

Yahweh's Feasts

What should you do when you learn there are Biblical Holy Days that you should be observing now? How do you know when they should be kept and where do you keep them? These and other important questions are answered here. There are Scriptural Holy Days that the True Worshiper is commanded to keep, rather than the paganistic ones most of the world indulges in today.

Thoughtful people who study their Bible in earnest soon raise the question, should not we also be observing the annual Feast days today in addition to the weekly Sabbath?

Are these days indeed still binding on Yahweh's people in today's modern ages? If we are to observe these times, where do we gather to keep them? What do we do at the Feasts? What time of the year are we to observe them? How long are they?

Abraham, Father of the Faithful

All who have entered into the New Covenant with Yahweh are to have the same attitude of faithful Abraham who did not flinch from doing Yahweh's will, for *Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws*, Genesis 26:5.

Abraham departed Ur of the Chaldees, the pagan moon-city, journeyed to Palestine and to Bethel, from there to Egypt and back to Bethel. Some Bible scholars perceive his travels and stopovers a foreshadowing of the Feast days. His travels could have been within six months.

He was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, tithes to Melchizedek, pioneered circumcision, and was faithful in his obedience to Yahweh. Abraham is rightly known as the "Father of the faithful."

Feast Days Everlasting

The Feast days were in force years before they were given to Israel at Mount Sinai. Cain and Abel evidently knew about them (Gen. 4:1-4). See *Companion Bible* note. The Feasts were kept by the Savior and His Apostles. They will be kept in the Millennium (Ezek. 45). Why should they be suspended now?

Because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of the Messiah, meal and animal sacrifices are now suspended. However, the times of the Feasts days are still holy and thus remain our obligation. We each must learn how to observe these times so we can guide and help others keep these as well.

Yahweh's Calendar

Every year Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua prepares a calendar showing the Feast days for the coming year. This sacred calendar is based upon observable new moons as was the custom during the days of the patriarchs and when the Savior walked the hills of Galilee. Moon-spotters are asked to report their sighting of the sliver crescent.

The modern Jewish calendar came into being since the time of our Savior, and is a calculated calendar, which ignores visible new moons. The present Jewish calendar is not very ancient, but was introduced in the 4th century by Hillel II, with its many postponements and rabbinical rules which are nowhere found or sanctioned in the Bible.

Feast Sites Selected

The Elders of Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua arrange for a place for Yahweh's people to

gather for the annual Feasts. There are seven special “Annual Sabbaths” to be observed throughout the year. Not all are able to take time from their secular jobs for the weeklong observance of Unleavened Bread in the spring and another week in the fall for Tabernacles.

Most of the brethren schedule their vacations for Tabernacles allowing time for travel, as some must travel great distances. The Feasts fall on different days each year, depending upon the visible new moons. Please note: we have forms available for those requiring excused absences for the Feast days for school or work.

Feasts Rejuvenating

The Feasts are special times Yahweh gives us for His worship. These times are for our spiritual and physical rejuvenation. These are in addition to the weekly Sabbath and a special offering is taken each annual Sabbath in accord with the command that we should not come before Him empty-handed (Deut. 16:16b).

All the Feasts days are mentioned in Leviticus 23 beginning with the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week known as Saturday. The Sabbath occurs every seven days and is a holy time when we desist from our worldly labors and pleasures. We abstain from secular activities and spend time communing with Yahweh and studying His Word, drawing closer to Him and His Son.

The reader is encouraged at this point to read Leviticus 23 to gain a background of these special days.

Year Begins in the Spring

Yahweh’s new year begins with the 1st month in the spring when vegetation stirs and starts to grow again (Hebrew = *Abib*). See *Biblical Timekeeping* on the back of our yearly printed calendars for a more detailed description on the word *abib*, especially in context of the law.

Unleavened Bread is the first annual festival and immediately follows the Passover, usually in March or April. Passover is observed on the evening of the fourteenth of *Abib* (Lev. 23:4-5). Bible days begin at sunset (Lev. 23:32). Passover is not a holy day and work is permitted. It is called the “preparation day,” that is, the preparation for the first Day (High Sabbath) of Unleavened Bread which follows (John 19:31).

Unleavened Bread

Seven days of Unleavened Bread follow Passover, and begin on the fifteenth Day of *Abib*. The fifteenth is a high (i.e., holy, set apart) annual Sabbath. The last Day of Unleavened Bread, which falls on *Abib* 21, is also a high annual Sabbath.

No bread with leaven is to be used with the Passover Memorial service nor is any leaven to be eaten during the days of Unleavened Bread.

All leavened products are to be removed from your premises until after *Abib* 21. Don’t store anything leavened in another room. Yahweh is here testing your obedience in asking you to discard all leavened products such as bread, cake, and cookies. Their value is usually less than ten dollars – a small price to pay for obedience!

