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## **YAH'S KODESH DAYS**

Has Yah indeed set aside certain times during the year to be called kodesh? If such times were established by Him, does man have the right to ignore their observance? Or should man not rather obey, to the best of his ability and understanding, all of Yah's commands? Yahshua said,

**“...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh.” (Matthew 4:4)**

Recently we have been given literature that attacks those who keep Yahweh's feast days. This writing will attempt to answer some of the objections raised by that writer and others who, because of denominational teaching, have not honestly represented those who are observing the feast days of Yahweh.

Those who oppose keeping the kodesh days are not necessarily being intentionally malicious. We feel their bias just holds them to a contrary opinion and they mean well. However, when any man teaches others not to obey what they perceive to be the complete will of Yahweh, he will have to answer to a higher judge.

Therefore, this booklet is not to sit in judgment of those who disagree with our position, but to teach the will of Yahweh on this subject, and why we believe it to be His will for the Assembly to observe the kodesh days as prescribed in His inspired Word.

### **MEANING OF “HOLY”**

The word “holy” comes from the Hebrew word “kah-dash,” and means to be pure, clean, consecrated, and sacred. It further means “to be separated from the profane.” This word is used very early in your Bible when Yahweh separated the Sabbath day from the other days of the

week (Genesis 2:3). The English Bible (KJV) translates “kah-dash” as “sanctified” here, labeling the Sabbath day as sanctified time or holy time.

Later when speaking of the Sabbath day, Yahweh said,

**“Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy [kah-dash] convocation...” (Leviticus 23:3)**

Here the Bible commands the people to be a kodesh convocation or a kodesh gathering. In other words, they were to be separated for worship at certain times. This same chapter of the Bible lists Yahweh's annual feasts to be times for kodesh gatherings.

Yahweh commanded both the weekly and the annual Sabbaths to be kept by Israel. This has caused some people to conclude that these days are only for Israel, but a closer look will reveal how Yahweh refers to them as *His feasts* rather than Israel's feasts.

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning *the feasts of Yahweh*, which ye shall proclaim to be holy [kah-dash] convocations, even *these are My feasts.*” (Leviticus 23:2) [Emphasis ours.]**

Only Yahweh has the authority to command something to be “kodesh” and make it such. Men have called pictures kodesh, certain days holidays, etc., but Yahweh does not recognize them to be really kodesh unless He establishes them so. Likewise, He is the only one who has the authority to repeal what He has made kodesh and, thenceforth recognize it as profane.

Yahweh has never canceled His kodesh days. When they were announced to Israel, He specifically said,

**“...it shall be a statute *for ever* throughout your generations in all your dwellings...” (Leviticus 23:14) [Emphasis ours]**

We will address the word “forever” later in this writing; it means just what it says--forever.

## **KODESH DAYS NOT ABOLISHED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Does the New Testament cancel Yahweh’s weekly and annual Sabbath? Some people will state that Paul does so in Colossians. Let’s take a closer look.

**“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an kodesh day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which *are* a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Messiah.” (Colossians 2:16-17) [Emphasis ours.]**

“If your Bible has a center column reference, notice the footnote preceding the words “in meat, or in drink.” It reads in the Cambridge edition of the KJV “for eating and drinking.” This makes it clearer whether Paul is saying we are not to let others judge us: 1) for *not* eating and drinking and observing kodesh days and Sabbaths or, 2) *for* observing them. The better translation will make it clear they were not to be judged *for keeping the kodesh days and Sabbaths*.

Further, notice the verb “are” in the previous quotation. The obvious understanding is that these kodesh days and Sabbaths are still being recognized by the apostolic assembly. Had they been repealed by Paul’s words, he would have used a verb of the past tense such as “were.” If Paul had said the kodesh days and Sabbaths “*were* a shadow of things to come;...” a case might be made from this text that Yahweh had re-

scinded kodesh day observance, but just the opposite is what the text is clearly saying. These days are still in effect and are a shadow of things to come. If the text could be used to prove the annual kodesh days are done away, it would at the same time prove the weekly Sabbath day is rescinded as well. The weekly and annual Sabbaths either stand or fall together in this verse.

