

ADVANCED DISCIPLESHIP COURSE: SESSION 3 [includes last section of Sess'n 2]

The Appointed Times (The Moedim): The traditional rites of these chosen days sustain us in spiritual power as we prepare within history for God's ultimate salvation of humanity (see the Shehecheyanu prayer). The spiritual legacy of Israel is contained in these days set apart for the people of God to celebrate God's continuing covenant faithfulness. Priestly oversight of the Moedim also fulfills Israel's calling to intercede for the nations. (See Leviticus 16 for Yom Kippur and Leviticus 23 for the other feasts.)

1. The Sabbath (Shabbat): The seventh day is a memorial of creation integrated into the weekly lifecycle for the Jewish individual to proclaim the sovereignty of the Creator. It is both testimony and intercession for the universal confession of the lordship of God. Sabbath rest is a sign of God's will for the shalom of all nations in Him and a foreshadowing of the age to come in God's kingdom. Yeshua is Sar Shalom (Prince of Peace) and Lord of the Shabbat. It is also a covenant sign for Israel to confirm the covenant that brought them out of Egypt (Exodus 20:1).

2. The Passover (Pesach): The Passover feast (Seder) celebrates and recalls our deliverance from bondage in Egypt. The full story is recounted highlighting the blood on the doorpost to avert judgement from the angel of death. Moses is not the featured savior. In fact, his name is barely mentioned. Instead there is greater emphasis on the sacrificed lamb and this points to our Passover Lamb, Yeshua who liberates all of us from bondage. Many 20th century liberation movements were inspired by this event (see further works by Dan Juster: *Jewish Roots; Israel, the Church and the Last Days*). The added celebration of the Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim) on the first day of the week leads us into celebration of the resurrection of Messiah.

3. Pentecost (Shavuot): 50 days after Passover, the harvest (culminating after the counting of days) recalls the giving of the Torah from Mt. Sinai and anticipates the Holy Spirit (Ruah Hakodesh) poured out on Yeshua's disciples in Jerusalem. In both events a great harvest of souls comes into the kingdom and anticipates the final great harvest of humanity at the end of the age. The celebration of Torah which is so meaningful to Messianic Jews is frequently lost for Gentiles who have dismissed the significance of the Mosaic covenant. Israel does not live out the Torah by its own efforts but by the power of the Spirit.

4. The Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah): We anticipate the new year one month in advance by the blowing of the shofar in regular services (we also celebrate the first day of each month as the new moon festival recalling God's covenant faithfulness). An extended liturgical celebration with the Akkeda as the featured text for the sermon prepares the heart of Israel in dedication for the new year and ten solemn days climaxing in the rites of Yom Kippur.

5. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): The holiest day of the Jewish calendar when the High Priest made atonement for the nation in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Two singular sacrifices of two goats – one to be released in the wilderness, the other for Temple sacrifice – provide focus on God's atonement

power both at the Mercy Seat (even after the Ark of the Covenant is missing) and in the wilderness of the nations. The blood sacrifice receives greatest attention at this time providing full atonement for the people of God – originally a day leading to great celebration after the day of self-denial (fasting). Yeshua is our final sacrifice outlasting the fallen Temple. He has brought His blood once and for all into the Holy Place of Heaven to atone for the sins of Israel and the nations (Hebrews 8,9). During this time, Israel continues to intercede both for their nation and the world.

6. Tabernacles (Sukkot): The final harvest is the leading celebration of the Jewish calendar and takes place largely in the home, similar to Passover. Israel is instructed to recall the journey from Egypt to the Holy Land by dwelling in tents which have no ceiling but are open to the night sky and are a lesson in humility at the time of the year when we might be most tempted to glory in the harvest of material blessings. We are reminded that all our blessings of land and a fruitful life have been rooted in the covenant promises and fulfillments of the Lord (Deuteronomy 8). Like Passover it is a pilgrim festival to go up to Jerusalem and celebrate for eight days, a picture of the ultimate celebration of God’s kingdom yet to come. Yeshua particularly identifies this celebration of the giving of the Holy Spirit (Ruah Hakodesh) and some believe that He was born during this feast.

Continuing Material from The Irrevocable Calling:

The Nature of the Torah and Its Relationship to the Life and Calling of Ancient Israel:

1. The Significance of the Mosaic Covenant: has been difficult for the Church to understand because it distinguished between the Moral, Ceremonial and Civil Instructions of the Torah. The ceremonial and civil instructions were dispensed with by the Church Fathers and later Christian theologians as they dismissed the Mosaic Covenant as irrelevant for the Church—an instruction which did not come from Yeshua. (An expert in this material is R. Kendall Soulen, *The God Israel and Christian Theology*.)
2. The Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant instruct us in the character of God in preparation for the Kingdom of God. Yeshua’s controversies with the rabbis are often used to suggest that he was resistant to the covenant teaching of Israel. However, a major step forward in Christian scholarship has begun to emphasize that, in fact, Yeshua’s teachings were actually part of the ongoing development and common discussions concerning the Torah within the Pharisaic traditions of his time.
3. For example, the discussion on the Sabbath in Matthew 12 is now understood properly as a common discussion concerning how strictly the legalities of the Sabbath should be applied. This was a matter of greater concern to the poor and those in rural areas (such as the Galilee)—clearly the more common constituency of Yeshua’s followers.

4. Despite the supersessionist teachings of the Church, as Juster points out: “neither Israel’s failures nor exile have prevented God from carrying out his loving, perfect will enfolded in his redemptive purpose.”

5. The Messianic Jewish Calling Today:
 - a) To live and practice traditions with the full understanding of their fulfillment in Yeshua
 - b) To redemptively foreshadow in our practice the Age to Come
 - c) To live as part of Israel (including making Aliyah as we’re called, see below)
 - d) To be actively part of the Jewish community
 - e) To engage with the larger Christian community as an authentic sign of the continuing relevance of the covenants to Abraham, the call of God to Israel, and the Jewish identity of Yeshua and its implications for the Body of Messiah

6. Biblical Zionism:
 - a) The Zionist narrative adopted by Messianic Jews
 - b) The Palestinian alternate narrative promoted as a colonial exploitation of Palestine
 - c) The claim of Palestinians of Christian descent
 - d) The claim “of the stranger in the midst of Israel”
 - e) The forced migration of Sephardic Jewry from the Muslim nations surrounding Israel and North Africa
 - f) The Islamic claim to Syrian lands which remains in effect
 - g) The call to make Aliyah—i.e. returning to Israel (see Jerusalem Institute for Justice)
 - h) Messianic Jews in Israel today