Leavened Doctrine

Those familiar with the Passover season arrange to have a little leaven to discard at this time. Leaven is symbolic of doctrine or a teaching (Matt. 16:5-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1).

Leaven can portray either good or bad, not always wickedness, sin and corruption. If it were always sin, we should never eat leaven, nor would it be offered to Yahweh at Pentecost (Lev. 23:17). Also, Matthew 13:33 shows the Kingdom of Heaven's expansion is similar to the action of leavening.

We are to be Unleavened

The purpose in keeping the days of Unleavened Bread is to examine all our doctrines of everything we believe and clear our minds of false doctrine or teaching, which leads to false worship. Then we are to accept and retain the unadulterated word of the "Living Bread" given us by the Savior (John 6:51). It is for us a spring house cleaning.

During these special days we are to eat some unleavened bread daily to remind us that just as Israel left Egypt, we are to forsake the leaven of the world. Not all peoples customarily eat bread as part of their diet, but a token amount should be consumed daily.

Grocers often stock Jewish Passover *matzohs* this time of year and ordinarily have Ry-krisp, Triscuits, and other unleavened products. Unleavened recipes are available from us at YAIY, and homemade unleavened cakes, pies, breads, cookies, can be eaten along with the fruit, grains, nuts and vegetables one normally eats. But avoid consuming any leaven for these seven days.

At first the above proscription to avoid leavened products for seven days may sound a bit strange. It does test our obedience and helps us **examine food labels** before ingesting food. We should know what we eat.

We understand better the reason for being "unleavened" when we perceive that we are to examine fully all doctrines we have come to accept as truth. When we find we have mistakenly accepted error, we are to eliminate error and replace it with the truth of Yahweh's word, the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:8).

Yahshua, Our Passover

The Passover and the ensuing days of Unleavened Bread are a very significant introduction to the annual Feast days. We must first accept the shed blood of the Lamb for our sins that are past. Then we clean up our lives by examining our doctrines. As we feed on the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth we walk the narrow way that leads to eternal life.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts for seven days. However, only the first and last days of Unleavened Bread are annual Sabbaths. The intervening days are NOT annual Holy Days, and work may be done on them, except for the weekly Sabbath which falls within that time.

Even though one might work on those days which are not set apart as Holy times, we should not let our daily routine keep us from realizing the purpose of this special time. We should spend extra time in Bible study and ingest some unleavened bread daily. This is a special time of rejuvenation both spiritually and physically.

Spring – Beginning of New Life

This is the beginning of Yahweh's new year. The earth is springing back to life as the grass greens, the trees bud, and the earth warms up for a new period of growth. It is really a time when we also should turn over a new leaf and determine to do better in our spiritual walk with our Savior. The remaining five Feasts will guide us along the way.

Israel kept the Passover as a family. Even the young were involved in the service. Today the children should be trained by parents to eat unleavened bread at this time and the meaning for doing so.

It is never too early to teach the young the reason for keeping these times. Most young people enjoy the challenge of participating in wholesome adult activities and eating unleavened bread

for seven days is not at all difficult.

We Sometimes Feel Alone

Not all families are in agreement in keeping these festivals. At times only one individual is converted to Yahweh's truth, and difficulties may arise. This is not to say there will be no problems. Much depends on you in overcoming these trials. Remember, Yahweh has called you to be His chosen representative wherever you may be.

Perhaps you have a husband or wife or even a family that does not follow Yahweh. Don't let that worry you! Don't force your will on another. Don't make them eat unleavened bread against their will. Yahweh is working with YOU and this is between you and your Heavenly Father Yahweh. His Spirit is with you, guiding and teaching you. Be a shining example for others!

Many are Called, Few are Chosen

Not everyone is called today, even fewer are chosen (Matt. 20:16). One of a city and two of a family will be brought to Zion (Jer. 3:14). Make your calling and election sure!

Where the family unit serves Yahweh, all leaven is removed from the premises during the days of Unleavened Bread. If the husband objects, esteem him as the head of the house and do not remove the leaven.

However, a wife need not bake at this time, and can remove all leaven from the kitchen where she works, if no objection is raised. Allow the unconverted spouse freedom to eat leavened products if he purchases them.

To forestall any opposition, you may wish to introduce some unleavened products long before the Feast so they will not think it strange when you first mention it.

If the unconverted enjoy them, you can serve them the entire week. The first annual Sabbath is the High Day of Unleavened Bread of *Abib* 15, the next day after Passover. You might want to make a special effort to have an enjoyable dinner with family members and converted friends this day in thanks to Yahweh.

Pentecost: Feast of Weeks

The next annual festival on Yahweh's calendar is called *Shavuoth*, Firstfruits, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks. This is a holy day which falls on Sunday (when the Sabbath ends, the week is out). Pentecost commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit and no labor is to be done on this day. As much preparation as possible for meals for this day should be done the previous Friday.

