

Chodesh Report

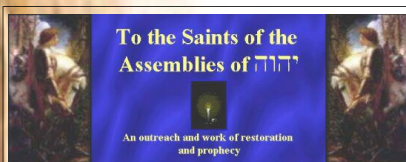
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Issue 56

The Feasts of Yahweh: Spring Festivals Edition



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Who we are

The Chodesh Report is an open dialog of topical research by TTSAOY Chaplaincy and like-minded Associates.

This is a free monthly newsletter published by **To the Saints of the Assemblies of YHWH**.

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Scriptural Allusions I

“Speak to the children of Yisra’el, and say to them, ‘The appointed times of יהוה, which you are to proclaim as set-apart gatherings, My appointed times, are these: (Lev 23:2, TS98)

Introduction

This month's issue is a collection of articles from several respected sabbath keeping authors and organizations who are actively serving the saints at large. They have graciously offered their contributions for this month's *Chodesh Report*, to whom we offer our deepest gratitude ~ the editors at TTSAOY.

שנה טובה

Happy New Year all!!

Abib

ABIB (ā'bīb; “an ear of corn”). The month the Hebrews were divinely directed to make the first of the year as a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:1-2; 13:4). The Passover and the feast of unleavened bread occurred in it, and it marked the beginning of the barley harvest. On the tenth day the Passover lamb was selected and on the fourteenth day was slain and eaten. On the fifteenth day the Jews began harvesting by gathering a sheaf of the barley firstfruits and on the sixteenth day offered it (Lev. 23:4-14). The slaying of the lamb was typical of the death of [the Messiah], the feast of unleavened bread of the believer's separated walk, while the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits spoke of the resurrection of [the Messiah]. The Jewish months were lunar and do

not exactly correspond to ours, which are fixed. Abib corresponds to March-April, and its name was changed to Nisan (which see) after the Exile (Neh. 2:1; Esther 3:7). MFU

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. (Song 2:11-13, KJV)

Passover

One of the oldest of religious observances is that of Passover—the annual recollection of the deliverance of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt. It is held on the evening of the fourteenth day of the Hebrew first month of the year, (named Nisan or Abib) - our March/April. It is observed to this day within Judaism.

The ceremony focused on the sacrifice of a lamb. It was carefully selected as blemish-free and an official token lamb sacrificed in the Temple on the ‘even’ of Nisan 14 around 3pm, the ‘ninth hour’. This coincides with the time that Jesus ‘...yielded up his spirit’ Luke 23:46). Lambs were also brought by the people for

sacrifice by the priests. (How long this took is disputed.)

[‘even’ was that period of time following the declining of the sun—after midday—and the setting of the sun, around 6pm-7pm in Jerusalem.]

Each family prepared the lamb and roasted it whole. It was to be eaten before midnight, accompanied by unleavened (ie, flat, unyeasted) bread. That is, it was eaten on the 15th Nisan—recorded as ‘...a night to be observed’ (Exodus 12:42), a time of celebration of their deliverance from slavery in tyrannical Egypt. This was now the first of the seven days of the Unleavened Bread festival.

Paul approvingly records that the Corinthians continued to observe this festival (I Corinthians 5:6-8). As there is now no Temple nor a designated priesthood—animal sacrifices cannot be offered—the occasion is marked by a festive family meal. Throughout the seven days only unleavened products are eaten. Ω (McBride, 2015, pg. 2).

The Week of Unleavened Bread

The **week of unleavened bread** is often referred to as the **Passover Week**. The first and last days of this week (15th and 21st Abib) are Sabbath days, on which all believers are commanded to rest from their labours and to assemble to worship the Almighty. (Leviticus 23:5-8)

Leaven (yeast) is a symbol of sin, hypocrisy and false doctrine, a **week** represents eternity and a **house** represents the church of God. Thus the week of unleavened bread (when every trace of leaven is cleared from the houses of believers) symbolises the church which is to be purged by God: of sin, hypocrisy and false doctrine - for all time. Only when that work has been done will the church be a fit "**Temple of God**," a spiritual home the Almighty will inhabit for all eternity. Yes, before Yahweh's Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in 'His house' (the church) He has scheduled Himself to purge His people of every trace of (leaven) sin. (Matt. 16:6-12, 1 Cor. 5:6-8, Luke 12:1).

I repeat, there is coming a time when the Almighty will purge **hypocrisy, false doctrine & sin (leaven)** from the minds of His people; and only when that time arrives will the Week of Unleavened Bread have found its fulfilment, not before.

