9:2-4
- 91-On the day of Passover, He became the Passover lamb. At the time when Israel slaughtered their Passover lambs in remembrance of their great salvation from Egypt, Yeshua was crucified and His blood was applied as a mark of salvation on all who would believe in Him.
- 92-The commandment to do "this" in remembrance of Yeshua is not a commandment just to take a cup and some bread. The specific "this" to which Yeshua referred was the Passover *seder* meal. It is not one cup, but the traditional cups of Passover. It is not any bread; it is the unleavened *matzah* bread of Passover.
- As believers keeping the Passover, we can use the annual remembrance of our Savior's suffering as a time to renew our lives in Him.

B. **Unleavened Bread: Sanctification** - Leaving "Egypt's bread" behind; leading us out of sin & into God's teachings

- 1. Learning a New Way
 - 2. How long O Lord: 7 Days—a number of completion—represents our sanctification process being until we are dead or until He comes for us
 - 3. Two Holy Convocations: First & Seventh Days
- #### C. **Firstfruits: Resurrection** - Yeshua's Resurrection & Our Promised Resurrection; Firstfruits – we are accepted in Him; no commanded holy convocation; offered unleavened firstfruits of the barley harvest; initiated the grain harvest in Israel

- 1. Power of God Dwells Within Us
- 11But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh- 13for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* Romans 8:11-14
- 2. A Living Hope
- ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,* 1 Peter 1:3-4
- 3. We Have Our Own Promised Resurrection
- 13But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Yeshua. 15For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Messiah will rise first. 17Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18Therefore comfort one another with these words.*
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- 92-The harvest ritual of gathering this barley sheaf was for a special first fruits offering to the Lord. According to Torah, no one could use or eat grain and produce from the new year's crops until a sheaf of the first grain to ripen was harvested and brought to the Temple. Barley is the first crop to ripen in Israel, so the offering was always a barley sheaf. The commandment of the barley sheaf served to remind Israel that the land and its produce belonged first to God.
- 93-By divine design, the rituals of offering the first fruits sheaf in the Temple coincided with the death and resurrection of Yeshua.
- D. Counting of the Omer:** 50 day count connecting Passover to Shavuot
1. Building Expectancy
 2. Testings Increase
 3. Yeshua's admonition to tarry...until (watch and pray)
- E. Shavuot: God's Word & God's Spirit;** Israel corporately became a nation before God at Sinai (Shavuot)
1. *Symbol of Remission* (A yearly mini-"year of Jubilee"); freedom to the captives; from physical to spiritual liberation
 2. *Giving of the Torah*
 3. *Outpouring of the Spirit*
 4. *Firstfruits of the wheat harvest* (leavened loaves); thanksgiving to God and dedication of that which is coming to Him
- 93-Before it was a New Testament event, the Jewish Sages considered Pentecost to be the anniversary of the day God spoke the Torah at Mount Sinai.
- Before tongues of fire ever fell upon the believers in Jerusalem, there was fire falling on Mount Sinai.
- According to Jewish legend, when God spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, His voice spoke forth in all the languages of mankind and it took the shape of fiery sparks that encircled the camp of Israel and came to rest on each individual Jew.
- 94-[Whether true or not], the miracles, signs and wonders that came upon them in Acts chapter two carried deep significance [to the disciples]. The tongues of fire and the speaking in every tongue were both direct allusions to the Mount Sinai experience and the receiving of the Torah.

IV. FALL FESTIVALS: Yeshua's Return

- A. Trumpets:** The Return of the King & the Rapture
- 14For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Yeshua. 15For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18*
- 94-The Feast of Trumpets is meant to prepare us for the holy Day of Atonement that comes ten days later. In Jewish tradition, the Feast of Trumpets is regarded as the New Year (*Rosh HaShanah*). It is a day for reconciliation between friends and families. It is a day when Torah-keeping people review the previous year's sins and shortcoming, and make a special effort to apologize to one another and forgive one another.
- 95-It is a day on which we anticipate the coming judgment, the trumpets of the book of Revelation, and the beginning of the end.
- B. Yom Kippur:** Israel's National Salvation
- 9And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. Zechariah 12:9-10*

- The Day of Atonement is the holiest day of the year. Its exalted holiness arises from the fact that it is the anniversary of the day on which the holiest man in the world used to enter the holiest place in the world.
- The book of Hebrews says that this day teaches us about the work of Messiah on our behalf. He is our High Priest.
- Since it is a fast day, the whole day is spent in prayer, confession, study and reflection.
- For disciples of Yeshua, the Day of Atonement is a special and significant day. It is the day we rehearse Yeshua's work on our behalf.