A convocation of Yahweh's people is held on this day just as the disciples gathered together on Pentecost (Acts 2:1) in 31 C.E. However, if one is unable to assemble with others of like faith, as with any Holy Day, a great deal of Bible study is always in order along with prayer.

Be a Shining Light

If you are observing this day alone and have opposition from your family, be especially considerate of others. Give the day a festive air, and do not withdraw yourself from the family. Make every effort to have this a special joyous time enjoying Yahweh's bounty such as inviting others to have a special dinner with you.

Above all, avoid all words or action which would engender religious strife. Let the family see that the spiritual Holy Days which Yahweh set in motion are so much more joyous and uplifting than the world's burdensome and materialistic holidays.

Feasts of the Seventh Month

With the approach of autumn, we welcome the first of the four Annual Sabbaths, starting with

the Day of Trumpets. It is a Sabbath of rest when no laborious work is to be done, except for the meals of the day. None of the Feasts of the seventh month has been fulfilled as yet. Fulfillment is yet ahead of us.

Remember, you are an example to those around you. Be a light to the world, and make this day a joy for your family. Spend extra time studying your Bible and prayer. Many of the brethren participate in a video or audio taped message both of which are available from YAIY.

Atonement

This day is indeed unique because it is referred to as a Feast day, but is actually a day of fasting! The Day of Atonement is a day in which no food or drink is taken for 24 hours – from sunset to sunset.

Leviticus 23:27 reads “afflict your souls,” which is a commanded fast. This can be seen by comparing Psalm 35:13; 69:10; and Isaiah 58:3. There are certain benefits from fasting, and Yahweh has legislated that His people fast at least this one special day.

Yahweh commands that no work of any kind be done on this day. It is the holiest of all days of the year. It is not uncommon that extra rest be taken this day. Make certain all work is completed beforehand so no complaints from the family will be forthcoming. Remember that fasting is from sunset the previous evening to sunset of this day.

Children May Also Fast

Because obedience to Yahweh is voluntary, children are not expected to fast. Yet, many desire to do what their parent does, and surprisingly do quite well. Allowing them to participate will bond the parent relationship, but we must ensure we don't make this a burdensome time for the young children who may find a complete fast difficult until much older.

Remember Yahweh's days begin at sunset (Lev. 23:32). When the sun has set, a new day begins and eating an evening meal can commence. Eat only a moderate meal following the Day of Atonement. Those under medical care should check with their physician.

Feast of Tabernacles

This is the most joyous time of the year. The harvest is in, and we can thank Yahweh for a bountiful growing season and look forward to His harvest of souls.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a time to join with others of like faith in thanking and praising Yahweh. We share our hopes and dreams for the seven days with others also striving to enter the Kingdom under Yahshua Messiah. It is a time to rejoice!

Reading the book of Deuteronomy is timely, for it will be the constitution of the coming Kingdom. The book on the side of the ark, which went into the promised land, was the book of Deuteronomy, 31:26. We can relate this to our own future entrance (Heb. 4:1). (Take special note: Heb. 3:16-19; 4:11).

High Sabbath and Last Great Day/Eighth Day

The first Day of the Feast of Tabernacles is a High Sabbath, and after seven days comes the last Great Day of the Feast, written in the Law as the Eighth Day. No work is to be done neither on the first day of Tabernacles nor on the last Great Day.

Yahweh places His Name in His people through baptism, and the Elders of His Assembly invite all sincere people to attend the Feast and join with others who have been sealed with His Name (Rev. 14:1).

Assemble for Annual Sabbaths

The Passover in Egypt was a family gathering as they huddled in their houses for fear of the destroying angel. The next day Israel gathered together as a congregation at Rameses to keep the first annual Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread. ALL Israel joined in convocation to keep all seven Annual Feast days. They did not keep these Feasts in their back yard.

The Feasts are given to Yahweh's people to educate and strengthen them in the most holy faith. Work is permitted between the first Day of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day (except for the weekly Sabbath which falls within the week).

To neglect the full week of the Feast and keep only the High Days deprives one of the joys that Yahweh has set before us. The Feast of Tabernacles is like a giant family reunion. Brethren we meet inspire and encourage each of us and we learn we are not alone, for many wrestle the same problems we face.

If the reason you are not attending Yahweh's Festivals is financial, you should start saving now a second tithe which you set aside to ensure your means of attending future Feasts (Deut. 14:22-23). This is Yahweh's way of ensuring your obedience in gathering together with His spiritual family of sons and daughters.

May Yahweh inspire you with zeal to become fully committed to Him so that when you come you are behind in no work or responsibility, but have faithfully trusted in Him to guide you in deeper truth. Should you have any Biblical questions, feel free to get in touch with us. Allow Yahweh the opportunity to bless you and plan to attend the next Feast of Tabernacles with us.

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2963 County Road 233, Kingdom City, Missouri 65262
View us online at: www.YAIY.org
Call Toll Free: (877) 642-4101
Main Line: (573) 642-4100