Scripture tells us that this Feast of Unleavened Bread is a **Sacred Sign on the believer's hand and mind that the Almighty's law is inscribed therein**. This Feast is, in fact, the appointed **sign** of faithful obedience, as opposed to the *Mark of the Antichrist*, which is the brand mark of disobedience.

Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to YHVH. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be

leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which YHVH did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that YHVH's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath YHVH brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year. (Exod 13:6-10, RNKJV) ... (Loughran, 1999).

Why, then, do we refer to the Days of Unleavened Bread also called the Festival of Freedom?

The Festival of Freedom

A quick review of the Passover Memorial. The Passover Night is a night of liberation. It is a night when our freedom from the slavery to sin (typified by Israel's enslavement by Pharaoh) was won by the power of Yahweh. In the Renewed Covenant, we are likewise freed from the sins of the world by death of Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb of God. Here's an excerpt from the *Churches of God, UK Newsletter* (March/April, 2015).

The Week of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover Week, is a memorial of Freedom through the power of Almighty God and the Blood of His Son Yeshua the Lamb of God. Freedom from:

- Satan's Slavery / Servitude / Oppression
- False Teaching / Hypocrisy
- Bitterness / Envy
- **Fear**
- And all the sins which so easily **enslave** us.

Ancient Israel was freed from Egyptian slavery on the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread. Remember that fact. To begin with let us understand certain words that come to mind when we talk of **freedom**. They are **slave, bondman, bond-servant, servant**.

Slave

The word '**slave**' appears only twice in the **Bible**; once in each Testament (Jer. 2:14, Rev.18:13). The word '**slave**' means: '*a person who is the property of another and obliged to work very hard for no wage other than food and a little clothing.*' Slaves have no rights or privileges. They are in the same category as domestic animals; kept only for work.

Bondman

Another Bible word for a slave is **bondman**. This word appears five times in the Old Testament and once in the New. Gen 44:33; Deu 15:15; Deu 16:12; Deu 24:18; Rev 6:15. From these verses we can see that **slaves** and **bondmen** have no freedom whatsoever. They must do what their masters demand. They cannot do as they please.

Bondservant

This is another word akin to a *slave*.

Lev.25:39 *And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: 40: But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile:*

We can see from this verse that **bondservants** do not receive wages. They are not hired servants; but are similar to slaves and bondmen.

Servant

A servant is someone who works for wages; someone who is free to go at will if the job doesn't suit him/her.

Yeshua The Redeemer

Except for the redeemed of the LORD, the whole human race is in slavery; bond-servants to Satan and sin. It's ironic, but sin does pay a wage. The Bible tells us that **the wages of sin is death!** Freedom from sin is only possible through Yeshua (Jesus). He alone is able to free the slaves of sin and its horrible result - eternal death! Once delivered from death, believers are no longer referred to as **slaves** in the '*Real Bible, the Authorised King James Version.*' Alas the modern translations still refer to believers as '*slaves.*' A tragic mistake!

Then said Yeshua to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abrahams seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Yeshua answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. ([John 8:31-36, RNKJV](#)). ... (Loughran, 1996)

Bondage? What Bondage?

Are we not in bondage to the influences of this world? A friend of the saints recently posted this comment that about such man that thought he had nothing to concern himself with.

When our Father speaks of those who say "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing" He tells them "do you not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"? (Rev 3:17). Our Father does not see wealth as men do. They were not rich with gold and flush with cash. They were rich with knowledge of Him! They said they needed nothing more. I have seen many who have much knowledge and have become full of themselves and say they need nothing more.

~ T. Puzak

Are we all perfect in our own eyes? Can we admit

to ourselves and Yahweh the influence of this world, its vices and influence? An interesting anecdote by Dr. D. Maestriperi helps to better understand just how the world does impact one's life.

What Monkeys Can Teach Us About Human Behavior

A fictional experiment written by Dario Maestriperi Ph.D.¹ on Mar 20, 2012 in *Games Primates Play*.

