

The Biblical Festivals Fulfilled in Yeshua



Tree of Faith,
Root of Life

By Tom Miller

Contents



Hebrew Views of Time

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:15

- In the Beginning – Time in the Torah – *Slide 3*
- God's Appointed Times: The Biblical Festivals – *Slide 13*
- Seven Key Biblical Festivals – *Slide 17*
- Fulfillment of the Festivals in Yeshua (Jesus) – *Slide 28*
- Conclusions – *Slide 33*

“In the Beginning. . .”



■ “In the beginning...” *Gen 1:1*

- *Time* began...
- Hebraic interpretation is that the Torah is giving the sequence of Creation: 1st heaven, then earth, darkness, water, light, etc.

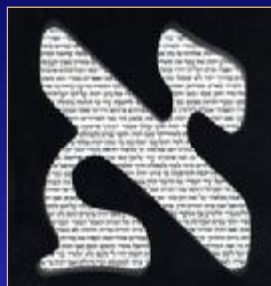


Image of Hebrew Letter Aleph from Book cover: “In the Beginning” by Joel M. Hoffman

■ “God created...” *Gen 1:1*

- *Place* was established
- Also rendered: “In the beginning of God’s creating”, or, “the world was created for the sake of the things that are called ‘beginning.’”
 - What are these things that are so important that the world was created “for their sake”? Answer: “Torah and Israel.” I.e., that Israel would accept & fulfill Torah by becoming a light unto the nations: God’s original blueprint for the earth!

■ “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”

- *Gen 1:5* - Literally, end of “Day One” (*not* the “first day”).
- Can also be rendered “the day of the One and Only,” signifying God was still the only spiritual being in existence at the beginning.
- Hebrew roots focus is on the spiritual reality that God is the Creator, not the exact process He used to create.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 3

Let There Be Lights



■ *Gen 1:14-15* – “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs seasons, and for days and years.”

■ Light was created on the 1st day, but the luminaries were set in place on the 4th.

- Note the parallels:
 - The seas and atmosphere were created on the 2nd day, but aquatic and bird life did not appear until the 5th day
 - Similarly, dry land and vegetation were created on the 3rd day, but not populated until the 6th day.
- “The Sabbath came and protested to God, as it were, saying, ‘You have given a mate to each of the days, but You have not given me a mate.’ God responded that the Jewish people would be its mate, because Israel would accept the commandment to observe the Sabbath.” *Midrash, quoted in Stone Chumash*



Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 4

Festivals Appeared Even Before Man...



■ Stars, sun & moon were made on the 4th Day

- Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. *Gen 1:16*



■ Also on the 4th Day: “Signs”, “festivals”, “days” & “years” appeared even before creation of man! *Gen 1:14*:

- NIV: “let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.”
- Heb: *moed* – “... for signs, and for festivals, and for days and years.”
- Another reminder of the Torah as a blueprint for life

■ There is a direct relationship between the cycles of heavenly bodies, human time & “appointed times” for festivals

- Established in *Genesis*, before the giving of the Torah at Sinai.
- Is it possible that God meant appointed times to be applicable to all people?

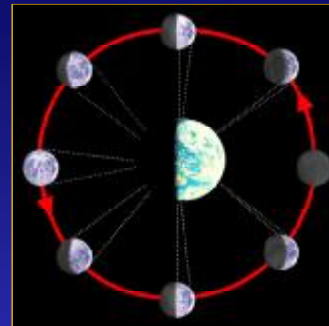
Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 5

The Complaining Moon



■ God created time first in the Torah. Similarly, time is His first commandment to His people in Exodus.

- *Ex 12:1-2* –The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month..."
- Converted the Egyptian solar calendar to a Hebrew solar-lunar calendar



■ The moon complained about being made smaller than the sun. *Talmud Babli, Hullin 60b.*

- God replied “Go, Israel shall reckon by thee the days and the years.” The moon still complained that it “is impossible to do without the sun for the reckoning of the seasons.”
- Seeing the moon would not be consoled, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: “Bring an atonement to Me for making the moon smaller.”
- “During the Blessing of the Moon, we ask for the restoration of the moon to its pristine brightness. [At the atonement of Messiah], Israel, too, will achieve its final redemption.” *The First Jewish Catalog, pp. 96-97*