96-The Day of Atonement is a day set aside for deliberate, intentional and conscientious confession of sin.

C. Sukkot The Millennium & God's Faithful Provision & Presence

1Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Revelation 20:1-6

96-The Hebrew name of the festival is *sukkot*, a word that means "shelters, stables or huts." ... The festival is so named because Israel is commanded to annually build such dwelling places as a reminder of the post-exodus years when they lived in huts and booths, following God in the wilderness.

-The Feast of Booths anticipates the Messianic Age when the dead will be raised to life again and we will all sit at the table with the aforementioned in the Kingdom of Heaven.

-According to the prophets, the Feast of Booths celebrates a time when all nations will ascend to Jerusalem bearing tribute to King Messiah and celebrating the festival. (Zechariah 14:16)

97-Many Messianic Torah teachers make a case for placing the birth of Yeshua during the Feast of Booths.

-The celebration of the Festival of Booths celebrates the Messiah who once tabernacled among us, now tabernacles within us and in the future will again tabernacle among us. When we look over the appointed times on God's calendar, it is easy to see Messiah in each appointment.

V. POST-MOSAIC FESTIVALS

A. Hanukkah

1. *Remembering our Redemption:* Yeshua as the servant candle and light of the world
2. *Rededicating our Temples*
3. *Experiencing the Miraculous:* A mighty miracle happened here
4. *Comforting the Oppressed:* Comfort ye my people
5. *Obedying God in Times of Persecution:* Enduring in the midst of difficulty & an understanding there will be a replaying of the story again
6. *Letting Our Light Shine:* We each are called to be a witness and to be the light of the world

B. Purim

1. *Last Yearly Biblical Festival:* The story of Purim is the last Biblical festival of the year and the story occurs over the course of almost a complete year and is a story proceeding through all of the festivals.
2. *God's Name:* This is the only book in the Bible where God's name does not appear directly although it does appear in acrostic form in Esther 5:4 as the first letter of each of four successive words – yod, hay, vav, hay, YHWH. God was, however, obviously present and in charge behind the scenes.
3. *Festival's (and Esther's) Name:* *Purim* or the *Feast of Lots* comes from the fact that the day was chosen for the Jews to die by a lottery. The word *pur* is Persian and it is the only festival that does not have a Hebrew name. Also, Esther's name (and the name of this biblical book) is named after a pagan goddess.

4. *Foreigners becoming Jews?* It states in Esther 8:17 that many of the foreigners living in Persia **became Jews** because of the fear of the Jews. It is assumed that in becoming Jews that these persons would have embraced the Sabbath, the festivals, and other *Jewish* observances and would have associated themselves with the Jewish people.

VI. A DIVINE CALL FOR THE NATIONS' PARTICIPATION

(VI, VII, VIII below edited from The Lighthouse *Back to Basics* #9: *Our Messianic Foundations*)

A. It's Biblical: The festivals

1. You might say, but aren't these Jewish stories? Actually the Bible is full of *Jewish* stories about the history of this people that is the apple of God's eye (Zechariah 2:8). Also, we as Believers are specifically grafted into the Believing remnant of the people of Israel (Romans 11:17-24). In light of this, we as Believers will find great benefit in the regular remembrance and commemoration (through the festivals) of these biblical stories.

2. *Dress Rehearsals of What is Yet to Come:* Our observance of the festivals are dress rehearsals of what is to come

Colossians 2:16-17 ¹⁶Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- ¹⁷things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Messiah.

- a. A coming Purim story: There is coming a future similar story of great difficulty for the Jewish people (and all Believers) with a greater Haman (Anti-Messiah) and a greater Mordecai (Yeshua) who comes to bring deliverance and salvation.

B. Yahweh's Festivals:

1. *Genesis 2:2-3* ²By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
2. *Leviticus 23:1-2* Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—**My** appointed times are these...

C. Prophesied of Foreigners Partaking

1. *Isaiah 56:6* ⁶"Also the **foreigners** who join themselves to Yahweh, To minister to Him, and to love the name of Yahweh, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath And holds fast My covenant....