They started with a cage containing five monkeys. Inside the cage, they hung a banana on a string with a set of stairs placed under it. Before long, a monkey went to the stairs and started to climb towards the banana. As soon as he started up the stairs, the psychologists sprayed all of the other monkeys with ice cold water. After a while, another monkey made an attempt to obtain the banana. As soon as his foot touched the stairs, all of the other monkeys were sprayed with ice cold water. It's wasn't long before all of the other monkeys would physically prevent any monkey from climbing the stairs. Now, the psychologists shut off the cold water, removed one monkey from the cage and replaced it with a new one. The new monkey saw the banana and started to climb the stairs. To his surprise and horror, all of the other monkeys attacked him. After another attempt and attack, he discovered that if he tried to climb the stairs, he would be assaulted. Next they removed another of the original five monkeys and replaced it with a new one. The newcomer went to the stairs and was attacked. The previous newcomer took part in the punishment with enthusiasm! Likewise, they replaced a third original monkey with a new one, then a fourth, then the fifth. Every time the newest monkey tried to climb the stairs, he was attacked. The monkeys had no idea why they were not permitted to climb the stairs or why they were beating any monkey that tried. After replacing all the original monkeys, none of the remaining monkeys had ever been sprayed with cold water. Nevertheless, nomonkey ever again approached the stairs to try for the banana. Why not? Because as far as they know that's the way it's always been around here."

DM concludes: "People sometimes do the same How many times have you heard "It has always been done this way. Don't mess with what works." Instead of challenging these assumptions, many of us, like the monkeys, simply keep reproducing what has been done before. It's the easiest thing to do" ... (Maestriperi, 2012).

It is important to consider one's strengths and weaknesses - the person first (*the spirit of man*) so that we

¹ Dario Maestriperi, Ph.D., is a professor of comparative human development, evolutionary biology, and neurobiology at the University of Chicago.

may afterward approach Yah's throne to address the more important matters of our faith. As the anecdote above suggests, sometimes we accept things at face value because others seem to validate our choices. It begs the difficult question; "Is what one believes really their own?" Or is it the product of some persuasive personality, from some revered albeit errant elder, or perhaps simply the result of congregational peer pressures?

There are many tests to measure one's faith to be found in the scriptures. We offer the following questions with the recommendation that you make your own list as you examine yourself this Spring Festival season; knowing that if asked, Yeshua will be with you and will guide you through the process.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Yeshua the Messiah is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Cor 13:5, RNKJV)

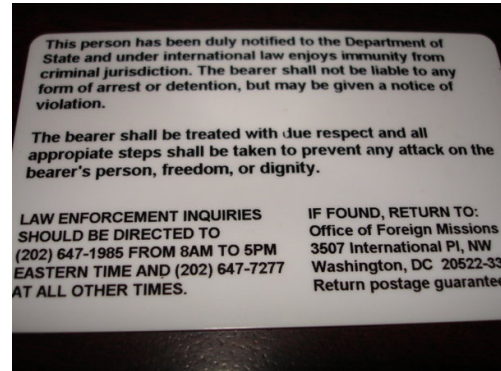
Here are a few questions to start your inquiry.

1. The Test of Conscience: *Is my conscience sensitive to sin? (1 Jn 1:5-10)*
2. The Test of Obedience: *How obedient am I to Yah's Word? (Jn 14:5; 1 Jn 2:3-6; 5:2-3; Rev 22:14)*
3. The Test of Worldliness: *Where do my affections lie? (1 Jn 2:15-17; 5:4-5)*
4. The Test of Anticipation: *Deep down, do I seek to be like Yeshua? (1 Jn 3:1-4)*
5. The Test of Holiness: *Am I progressing away from sin toward holiness, or am I still in bondage? (1 Jn 3:4-10)*
6. The Test of Love: *Do I love other believers and long to be with them? (1 Jn 3:11-18; 4:7-12)*
7. The Test of Prayer: *Does Yah answer my prayers? (1 Jn 3:21-22)*
8. The Test of the Holy Spirit: *Do I experience the power of the Spirit in my life? (1 Jn 4:13)*
9. The Test of Persecution: *Have I ever suffered because of my testimony for Christ? (1 Jn 3:10-13)*
10. The Test of Confession: *Do I have Jesus Christ as my own? (1 Jn 4:1-6; 5:1, 10-12) ... (Tautges, 2011).*

With consideration of the seasons and appointed festivals, especially prior to Passover, this is a time for prayerful introspect. As suggested in the above articles, and for sample sake, here's a topic for consideration. Those new to the truth often believe that they have been 'saved' from the sins of this world and nothing will deter that 'right' from them. After all, the scriptures tell them so... that is, the way they interpret it. Here's a wonderful article that answers to the question, "Are we really saved, once saved?"