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 6

Rosh Chodesh – The 1st Commandment



- Lit. “Head of the First”
 - Based on “**observed time**”– watching the skies for crescent moon.
 - Based on 2 ordained witnesses in a rabbinic court until time of diaspora. Fixed according to calculations by Hillel II in 358-59 AD.
 - Links us to moon’s cycle of waxing & waning
 - Israel too will experience waxing & waning
- Biblical *Rosh Chodesh* was a day of festive meals, visiting prophets & not doing business
 - Women did not work on this day as a reward for not giving their jewelry to the making of the Golden Calf
 - “It shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me,” says the LORD. *Isaiah 66:23*
- Blessing of the New Moon
 - Reminds us of Messiah's redemption. It is a remembrance of the original sanctification, not a deification of the moon.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 7

“Months”



- Lunar year has approx. 354 days vs. 365 days for solar year
 - Lunar months have 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 3.5 seconds
 - Requires adjusting to fit solar calendar
 - Dates of Hebrew months vary year to year to adjust for the 11-day difference
 - An extra “leap month” – *Adar II* – is added to the solar year 7 times every 19 years. (*See next page.*)
- Names of Jewish months are of Babylonian origin.
 - Adopted after destruction of First Temple
 - Retained as a reminder of the redemption from Babylon, which resulted in building of the 2nd Temple (*Ramban*)
- *Rosh Chodesh* may also be understood as “**renewal**” rather than a “month.”
 - Because God showed Moses the new moon and told him, “When you see the moon in its new phase, it shall be *Rosh Chodesh* [renewal] **for you.**” (*Rashi*)

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 8

Names of Jewish Calendar Months



Religious Calendar	Hebrew/ Babylonian Name	Agricultural Calendar	Approx. Julian Month
First Month	Nisan	7 th	April
Second	Iyar	8 th	May
Third	Sivan	9 th	June
Fourth	Tammuz	10 th	July
Fifth	Av	11 th	August
Sixth	Elul	12 th	September
Seventh	Tishrei	1 st	October
Eighth	Heshvan	2 nd	November
Ninth	Kislev	3 rd	December
Tenth	Tevet	4 th	January
Eleventh	Shevat	5 th	February
Twelfth	Adar	6 th	March

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 9

Counting the Months



- Nissan is numbered 1st – The *Religious* New Year (See next page.)
 - This is the month in which the commandment to begin counting lunar months was given.
 - Passover always occurs on the 15th day of Nissan.
 - All months are counted from Nissan to recall the month of the Exodus.
 - Similarly, all days of the week are numbered in relation to Shabbat to always keep Shabbat in mind.
- Rosh Hashanah is the *civil* “New Year” Marks beginning of counting the next year.
 - Always on 1st day of Tishrei, the 7th Month.
 - Marks beginning of solar year, adopted after Babylonian exile.
 - First of the High Holidays or *Yamim Noraim* (“Days of Awe”),
 - Not called “Rosh Hashanah” in Bible, but referred to as:
 - “Day of the blowing of the horns” (*Yom Terua*) *Leviticus 23:24*
 - “Day of judgment” (*Yom ha-Din*)
 - “Day of remembrance” (*Yom ha-Zikkaron*)

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 10

Four “New Years” in Judaism



■ Rosh Hashanah

- Civil New Year
- Years are counted from Rosh Hashanah
- Followed by *Asseret Yemei Teshuva* - The Ten Days of Repentance

■ Nissan

- Religious New Year
- Months are counted from 1st of Nissan
- Exodus 12:2: "This month shall be to you the beginning of months."

■ Elul

- New year for counting animal tithes
- Designated by the Priestly Code as a way to provide meat for Levites

■ Tu Bishvat – 15th of Shevat

- New year for trees (and agricultural tithes)
- Also part of the Priestly code, for reckoning tithes involving trees and fruit

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 11

“Daybreak”



- “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the 1st day.” *Gen 1:5*



- Christian interpreters point out that it is possible to conclude that evening and morning *followed* the creation of a particular day, implying that daybreak occurs at sunrise.
- Or the text may be indicating, more consistently with other scripture, that there was no creating going on at night, or that there is no night with Yahweh. (cf. www.bibletime.com/theory/day/)
 - “He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” *Ps 121:3-4*

- Hebrew interpretation is more literal. *Days begin at sunset!*

- Prayer watches of the night are thus prayers that set the tone for the coming daytime, in the Hebrew system.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 12