Some will then turn to Paul's writings to the Galatians in their effort to prove he saw the kodesh days as abolished.

**“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” (Galatians 4:10-11)**

The question is this: Was Paul speaking of Yah's kodesh days or of pagan practices of the Gentiles?

First, it should be noted how the Bible refers to pagan worship in connection with certain “times.” See Deuteronomy 18:10, II Kings 21:6 and II Chronicles 33:6 for some examples.

Further, the word “times” in Paul's letter comes from the Greek word “kairos” and never refers to Yah's feast days. The 27 times where Yah's feast days are referred to in the New Testament, the Greek word is always “heorte.” Not one time does the Greek word “kairos” refer to Yah's kodesh days. Also the verse in question does not contain the word “sabbath”. It merely says “days.”

Second, we want to be aware of the cultural background of the Galatian assembly. Reading the second chapter of this book will reveal that it was written to Gentiles. These people, prior to their conversion, were pagan worshipers. They had been worshiping idols for gods. Consider what Paul wrote,

**“Howbeit then, when ye knew not Yahweh, ye did service unto them which by nature are no**

***gods. But now, after that ye have known Yahweh, or rather are known of Yahweh, how turn ye again to the beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Galatians 4:8-9) [Emphasis ours]***

When these Gentiles returned to the weak and beggarly elements, they were returning to pagan practices. Yah’s kodesh days are not weak and beggarly elements to be associated with idol worship of heathen nations. The elements they had previously worshiped were the sun, moon, planets, and idols which were common objects of worship to the pagan culture of that day.

Members of Yahweh’s assembly should always remember how Peter warned that Paul’s writings included things hard to understand.

**“And account that the longsuffering of our Master is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things *hard to be understood*, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (II Peter 3:15-16) [Emphasis ours.]**

## **A STATUTE FOREVER**

The Hebrew word “olawm” has been translated in the KJV as, “forever, everlasting, perpetual, and eternal.” The Hebrew/English Interlinear translation by Jay P. Green uses the words “never-ending” for “olawm.”

Some argue that this term does not mean forever when used with the phrase “throughout your generations.” But the same persons agree that the Sabbath is a perpetual (olawm) covenant as stated in Exodus.

Their argument breaks down under close scrutiny.

**“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath *throughout their generations*, for a perpetual [olawm] covenant.” (Exodus 31:16) [Emphasis ours.]**

Likewise, when speaking of the kodesh days of Yahweh, Moses uses the same words four times in Leviticus 23:14, 21,31, and 41: “It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.” Three times he includes the words, “in all your dwellings”. This is very important, for it shows they were to observe the feast days wherever they were, “in all your dwellings”, not just in the city where the temple was. However, the sacrifices were to be performed at the temple.

The prohibition against eating blood is also described as an eternal law.

**“It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings...” (Leviticus 3:17)**

Sacrificing to devils is condemned in similar words as well as drinking wine and strong drink in His sanctuary. See Leviticus 10:9 and 17:7. We understand these prohibitions to still be binding on righteous people today.

The phrase, ‘forever throughout your generations’ was an idiom used by Moses and in no way re-qualifies the meaning of the word “forever” (olawm) to mean other than perpetual, forever, or never-ending. Those who insist otherwise show either their bias against keeping the feast days or their ignorance of the Hebrew language or both. We hope they will consider the issue and withdraw writings that demean those who want to obey Yahweh’s Word.

## **THE KODESH DAYS PRECEDED SACRIFICIAL LAW**

Another misunderstanding regarding Yahweh's kodesh days is that they originated with the sacrificial laws. This is simply not true. The feasts of Yahweh were mentioned in the original covenant He made with Israel through Moses. The covenant included more than just the ten commandments. The ten commandments were spoken aloud directly from Yahweh. When the people became fearful, Yahweh gave the balance of His covenant with Israel through Moses. The words of Exodus chapters 20 through 23 were all a part of that covenant.