Once Saved, Always Saved?

The year was 1979. The Burmese ambassador to Sri Lanka was convinced his wife was having an affair. Deciding to take matters into his own hands, he shot his wife one evening when she came home late. Neighbors reported to the police that a funeral pyre was being built in the back yard of the residence. When Sri Lankan police arrived, they could see the ambassador putting his wife's body on the pyre, but the ambassador refused to let them set foot on the property.



According to Gerald Hensley, one-time high commissioner of New Zealand: "It caused quite a stink. The ambassador said it was Burmese territory and they couldn't enter."

1 Despite the seriousness of the crime, the Sri Lankan Government was unable to proceed against the envoy who was eventually, but not immediately, recalled to his country.

2 A murderer walked free . . . because he had diplomatic immunity.

The abuse of diplomatic immunity has caused many to question its fairness. It is not just or reasonable to give anyone freedom to flout laws simply because of their diplomatic status.

And yet...

Millions of Christians teach a doctrine that, in effect, is as unjust and unreasonable as a murderer walking free simply because he is a diplomat. It is called "once saved, always saved." In other words, once you are saved, you will always be saved. This doctrine, popularly referred to as "eternal security," sounds good but a careful study of this belief reveals it to be profoundly unbiblical.

Proponents of eternal security base this belief on several texts that speak of the security a believer has in the Saviour:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

(See also 1 Peter 1:5; John 6:39; and Jude 24.)

In this passage, believers are referred to as "sheep" who hear the Shepherd's voice and follow Him. Rather than teaching "once saved, always saved" these passages simply promise that no spiritual harm can come to the

person who, submitting to Yahuwah, lives in submission to the divine will.

Sheep, however, are notorious for wandering astray. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” (Isaiah 53:6) If one ceases to surrender the will to Yah and begins to knowingly sin, he will be lost – even if he had previously accepted the gift of salvation.

Yahuwah will never force the human will. It is for this reason that Scripture abounds with warnings of what will happen to those who, having once accepted salvation, wander astray. The [parable of the lost sheep](#) reveals the pitying love of the Father and the Saviour for lost and wandering souls. But even then, a soul will never be forced to return. Full religious liberty is guaranteed all. If the heart stubbornly clings to cherished sins, eventually the waves of mercy will be beaten back, never to return.

Using the analogy of a vine and branches, Yahushua explained the fate of all who do not continue to abide in Him: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” (John 15:6)



The branches are not weeds that were never connected to the vine. A branch can only grow and exist if it is connected. The branches in the Saviour’s parable refer to those who, at one time, were closely connected to Him, receiving the spiritual nourishment to grow! But, exercising their divinely given freedom of choice, they withdrew from their source of life. They became unfruitful and were eventually cast off.

Far from teaching “eternal security,” Scripture teaches the exact opposite: that it is possible to accept salvation and, at a later date, exercise one’s free will, returning to a life of rebellion against Yahuwah. Using the illustration of a race, the apostle Paul highlighted the sacrifices and careful preparations which athletes are willing to make to win the prize. He ends his illustration by acknowledging even he could still be lost:



Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to

others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Paul knew that, although he was in a saving relationship with his Redeemer, this did not steal his personal freedom of choice. He could still, by the choices he made, lose out

on eternal life. The death of the Saviour on the cross provides “diplomatic immunity” for sins past. It does not remove accountability for current sins, knowingly committed. Thus, Paul realized that, even after leading others to salvation, his personal choices could still cause him to be “disqualified.” This word, translated “Castaway” in the King James Version, comes from Adokimos (#96), which means: “unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication worthless . . . castaway, rejected, reprobate.”

The word “reprobate” is an interesting word choice. It is not used very much anymore, but it contains a wealth of meaning. The word, when used as a noun, refers to “A person abandoned to sin; one lost to virtue and religion.”³ There are a number of verses in Scripture that use this word. These passages provide clear contextual examples of what it means to be a reprobate or have a reprobate heart. (See [Titus 1:10-16](#); [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:5-7](#); etc.)

Probably the clearest use of the word, and the passage that most directly refutes “once saved, always saved,” is found in [Romans 1:18-32](#). Here Paul specifically states that, although these reprobates “knew” Yahuwah ([verse 21](#)) they nevertheless stubbornly clung to sin. It cannot be said that these were heathens with no knowledge of the Creator. But, even knowing Him, [verse 28](#) states that they did not want to remember Him: “And even as they did not like to retain Eloah in their knowledge, Eloah gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Note that Yahuwah “gave them over to a reprobate mind.” Here is presented the truth of the salvation offered by Yahuwah. He “is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” ([2 Peter 3:9](#)) But, as much as He longs to bring all to repentance so that all may be saved, He will never remove the individual’s right to choose for himself. He will let go those who do not want to retain a relationship with Him, leaving them to follow their own desires.

