

Feast Days—Yes or No

Some teach that Christians should keep the feast days as set forth in the Old Testament. The question is what do the scriptures say? We know that this was a problem for the early church when Jew and Gentile came together to worship the Messiah. Let us look at what the scriptures say.

Hosea 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

Isaiah 1:8-18

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

We should be able to realize that God was not truly looking for feast days and sacrifices, but for obedience, and love toward him, and one another.

We will not deal with the Seventh day Sabbath, other than to say that the weekly Sabbath is not part of the Feast days set forth by Moses. Please read the tracts on the Sabbath.

Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

God's law was first spoken to Israel, and then written on tables of stone; but Moses handwrote the ordinances on parchment. This is what was blotted out, those sacrifices and feasts that would not play a roll in the New Testament Assemblies of God. Read The Commandments of God.

Galatians 4:9,10

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

This bondage is to their restrictive laws that were punishable by death in nearly every case. Joshua wrote those curses on plastered stones after crossing the Jordan River into Canaan.

Deuteronomy 27:2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister:

Cross the above reading with Joshua 8:31-35. We see that the plastered stones were a temporal law, being it was put on plaster over rock, where the commandments are written in stone with God's finger twice. Why would any one think that in this time, a time of deliverance, we would keep feasts that are not part of our heritage nor were desired by our God? We are of faith waiting on the sure return of our King and Saviour Jesus. There is no commemoration to keep other than the Lord's Supper, which Jesus commanded us to remember. The letter to the Hebrews is very clear.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. What do you want to serve Jesus Christ our Alter or the feast and sacrifices of the tabernacle?

It would not be a proper to look at the feast days if we did not consider some of the events of the New Testament with disciples like Paul or Peter.

Acts 12:1-4

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternion of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

As we see there is no reason to believe this scripture teaches the observance of the feast days for Christians. We also know that the use of the word Easter was a translation change from Passover.

Acts 18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

This certainly sounds as though Paul was planning to keep a feast, but we must weigh out all things and not just accept things as they seem. Did Paul teach the keeping of the feast days any where in the New Testament especially to the Gentile Christians, the answer is no. Let us also look at the word 'keep' is translated from. The word is poiesai a form of poieoi which has a number of possible means in English. For example: to make or do; to gain; to secure and to spend. The word poiesis, is best understood as "undertake" or do. It should be considered that if Paul did attend this feast it could not have held great importance as verse 22 goes on to tell us that when Paul landed at Caesarea he went up and saluted the church at Jerusalem, and then went down to Antioch. The only message we see is that Paul went up to greet the church at Jerusalem. We need to pay attention to the fact that Paul does not ask or command any one else keep this feast.

Acts 18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

If we look at Acts 20:6 and preceding and following verses we will not find any thing about sacred observance of these holidays by the church. Many of us who do not hold Christmas still make reference to events before and after as being before or after Christmas. Paul being a Jew would do the same! Let us also not forget that Paul was an Israeli and would strongly relate to this, as there is no wrong in these feasts. They are remembrances of our God interacting with his first people.

Acts 20:16 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.

The scriptures will show us that Paul was not worried about keeping the feast of Pentecost. If you read from the above scripture to Acts 21:21 you will see that Paul used this as an opportunity to speak to Jews from all over the world. In Acts 21:17 Paul is said to teach the Jews amongst the Gentile to not keep the Law of Moses, to not circumcise their children to not walk after their customs. In the following scripture we will see Paul uses the term fast, in most commentaries it is believed to be the Day of Atonement, but Paul's use here refers to events happening before or after a specific time. Read Acts 27:9 clearly the sailing was not dangerous because of the fast but because of the time, look also at verse 14. It was now after the Day of Atonement and sailing was dangerous at this time of year.

1 Corinthians 16:8,9

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Here Paul leaves us no guessing he is going to Pentecost because of the opportunity with so many souls in attendance for this major feast. It is a great opportunity to witness to many.

It should also be remembered that these feasts were commanded to be kept a certain way. Only in the place God chooses, at the Tabernacle at Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Joshua 18:1 ¶ And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

Even our Lord's parents obeyed this command.

Luke 2:41-43

41 ¶ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

We must remember especially one text.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. What do you want to serve Jesus Christ our Alter or the feast and sacrifices of the tabernacle?

As stated earlier we must chose whether we want to serve Jesus Christ, our altar, or the feasts and sacrifices performed at the Tabernacle in Jerusalem.

This is only a brief look at the reasons we can not keep these old feasts, all except the Passover, were not even kept in the dessert. They were instituted after they crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land and had gathered their first harvest.

Exodus 23:14-16

14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)

16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

These feasts could not be kept in the dessert as they never planted or harvested any crops; all things were provided by God.

Let us wait until we enter the Promised Land and keep what ever feast God grants us in remembrance of our deliverance.

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