

IS HE LORD OF YOUR CALENDAR? - Daniel Botkin -

I became a born-again Christian in 1972. In the 1970s a popular Christian slogan was "Jesus is Lord!" This slogan was shouted and printed on T-shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, and other paraphernalia. Christians talked about letting Jesus be Lord of your finances, Lord of your marriage, Lord of your job situation - in short, Lord in every area of your life. I believed in letting Jesus be Lord back then. Now that I'm in the Messianic movement, I still believe in letting Jesus be Lord, even if I now call Him by His Hebrew name, Yeshua. I think that most other Messianics would say that they, too, believe in letting Yeshua be Lord. For Messianic believers, though, the Lordship of Yeshua affects their calendars in a way that it does not affect the calendars of mainstream Christians who do not identify with the Messianic movement. Let me explain.

In the Christian world, the Lordship of Jesus over an individual's time usually focuses on little more than the individual's use of time. The Christian is instructed to be a good steward of the time he has on earth, to use his time to pursue things of eternal value, and to not squander his time on vain, foolish activities. In other words, to make the most of his time on earth for God's glory - "redeeming the time" as Paul put it (Eph. 5:16).

How an individual uses his time is indeed of utmost importance. But in addition to the "how," there is another aspect of our stewardship over time. That aspect is not the "how" but the "when" of time. The Scriptures speak not only of how we are to use our time as individuals, but also of *when* we are to assemble in holy convocation with our local congregation to meet with Yahweh at His appointed times.

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of Yahweh, which ye shall

proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts" (Lev. 23:1f).

These words serve as an introduction to the calendar that God gave to His people. The remainder of Leviticus 23 lists the "feasts." The first one listed is the Sabbath, a weekly feast. Then the seven annual feasts are listed in order, beginning with Passover in the spring and ending with Tabernacles in the fall.

In Leviticus 23 there are two Hebrew words which are pivotal to the understanding of the text. These two words are *mo'ed* and *mikra*. Let's consider how these two words should affect the Lordship of Yeshua over our time.

MO'ED

Mo'ed is translated "feast" in the KJV. I love the KJV and prefer it far above all other translations. In this particular instance, though, "feast" is not the best English translation. It is not an incorrect translation, but it is an incomplete translation, because *mo'ed* carries with it the idea of having an appointment at a designated time. This is the reason that some Bible translations render *mo'ed* as "appointed times" (NASB), "appointed feasts" (NIV), or "appointed festivals" (Stone Tanach and New Living). Any Christian with a Strong's Concordance can look up the word and see that the addition of the adjective "appointed" clarifies the meaning of *mo'ed*.

MIKRA

The KJV translates *mikra* as "convocation." This English word is somewhat archaic, but it is an excellent choice. The general, primary meaning of *convocation* is "the act or process of convoking." The verb *convoke* simply means to call people to assemble together for a meeting - in this case a "holy convocation," a meeting for the purpose of worshipping as a community.

CONCLUSION: APPOINTED TIMES
TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER FOR
WORSHIP AS A COMMUNITY

A local community can assemble
together for worship at any time.

However, there are certain specific times at regular intervals which Yahweh has appointed for community worship. He has scheduled an appointment for you to meet with other believers on the Sabbath, on Passover, and at all the other appointed times listed in Leviticus 23. If He is truly Lord of your calendar, you will mark these appointed times on your calendar well in advance. When you plan other activities, you will schedule them around God's appointed times. Unless something is very urgent, you will not cancel your appointment with the Lord to do something else. You will view your appointments with the Lord as a very high priority if He is Lord of your calendar.

"BUT I'M NOT A JEW" Some Christians think that the appointed feasts of Leviticus 23 were just for the Jews. However, please note that God calls them "the feasts of Yahweh" and "My feasts." It is true that they are sometimes called "the feasts of Israel" (or even the Jews' feast of tabernacles" in John 7:2). However, this is only because the feasts were appointed for the people of Israel; Israel is the nation with whom God schedules these appointments.

"Then that lets me off the hook," some Christians say, "because I'm not an Israelite!"

Yes, you are. You may or may not have physical Israelite ancestry, but if you believe in Israel's Messiah, then you are a part of Israel - even if you still call Him "Jesus" instead of "Yeshua," and even if all your ancestors were pagans. If you do not believe me, read Ephesians 2 and Romans 11. There you will see that you are now a part of the commonwealth of Israel and the olive tree of Israel. You are just as much an Israelite as were Rahab, Ruth, and other Gentiles who left their pagan ways behind and joined themselves to the God of Israel. If Israel's Messiah is your Lord, let Him be Lord of your calendar. Mark His appointments on your calendar and guard them. They are precious. Q