The apostle Peter likewise teaches the same thing:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Master and Saviour Yahushua the Anointed, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. ([2 Peter 2:20-22](#))



It is a Biblical principle that “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

([2 Corinthians 13:1](#)) Thus, both Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, and Peter, the apostle to the Jews, concur that even after a person has accepted the gift of salvation, by

the free exercise of his will, he can still be lost.

The danger of clinging to the error of “eternal security” is that, like diplomatic immunity, it can be used to rationalize or otherwise excuse cherished sins that the stubborn heart does not wish to surrender. Salvation is a free gift, but it does not remove personal responsibility to choose to **surrender to Yahuwah on a daily basis**. “Once saved, always saved” is a popular error because it, in effect, exempts one from the consequences of all future actions and decisions, regardless of how grievously, or frequently, the divine law is broken. It is a sort of divine “diplomatic immunity” that, they suppose, covers anything they do because they are now saved.

This is an extremely dangerous supposition to make. The work of the **Holy Spirit** is to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (**John 16:8**) The Holy Spirit might be convicting a heart to lay aside a particular sin, but if a person believes in “once saved, always saved,” such convictions are brushed aside as “doubt.” This is extremely dangerous because rejection of the Holy Spirit is the one sin that is unpardonable. When the Holy Spirit’s drawing is consistently and continually rejected, there is nothing more Heaven can do.

Scripture is clear regarding the fate of all who turn back from following the Saviour:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of Yah and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of Yah, and put Him to an open shame. (**Hebrews 6:4-6**)

Some would argue that, if a person falls away, they were never saved to begin with, but this is not consistent with the passage of Scripture given. Paul clearly states they “were once enlightened.” If a person turns his back on divine grace, divine Love will never force him to remain against his will. “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” (**Hebrews 10:26**)

Perhaps the worst thing about the doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” is what it teaches about the character of Yahuwah. “For Yah so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For Yah did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (**John 3:16-17**) The inheritance of a sinful nature, stole from every son and daughter of Adam, the ability to choose for themselves who they would serve: Yahuwah or Satan. Yahushua’s sacrifice did not guarantee that all would be saved. It merely restored their right to choose for themselves, rather than lose eternal life through the choice of Adam.

Yahuwah, who sacrificed so much to ensure freedom of choice, is never going to remove that right to choose once the individual is in a saving relationship with the Saviour. Sin enslaves the will; redemption restores it to harmony with Yahuwah. But none at that point become will-less mind slaves. All still have the power of choice and

Yahuwah will never take that away, forcing His will on His creatures.

The Bible **teaches** that believers are secure while they remain faithful to Yahuwah. But if one chooses to let go of the hand of Yahushua, there is no such assurance. “The wages of sin is death” (**Romans 6:23**) even for those who, at one time, had accepted salvation.

All error separates from the source of all life and love. The fact that Yahuwah sacrificed His own Son to ensure freedom of choice and that He continues to allow all to retain that freedom of choice, demonstrates a love so profound, so far-reaching the human mind cannot grasp it in its entirety. Lay aside the error of “once saved, always saved.” Draw close to the one who is able to keep you safe from all harm. He will never violate your individuality, your self-hood, your freedom of choice, but when you choose to surrender your will to Him, He will keep you.

... (WLC, 2014).



- (1) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/blog/2012/mar/28/dominique-strauss-kahn-diplomatic-immunity-scandal>
- (2) <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=29779&Cat=9>
- (3) Noah Webster, American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828.

Festival Planning

Where will you go to the festival this year? A recent article from COG, UK offers this helpful advice for making your choices.

Divided Kingdoms

Three of the Gospels record these words of Jesus: ‘...if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand’ (**Mark 3:24-25**). It’s for we see nations torn apart by civil war, and we see families ripped asunder by strife.

Sadly it is, too, a fact of life within the world’s religions. The various Islamic sects in the past—and even now, today—are at each others’ throats, sometimes literally. In Christianity denominations arise and over time divide as internal factions arise. History tells us that the latter has at times resulted in hot wars between branches of their faith.