The Jewish Festivals

Cycles



- Stars, sun, planets and moon set forth “cycles of time”
 - Cycles of *life* are tied to cycles of *time*
- Hebrew word for “Year” is *Shanew*
 - Means “revolution”, “repetition” or “cycle”
- **Destructive cycles** – Human experience after the Fall
 - *Book of Judges* highlights cycles of destruction of Israel
 - People rebel against God
 - God allows enemies to rise up and oppress them
 - People repent and turn back to God
 - God raises up a deliverer to save them from the enemy
 - After the oppression is broken, the people rebel again!
- **Cycles of Blessing** – Reveal God’s goodness & power
 - Sowing and reaping, growth, multiplication and increase



Cycles of Blessing: The Appointed Times



- God wants us to break out of destructive cycles, into God's cycles of blessing!
- *Moedim* – Heb. for “appointed times”
 - Weekly: Shabbat (*Sabbath*)
 - Monthly: New Moon (*Rosh Chodesh*)
 - Seasonal: Festivals
 - Also means “appointed place” – i.e., the Temple
- Three “Pilgrim” Festivals:



"Be careful to do everything I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips. ¹⁴ Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me. ¹⁵ Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty-handed. ¹⁶ Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field. ¹⁷ Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD." *Ex 23:13-17*

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 15

God's Appointed Times



- Appointed times are to be "a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places." *Leviticus 23:14*
- Times appointed to appear before God
 - Not merely “Jewish Festivals”
 - Appointed *place* is gone, but the appointed times continue as *Festivals* to be celebrated wherever we live.
 - Special times of alignment, when portals to heaven open up
- Messianic interpretation of the Parable of the Wedding Feast *Matt 22:2-4*
 - Yeshua tells how a certain king gave a wedding feast for his son and sent out servants to call those who had been invited. The servants declared the appointed time & appointed place, but the invited didn't come!
"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come....many are called but few are chosen."



Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 16

Seven Key Biblical Festivals



“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The LORD’s appointed times you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these.’” *Lev 23:2*

Passover	<i>Pesach</i>	<i>Ex 12:15-20</i> 14 th day of Nisan	Spring festival celebrates Exodus; became “Easter.” Deliverance
Unleavened Bread	<i>Hag Hamatzot</i>	<i>Lev 23:6-8</i> 15 th day of Nisan	7 days, beginning with Passover. Removal of sin
First Fruits (Early)	<i>Yom haBikkurim, or Sfirat Haomer</i>	<i>Lev 23:9-14</i> 17 th day of Nisan	First offering of barley harvest. Faith for rest of harvest
Pentecost (Latter First Fruits)	<i>Shavuot</i>	<i>Lev 23:15-22</i>	Feast of Weeks: First “fruits” 50 days after Pesach. Receiving God’s Word & Spirit.
New Year, or Feast of Trumpets	<i>Rosh Hashanah, also Yom Teruah</i>	<i>Lev 23:23-25</i>	Anniversary of Creation. Civil new year. Followed by 10 Days of Awe. Remembrance & Repentance.
Day of Atonement	<i>Yom Kippur</i>	<i>Lev 23:26-32</i>	Only fast day decreed in Bible. Priest entered Holy of Holies. Judgment
Tabernacles	<i>Succot</i>	<i>Lev 23:34</i>	7-day Harvest “in-gathering” Festival. Celebration with Messiah.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 17

7 Festivals by Season



■ Seven is the number of completion, or perfection

Spring			Summer	Fall		
<i>Pesach</i>	<i>Hag Hamatzot</i>	<i>Yom haBikkurim</i>	Shavuot	Rosh Hashanah	Yom Kippur	Succot
Passover	Unleavened Bread	First Fruits	Pentecost	Trumpets	Atonement	Tabernacles
			← “First Fruits” → Count Omer for 50 days*		Also a “First Fruits” Offering	
March - April			June	September - October		

* See slide 19 for more about “First Fruits” and slide 22 for more about “Counting the Omer”

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 18

A Word about First Fruits



- Different kinds of firstfruits were offered on different occasions:
 - Early Firstfruits – On the day after the Passover Sabbath, a leaf of new grain was offered before the altar. *Lev 23:5,6, 10,12*
 - Feast of Weeks – Two loaves of leavened bread made from new flour were to be waved before the altar. *Lev 23:15, 17, Num 28:26*
 - Feast of Tabernacles – Acknowledgment was made that the fruits of the harvest are from the Lord. *Ex 23:16, 34:22*
 - Tithe – Every individual was required to consecrate to God a portion of the firstfruits of the land. *Ex 22:29, 23:19, 34:26, Num 15:20, 21*



Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 19

Why the Pilgrim Festivals?