**“And Moses came and told the people *all the words of Yahweh*, and *all the judgments*: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, *All the words which Yahweh hath said we will do*. And Moses wrote *all the words of Yahweh*, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh.” (Exodus 24:3-5) [Emphasis ours.]**

It is important to know that this altar was not for sin offerings as was the altar of the sanctuary. It was constructed of stones of the earth, not wood covered with brass as Moses was instructed later for the sanctuary (Exodus 27:1-2). The specific purpose of the earthen altar was to seal, or ratify, the covenant and put it into force.

**“And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the *book of the covenant*, and read in the audience of the people: and**



**they said, all that Yahweh has said will we do, and *be obedient*. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you concerning all these words.” (Exodus 24:6-8) [Emphasis ours.]**

This was the original covenant between Yahweh and the nation of Israel. It was a covenant of *obedience*, without temple sacrifices. Two sacrifices are mentioned therein, neither of which are to be construed as a part of the sanctuary service which was added later. Exodus 20:24-26 mentions an *altar of earth*, which was made and used to ratify the covenant as outlined above. The only other sacrifice was the paschal lamb to be sacrificed on the anniversary of Passover.

**“Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning.” (Exodus 23:18)**

This is the same manner in which Yahweh had previously told them to keep the Passover before leaving Egypt.

Within the wording of this covenant (a covenant on righteous living) is the command to keep the three seasonal feasts of Yahweh.

**“Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.” (Exodus 23:14)**

The text goes on to show these to be: 1) the feast of Unleavened Bread, 2) the feast of harvest or sometimes called the feast of weeks (Pentecost), and 3) the feast of ingathering (Tabernacles).

It was only after this book of the covenant was read, agreed to by the people of Israel, and ratified by blood, that Yahweh gave the ten commandments in stone to Moses.

And *after that* He gave Moses the instruction for building the tabernacle where laws of sacrifices were to be added because He knew they would violate the covenant of *obedience*. The Old Covenant came in two parts, first the laws of obedience, then later the laws of *sacrifices* because of disobedience.

This point is further emphasized in the writings of the prophets.

**“For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying *obey My voice...*” (Jeremiah 7:22-23)**

It is true that special sacrifices were later added to kodesh days. Space does not permit enumeration of all these many sacrifices but they are all listed in the book of Numbers, chapters 28 and 29. What some fail to acknowledge, however, is that the weekly Sabbath also had special sacrifices added to it as did the annual feast days.

**“And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: This is the burnt offering of *every Sabbath*, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.” (Numbers 28:9-10) [Emphasis ours.]**

Sacrifices that were added later because of disobedience to the covenant neither validated nor invalidated annual kodesh days or weekly Sabbaths.

## **KODESH DAYS KEPT WHILE IN THE WILDERNESS**

It has been dogmatically taught by some that the kodesh days of Yahweh were not observed in the wilderness, but were reserved for

keeping only after entering the promised land with Joshua. This position seems to be supported by the statement,

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *when ye be come into the land which I give you* and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest; the priest shall wave the sheaf...” (Leviticus 23:10-11) [Emphasis ours.]**

A careful reading will reveal it is the *harvesting and the waving of the first fruits that are to wait until entering the promised land, not the annual observance of the feast days*. So far as this text reads, along with the whole chapter, the weekly Sabbaths and the annual kodesh days could have been kept in the wilderness. Remember, they did not harvest crops of barley and wheat during the wanderings in the wilderness. Rather, they ate manna as Yahweh provided. Hence, they had to wait until they entered the promised land to begin the ritual of the wave offerings of the barley first fruits.

This seems to be the actual fact when we consider that the feast days, as well as the weekly Sabbaths, were a part of the covenant the Israelites agreed to keep. When Moses, just before his death, pronounced the blessings upon the different tribes, he said of Levi,

**“...for they have observed thy word, *and kept thy covenant.*” (Deuteronomy 33:9) [Emphasis ours.]**

On at least one occasion the record is quite clear that they kept the Passover in the wilderness.