Church of God Movement

It is a fact of life that this division has infected our Sabbatarian churches. There have been splits—often amicable. But a few factions act as attack-dogs regarding the ethical or doctrinal stance of other groups—even to the extent of branding them as unchristian, and ‘headed for the Tribulation’. Or, ‘damned to destruction’ and may ‘lose eternal life’.

It is worth recalling the letters Jesus wrote to the seven individual churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3). Despite their clear heretical tendencies in some, Jesus still recognizes each of them as his church, though in need of a clean-up. Critics fail to note that *Jesus* is the Head of the Body, and that he alone judges—and, when necessary, corrects his church. Or removes them.

It is true that the ethos of any one congregation affects everyone in it—Laodicea is a prime example. A whole assembly—indeed a whole world-wide denomination— can depart the ‘faith once for all delivered’ by the apostles.

Salvation, however, is *personal*, and individual Christians within a failing assembly may well remain as humble servants of the Saviour despite what comes from the pulpit (Revelation 3:20)! The Father deals with each of us personally, lovingly (though it might hurt! Hebrews 12:5-8) shepherding us towards the formation in us the image, the holy character, of Jesus. After all, He chose us to serve Him throughout eternity. We are not ‘yellow pencils’!

Co-operation

The New Testament pattern for organization of the church was that each individual assembly was autonomous, independent—rather, inter-dependent. They were not tied to the strings of a denominational label—but simply addressed as ‘*the church of God in [location]*’ They worked together, not in competition.

Individual local assemblies welcomed visiting teachers—but carefully weighed their message. They initiated country-wide evangelistic outreach. They supported needy brethren in distant assemblies, and emulated their faith. They saw to the material needs of roaming apostles and evangelists, and provided prayer support. They shared written communications from authentic recognized leaders. Above all they were in tune with the Head through the leading of his Spirit (eg Acts 13:2).

Those Revelation letters also indicate diversity of doctrine and behaviour (good and bad!) in individual assemblies. But note that within each of those assemblies taken to task by Jesus there were faithful brethren who resisted the negative influences.

Unity, then, is not subservience to a unitary remote and uncaring headquarters. It is a unity of spirit, a shared

desire to work together to further the work of the Gospel of Christ and the spiritual nourishment of the saints to Christ-like maturity. A divided kingdom won’t last. ... (McBride, 2015, pg. 1).

Spring Festival Season Summary

Considering the facts

Have you been completely freed from the sins of this world? ... received the inviolable and innumerable blessings of the Creator's promises? ... to become adorned in the purest of linen without spot or wrinkle as a member of His family? Aren't you tired of the struggles of this life?

A life of bondage; or, Life with Yah. It's yours for the asking. The Father awaits you! הללויה - Hallelu'Yah!!!

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Scriptural Allusions II

And His parents went to Yerushalayim every year at the Festival of the Passover. (Luke 2:41, TS98)

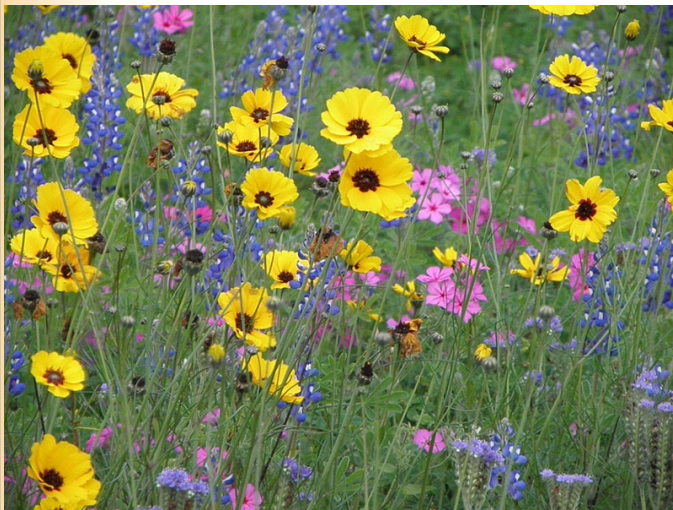
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'Tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes!

~William Wordsworth, "Lines Written
in Early Spring," *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798



Nature's celebration.

Abraham and the Investment Banker

An Investment banker was walking through desert and came to a camp of nomads. While approaching the camp he saw a man among a flock of sheep. The Investment Banker said hello to the man who introduced himself as Abraham. The Investment Banker complimented the man on the quality of his flock and asked how long it took to acquire such a herd.