- Hebrew men were commanded to appear three times “in a place He will choose.” *Lev 16:16*
 - “Observance of the festivals are the road to faith in God.”
 - By celebrating in God’s resting place (Jerusalem) with peace offerings, we acknowledge God as Lord and celebrate “freedom, the seasons, and prosperity.”
- Festivals are pictured as an antidote to the Sin of the Golden Calf.
 - Reminders that God created and controls the universe. There is no need for substitutes for Him or intermediaries to Him
 - *Ex 34:17-26*, describing the festivals, parallels the giving of the 10 Commandments (see *Ex 23:17*) by first warning against idol worship (*Lev. 17*) before teaching Israel to channel their desire to serve God
 - Observing the pilgrimage festivals channels our desires to serve God
 - I.e., the road to material success and prosperity is through service to God, not a frantic search for omens, intermediaries or idols!

Stone Chumash commentary on Exodus 34:18-26

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 20

Pesach – Passover – Highlights



- **Pesach – Passover** (*Lit. to “pass over”*)
 - Ex 12, Deut 16:2-3
 - “Christ, our Passover Lamb...” 1 Cor 5:7-8
 - 7-day Festival of Spring, always in Nisan, which must always come in spring
 - Marks beginning of Israel as a nation - occurred when Israel had fallen to lowest depths of degradation, as slaves and idol worshipers
 - Matzah is the “Bread of affliction”, unadorned, without leavening
 - Baked with stripes, reminders of Yeshua’s suffering
 - Meat of the spotless lamb offering must be eaten during Seder or disposed of.
 - God chose lambs or sheep for offerings because they were Egyptian deities (Ramban)
 - The specified amount of meat to eat is the size of one olive, which implies sharing the meal.
 - It was not the *blood* that saved Israel but the *demonstration of righteousness*:
 - By slaughtering lambs (Egyptian deities) in public and placing the blood on doorposts Israel qualified for the Passover redemption. (*R’ Bachya*)
 - On the 7th day shall be an assembly to the Lord (*Deut 16:8*)
 - Also implies to gather your memories of the Seder and festival to apply them to your life.



Agnus Dei - Francisco de Zurburán (1598-1664)

Stone Chumash commentary on Leviticus 16

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 21

Counting the Omer



- **50 Days to Shavuot - Pentecost** Lev. 23:9, 15
 - God commanded Israel to count the 50 days from when the barley sheaf was offered during the feast of unleavened bread until the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai, commemorated at Shavuot.
 - “Omer” = 1/10th of an ephah = 2.2 liters
- **A spiritual journey of preparation for Shavuot**
 - Yeshua’s resurrection appearances were during this time
 - Divided into two periods: 33 days of “semi-mourning” followed by celebration
 - Observed by reciting a blessing nightly with Psalm 67 (49 Hebrew words):
“Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.” Ps 67:6-7
- **Messianic implications**
 - Messiah’s resurrection was the First Fruit of the whole future harvest of the resurrection of the dead. Cf. 1 Cor 15:20



Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 22

Shavuot – Pentecost – Highlights



■ Shavuot (Shavuot) – Pentecost

- See *Ex 23:16, 4:22, Lev 23:15-21, Deut 16:9-12*
 - Also mentioned in *Acts 20:15* & *1 Cor 16:8*
- Marks giving of Torah seven weeks after Exodus
 - Shavuot means “weeks”, counted as 7 weeks after the 1st day of Pesach = 50 days later (hence “Pentecost”, which means “50”)
- Also known as:
 - *Day of First Fruits* – *Deut 26:1-11* – But it’s the latter day of First Fruits
 - *Harvest Festival* – *Ex 23:16* - End of barley harvest & beginning of wheat harvest
 - Marked by bringing prepared grain – I.e., 2 loaves of leavened bread
- Entire night before 1st day is spent studying religious texts following festive evening prayers and a festive meal. Traditionally read *Book of Ruth*.
 - This is what the disciples would have been doing in the “Upper Room”
 - Commands “rejoice before the Lord” and specifies 8 categories of people to include in your joy: son, daughter, slave, maid-servant (household) and Levite, proselyte, orphan & widow (the poor)
- Anticipated giving of Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (*Acts 2*)