**“And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even *in the wilderness* of Sinai according to all that Yahweh had com-**

**manded Moses, so did the children of Israel.” (Numbers 9:5) [Emphasis ours.]**

Since this was a part of the covenant, it would make sense that they observed the other feast days during that same time period prior to entering the promised land.

The absence of a record each time the Israelites observed the kodesh days is not proof they were not kept. Specific instances of keeping the feasts are rather rare in scripture in relation to the many thousands of times they were held throughout Israel’s history.

It has been charged that any observance of the day of Atonement would be a denial of the atoning work of Messiah. This is as ridiculous as saying that people who observe their birthday are denying their own birth. Or that when we keep the Master’s supper we are denying His death and resurrection. Rather than to be a denial of the atonement work of Messiah, keeping the day of Atonement emphasizes and memorializes what was foreshadowed by the ancient ritual and how it was fulfilled in Messiah’s ministry. It declares how helpless man is in trying to earn his own atonement relationship with Yahweh. It is only through the grace of Yahweh and through the true self-denial of Messiah, that Yahweh has provided our atonement.

## **NEW TESTAMENT FEAST DAYS**

Did the Apostolic Assembly keep the feasts? We believe the preponderance of evidence proves they did!

We should begin by exposing an erroneous idea that the feasts were only for the Jews. It has been claimed by some that since John called the Passover and other feasts, “feasts of the Jews,” this somehow excluded Gentile Believers. See John 5:1, 6:4, and 7:2.

John could hardly say they were the “feasts of the Gentiles,” for then he would have been including pagan festivals. Another term com-

mon in the New Testament is, “Yahshua...born King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:1-2). This does not exclude His being King of those Gentiles who also believe in Him. Obviously, Yahshua is the Anointed King, established by the Father. He is just as much King of the Gentiles as He is King of the Jews. The same is true of Yahweh’s appointed feast days. They are for all Yahweh’s people.

About 25 or more years after Messiah died, Paul kept the feast of Pentecost.

**“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” (Acts 20:16)**

The question we should try to answer is this: Was Paul in Jerusalem for Pentecost just to preach to the unregenerate Jews or was he there to worship Yahweh? Let's not guess, as so many have done, for our biased attitude might mislead us into wrong conclusions not based on the facts.

In his defense before Felix, Paul fully explains why he had been in Jerusalem.

**“Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem *for to worship*. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.” (Acts 24:11-13) [Emphasis ours.]**

Paul’s testimony declares that his sole purpose for being in Jerusa-

lem was to worship. If he had stopped there we might still wonder whether he also was preaching Messiah among the Jews as some have claimed. But he distinctly says, he was not disputing among the people in the city. Can we imagine him preaching Yahshua as the Messiah and not raising a dispute? Impossible during that time. He was there to observe Pentecost in Jerusalem.

Speaking of the feast of Unleavened Bread, Paul adds a spiritual dimension to the term “leaven,” when he states he and the Corinthian believers are to keep the feast.

**“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Messiah our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us *keep the feast*, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (I Corinthians 5:7-8)  
[Emphasis ours.]**

If Believers had not been keeping the sabbath days and feast days, surely the denunciation would have been loud and clear from the Jews. But of what do we find the Jews accusing the Believers? Not of ignoring the feasts that Yahweh had commanded them to keep. The accusation against the Believers was coming to Yahweh through Yahshua instead of first becoming a part of nationalistic Judaism, evidenced by circumcision of the flesh.