Abraham replied, only a little while.

The Investment Banker then asked why didn't he get a larger flock.

Abraham said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs.

The Investment Banker then asked, "but what do you do with the rest of your time?"

Abraham said, "I sleep late, play with my children, nap with my wife, Sarah, stroll among the camp visiting where I sip wine and tell stories, I have a full and busy life."

The Investment Banker scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time making your flock larger and with the proceeds, buy some land rather than drifting about. With the proceeds from the land you could buy a larger ranch and larger flocks and branch out into other livestock, eventually you would have a large enterprise with thousands of acres and hundreds of employees. You would be selling thousands of livestock each year. Instead of selling your inventory to individuals you would sell directly to the processor then eventually opening your own meat processing facility. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this desert and move to a larger city, and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

Abraham asked, "But, how long will this all take?"

To which the Investment Banker replied, "15-20 years."

"But what then?"

The Investment Banker laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions. Then what?"

The Investment Banker said, "Then you would retire. Move to the quiet and beautiful desert where you can sleep late, play with your children, nap with your wife, Sarah, stroll among the camp visiting where you can sip wine and tell stories."

The Data

Rosh Chodesh 1, March 2015

The new moon should be visible within the realm of Israel on **March 21 2015** Jerusalem Standard Time [JST] at even-time [1][2][3].

The Data:

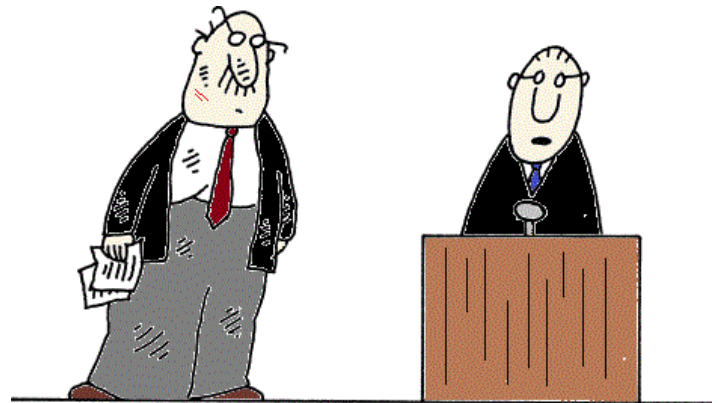
Sunset	5:50 PM (JST)
Moonset	7:11 PM
Age	0.8d/30 since last
Illumination	0.8% [Marginal sighting]

[1] Lunisolcal V4.5 (Voeking, 2013)

[2] Ephemeris V2.0 (Sachs, 2000-2001)

[3] SkyViewCafe V5.8.6 (Shetline, 2000-2013)

The Lighter Side



C. Barotto

"Our next speaker looked into the abyss and made a few notes."

Quotes

Cleanliness becomes more important when godliness is unlikely. ~ P J O Rourke

Meaning: A lifestyle of uncleanness generally lends itself to a host of maladies. In contrast, observing the laws of cleanness imparts both mental and physical well being. Those far from Yah's Word's to the wise are destined to experience curses more than blessings.

More Quotes

Behold, I give before you today a blessing and curse. The blessing, if you should hear the commandments of [Yahweh your Elohim], as many as I give charge to you today. And the curse, if you do not hearken to the commandments of [Yahweh your Elohim], as many as I give charge to you today, and you should wander from the way which I gave charge to you, having gone to serve other gods, ones who do not perceive. (Deut 11:26-28, ABPen)

Yahweh's Feast Days of (2015)

-	Abib 1 (Starts @ sunset Mar 21)	Day 1 of the year	Mar 22
-	Yah'shua's Kiddush	Abib 13	Apr 3
-	Passover Memorial (at even)	Abib 14	Apr 4
I, II	Passover Feast (DUB)	Abib 15-21	Apr 5-11
-	Wave Sheaf	Abib 16	Apr 6
III	Feast of First Fruits (Pentecost)	Abib 16 + 49	May 25
IV	Feast of Trumpets	Day 1 of 7 th new moon	Sep 16
V	Atonement	Day 10	Sep 25
VI	Feast of Booths (FOT)	Day 15-21	Sep 30-Oct 6
VII	The Last (8th) Day	Day 22	Oct 7



Campbell

"I imagine you were pretty nervous addressing an army of experts."



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