Stone Chumash commentary on *Leviticus 16*

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 23

Succot – Tabernacles – Highlights



■ Succot (Succos) – “Tabernacles”

- See *Ex 23:16, 34:22, Num 29:12, Deut 16:13-15*
- 7-day festival of “Ingathering” concludes agricultural cycle
- 8th Day is *Simchat Torah*, which concludes the cycle of Reading the Torah
- Commanded to build a Succot using materials grown in fields: “You will be completely joyous.” (*Lev 16:15*)
 - *Sukkot* = “rustic temporary shelter”
 - Commanded to dwell in Succot 7 days *Neh 8:15*
 - Celebrates simplicity & closeness to nature
- Commanded to rejoice before Lord with “4 species”
 - » *Lev 23:40*: palm branch, willow, myrtle, citron fruit



■ Anticipates the coming of Messiah and in-gathering of believers at that time

- Some Messianic communities now celebrate the birthday of Yeshua at this time

Stone Chumash commentary on *Leviticus 16*

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 24

Rosh Hashanah Highlights



- Rosh Hashanah – Feast of Trumpets *Lev. 23*
 - First of Tishrei, the seventh month
 - Parallels idea of the 7th day, *Shabbat*
 - Only festival without a God-given name
 - Referred to as *Yom Teruah*, Day of the Sounding of the Shofar - 100 blasts of shofar are sounded on *Rosh Hashanah*
 - Shofar memorializes Abraham finding ram in the bush (*Gen 22*)
 - “*Birthday of the world*” – Memorializes creation of the human soul, which is interpreted as “the world” – at which the sons of God shouted for joy (*Job 38:7*)
 - Begins “High Holy Days” = 10 Days of Awe
 - Preparation often begins on 1st of Month of Elul, 30 days before Rosh Hashanah. Shofar is blown daily throughout Elul & 10 Days of Awe.
 - 40-day period is known as “Teshuvah” = “return” or “repentance”
 - Day of solemn rest, remembrance and self-examination
 - On *Yom Teruah*, Sarah, Rachel & Hannah were “remembered”



Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 25

On 1st Day of Tishrei



- Tradition holds that the following things happened...
 - Adam and Eve were created
 - The Flood waters dried up
 - Enoch was taken by God (*Gen 5:24*)
 - Sarah, Rachel & Samuel were conceived
 - Joseph was freed from prison by Pharaoh
 - Forced labor of Hebrews in Egypt ended
 - Job contracted Leprosy
 - Sacrifices began on the altar built by Ezra (*Ezra 3:1*)

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 26

Highlights of Yom Kippur



■ Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement

- From *kapar* to cover, i.e., to *atone*
 - Technically not a Biblical feast, but occurs in conjunction with Rosh Hashanah
- Also called “Day of Judgment”, “Sabbath of Sabbaths” & “Day of Redemption”
- Pictures the “transfer of sin”
 - Day of fasting, cleansing & reflection
 - “You shall afflict your souls.” *Lev 16:31*
 - *Only Jewish fast day never postponed if it occurs on a Sabbath*
 - Customary to wear white
- High Priest entered Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the Ark for atonement of Israel’s corporate sins.
 - *Mishne Torah* (Maimonides, 12th C. AD), extended idea to include seeking forgiveness among individuals
- Marked by solemnity and multiple services at the synagogue



Jews praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur. (1878 painting by Maurycy Gottlieb)

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 27

Fulfillment of Festivals in Yeshua



Passover	Exodus	Crucifixion	} High Priestly issues already dealt with by Yeshua
Unleavened Bread	All leaven removed from house for seven days.	Yeshua offered as the sinless “bread of heaven”	
First Fruits	First barley offering waved before the Lord.	Yeshua rose as “first fruits” of resurrection	
Pentecost	Giving of Torah of Moses	Giving of Holy Spirit	Present Age of Holy Spirit
Trumpets	Announces the coming Judgment	1 Thess 4:16 – “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven ...with the trumpet of God.”	} Kingly issues, to be dealt with by Yeshua upon His return
Atonement	Final chance to repent	Heb 12:26-27 - “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”	
Tabernacles	Celebration of the Harvest	Matt 24:31 – “They will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”	

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 28

When Did Christians Change the Jewish Calendar?