Historians agree that the first Believers (which were among the Jews) kept all the feast days. Some even insisted on the fleshly circumcision, hardly a point noteworthy for the historian had they all been Jews. Read what W. D. Davies, a specialist on early Christianity records,

**“Everywhere, especially in the east of the Roman Empire...they still observed the feasts of**

**Passover and Tabernacles; they also continued to be circumcised, to keep the weekly Sabbath and Mosiac regulations concerning food.”**

Other historians speak further,

**“...the sect originated after the flight from Jerusalem, (70 A.D.), are characterized essentially by their tenacious attachment to Jewish observances...they became heretics in the eyes of the Mother Church-they well represent, though Epiphanius is energetically refusing to admit it, the *very direct descendants of the primitive community.*” “They practice the custom and doctrines prescribed by the Jewish law, *except that they believe in Christ* ”(From Sabbath to Sunday, by Samuele Bacchocchi.)**

The kodesh days are mentioned in the New Testament only a few times after Messiah died. This causes some to presume they were not kept. However, we must keep in mind that in the Old Testament (an Israelite history of over 1,000 years), relatively few instances of kodesh day observances are recorded. Should we be surprised then when less than 70 years of Christian history fails to make more than a few references to them? If the Believers had been ignoring them, we believe specific charges would have been made against the assembly and be most evident in the Bible. The lack of such evidence argues for their observance by the early assembly.

## **FUTURE BLESSINGS**

The Bible implies the feasts of Yahweh will be kept after Messiah returns to rule the earth. It specifically speaks of keeping the feast of Tabernacles in the writings of Zechariah.

**“And it shall come to pass, that *every one that is left of all the nations* [not just the Jews] which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14:16) [Emphasis ours.]**

Strange as it may seem, men living on the earth under Messiah’s rule will still have the freedom to refuse keeping the kodesh days just as they do today. However they must suffer the consequences for their rebelliousness.

**“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith Yahweh will smite the heathen that come not up to *keep the feast of tabernacles.*” (Zechariah 14:17-18)**

If Yahweh says the feasts are going to be kept in the New Earth, why would men today refuse to observe them and receive His fuller blessings?

We urge people, as individuals, to study this issue and decide for themselves. No preacher or denominational leader should decide whether we as individuals can or should be keeping the feasts of Yahweh. If we are truly following Messiah, the Bible is our most sure guide. The blessings we receive will be proportionate to how we each obey what we understand to be His will, not the coercive teachings of denominations.

Both weekly and annual kodesh days were established prior to the



sacrificial laws. Both are equally binding upon those who want to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh. Only the sacrifices that were added later were superseded by the greater sacrifice of Messiah's blood.

## **REALITY OF THE KODESH DAYS**

At this point, a brief summary of the kodesh days and their significance is in order.

In Israel, there were three major harvests of fruit of the land. Each harvest pictured a part of Yahweh's plan of salvation for mankind, the greater spiritual harvest of men's lives.

In the early spring, Abib 14, was Passover. The killing of the pass-over animal pictured the death of Messiah. "For even Messiah our pass-over is sacrificed for us..." (I Corinthians 5:7).

This was followed by the unleavened bread. During the week of Unleavened Bread, all leavening was put out of their homes. This pictured the casting out of sin. Believers today are reminded by this process how subtly sin encroaches in all our lives. Just when we think it is conquered, it reappears. This reminds us of our total need of Yahweh's forgiveness for the sin in our lives.

During the week of Unleavened Bread, the wave sheaf offering was made, which pictured the first of the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead, Yahshua Messiah.

The next feast was called the feast of weeks, which came seven weeks after the wave sheaf was offered. The New Testament calls this day Pentecost. Here the Kodesh Spirit was poured out to begin the New Testament assembly. This harvest which began shortly after the ascension of Messiah, does not end until He returns to catch away the saints and resurrect all who died in Him (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

His return in full kingdom power to rule the earth is pictured by the day of Trumpets. The last trumpet calls forth the dead in Messiah and announces Yahweh's war against evil, Armageddon.

Atonement was accomplished for mankind at Yahshua's death. The full benefits, however, will not be realized until after His return when we are most literally at one with Yahweh, ruling with Messiah. We observe this day in commemoration of His atoning sacrifice.

Then comes the 1,000 years of earthly rule which is typified by the feast of Tabernacles. (See Zechariah 14.)

Finally, the last great day will come, picturing the Great White Throne judgment.

May the Almighty who created all things bless each of us as we obey in observing His command to be a part of kodesh convocations at His appointed times.