D. A Call to Walk in the Ancient Paths

Jeremiah 6:16-17 ¹⁶Thus says Yahweh, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' ¹⁷"And I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'

E. New Testament Gentile Festival Observance

1. *Acts 15:19-21* ¹⁹"Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, ²⁰ but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. ²¹"For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."
2. *1 Corinthians 5:8* ⁸Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

VII. BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING

- Thematic Reminders:** By our participation in the festival of Purim (and also the other biblical festivals) we have a consistent, yearly reminder of the themes that God is stressing during each season.
- Connection with Israel:** We as God's redeemed are intricately connected to His people Israel (Romans 11). As we participate in the festivals and other biblical practices, we are conscious of a practical connection with Israel as well as causing Israel to be jealous as we endeavor to "hit the heart" of what these festivals are about.
- Parties Are Important**
 1. *Celebration:* The common refrain of nearly all the festivals: "The tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat!"
 2. *Corporate Participation:* Corporately it is important for us to rejoice and celebrate God's faithfulness.

VIII. ENTERING IN

- A. Just Do It:** We will never walk out these festivals perfectly, but we can start observing them and improve by doing a little more each year.
1. *Making Jews Jealous:* We can make the Jewish people jealous by our coming to salvation and then by walking out those things (including Sabbath & festivals) that God has given to us as His covenant people. *Romans 11:11* ¹¹*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.*
 2. *Practical Suggestions:*
 - a. Ask God what Purim traditions you can establish
 - b. Procure resources that will help you understand Purim more fully and be able to enter in to the celebration
 - c. Buy special crafts, decorations, and music to commemorate the season
- B. Our Attitude in Keeping the Festivals**
1. *Humility:* We should be more concerned as a people about humbly walking out the festivals than making others feel bad for not doing them. If we are humbly and faithfully keeping these festivals each year, many others will have a desire to enter into the joy of these times with us. Many Messianic Believers over the years have proudly and boisterously walked out these festivals with a pointing finger towards other Believers and in so doing have contributed to turning them away from this part of their inheritance. Also, it is important to realize that we have much to learn from other expressions of the Body of Messiah.
 2. *Realize it's a Mystery:* We as those from among the nations are fellow heirs with the remnant of Israel and have a divine invitation to walk out this covenant the way Yahweh has brought forth in His Scriptures. This would include observing His holy days.
 - a. Fellow heirs and members: Part of the mystery of the gospel is that the Gentiles are ***fellow heirs*** and ***fellow members*** of the Body (Ephesians 3:4-6) by being grafted into the Believing remnant of Israel (Romans 11:17-27). By nature of this we are no longer strangers to the covenants of promise (given to the Jewish people) but are partakers with them of all of these biblical covenants and privileges. *Ephesians 3:4-6* ⁴*By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Messiah,* ⁵ *which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;* ⁶ *to be specific, that the Gentiles are ***fellow heirs and fellow members of the body,*** and fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua through the gospel.*
- C. A Prophetic Pilgrim People:** The non (ethnically) Jewish Believers who observe the festivals and other parts of the ancient paths (Jeremiah 6:16) are arguably the most disliked and misunderstood group of Believers in the world.
1. *Misunderstood by Unbelieving Israel:* We are frequently disliked/misunderstood by unbelieving Israel and the nations because we speak that salvation comes through only one way—repentance and faith in Yeshua's atoning blood to cover our sins.
 2. *Misunderstood by the Christian Church:* We are frequently disliked/misunderstood by the traditional Christian church because of being labeled as “under the law” and because of our responsibility to lovingly call her to embrace God's commandments, festivals, and ancient paths which have frequently been neglected and misunderstood.
 3. *Misunderstood by Messianic Jewish Believers:* We are frequently disliked/misunderstood by many Messianic (ethnically Jewish) Believers who think that we are unnecessarily complicating things and causing conflict by calling to non-Jewish Believers to embrace God's ancient paths of blessing (which has typically been misunderstood by many as being only for the Jewish people).
 4. *Soft Hearts, Tough Skin:* In light of these challenges, God has called us to have soft hearts and tough skin. By His grace, we will continue to faithfully walk out that which we have seen within the Scriptures that is a part of our inheritance and calling others to join us.
 5. *Least or Greatest? Matthew 5:19* ¹⁹ *"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*