- Julius Caesar introduced Julian Calendar – a *solar* calendar system in 46 BC
 - Months named after emperors
 - 365 days + leap years every 4 years
 - Not completely accurate
 - Dominated until 16th century



Coin of Constantine, with depiction of the sun god *Sol Invictus* on reverse side, with inscription: SOLI INVICTO COMITI, To (Constantine's) "companion, the unconquered Sol".

- 1st Council of Nicea (325 AD) began assault on Hebrew calendar
 - Fixed the date for celebrating the Resurrection as 1st Sunday after 1st full moon after vernal equinox
- Modern Gregorian Calendar – Pope Gregory XIII in 1582
 - Adopted by all Roman Catholic dominated countries at first
 - Later adopted by protestants and most countries
 - Dating of Easter and Christmas still varies
 - Certain Orthodox churches continue to use the Julian calendar to fix dates for Easter and Christmas

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 29

Should Gentiles Observe the Festivals?

- Observing special days is enslavement. *Gal. 4:9-11*

Now that you know God-or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

 - Two likely interpretations: (1) Galatians were turning back to pagan holidays; or (2) Galatians were observing the Festivals zealously and legalistically, believing them to have magical properties as they once thought of pagan holidays.
- Talmud cautions against legalistic observance of commandments
 - We must be cautious not to make the commandments into false idols, as if they had independent value outside the context of our relationship with [the Lord].
 - Some people adopt a Torah lifestyle because they are looking for social approval or for an escape.... It is just another form of slavery. From *Endless Light*, by David Aaron
- Yet Paul, himself, was a Jew who carefully observed all holidays!
 - The Apostles were otherwise silent on whether Gentiles were to celebrate the Festivals, but the Apostles all celebrated them themselves.

This and previous page are adapted from First Fruits of Zion, *Torah Club*, Vol. 5, Commentary to Parasha Emor

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 30

Should Gentiles Observe the Festivals?



■ Festivals are a shadow of Christ. *Col. 2:16-17*

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

- Does not mean don't observe the Festivals. Rather, it means see Yeshua Messiah in the Festivals.
- It is possible that new believers were being judged by other Gentiles for following the Festivals, rather than for not following them!

■ There are *no longer* special holidays. *Romans 14: 5-6*

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord....

- No clues in the text as to which days Paul is referring to. Can't be the Festivals because the Festivals are *commandments*, not matters of personal opinion.
- *Book of Romans* was addressed to Jewish believers as well as Gentiles, and Paul never negated Jewish laws to Jewish people.
- "Observe" = *phroneo*, not used for how one actually performs something but for the way one thinks about a matter.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 31

So, Should We Observe the Festivals



- The Festivals were given in *Exodus* and *Leviticus* to the Jewish people to observe and are not Biblically required of Gentiles.
- But Scripture also shows in *Genesis* – long before the Laws of Moses – that the sun, moon and stars were made on the 4th Day of Creation "to be for signs and seasons" to all humanity.
- Since the Festivals foreshadow the work of the Messiah – Jesus – it is enriching to celebrate the Festivals to deepen our remembrance and understanding of the saving work of Jesus.
- Many Messianic Jews, who accept *Yeshua* (Jesus) as their Lord and Savior have developed ways to celebrate the Festivals so as to honor Jesus.
- Neither judge other believers, nor accept other believers' judgments of yourself, for celebrating, or not celebrating, these honored Biblical markers of time. See *Col .2:16-17, Rom . 14:5-6*.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 32

Conclusions



- The Biblical Festivals are special times appointed by God to meet with the people of Israel.
 - Timing of the festivals was according to the Biblical calendar established by the stars and planets set forth in *Genesis 1:14-15*.
 - The festivals paralleled the agricultural year and were associated with the covenants of God and the blessings of the land, as well as with major events that occurred in the history of God's people.
 - The festivals also remind the people about God throughout the year, serving as an antidote to the sin of the Golden Calf.
- Yeshua – Jesus – came to fulfill the Law, and in so doing fulfilled two of the three major Pilgrim Festivals.
 - He was crucified on Passover: “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” *1 Corinthians 5:7*
 - He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost: “You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” *Acts 1:5*
 - Many believe *Yeshua* will return during the autumn Feast of Tabernacles to gather in the End Times harvest of souls.

Hebrew Roots, Tom Miller 33

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