

God's Righteousness & Holiday Calendars

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*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:
because thou hast rejected knowledge,
I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me:
seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,
I will also forget thy children.
Hosea 4:6 KJV*

Funny how Christians declare that only the NT is still in force, yet will quote from the Prophets or Psalms in a limited way to make a point.

Many Christians quote the first part of this verse from Hosea as a warning that we need to **turn** to God. **Check the context: Commentators agree that the knowledge that is forgotten and lacking is the knowledge of our God and His ways.** They do not **RE-turn** to the Law of our God, but continue in the traditions of men. This month's message, concerning return to His Holy day calendar, is among the most challenging aspects of returning to His righteousness. He is calling us out of Babylon, in what is called the Second Exodus, greater than the first out of Egypt; this one involving every tongue, tribe and nation. He is calling us back to what is holy-set apart, and away from what is profane.

In our western worldview, we think of knowledge as that which is accumulated while we learn here in the world. In this Hosea verse, that is wrong! "Knowledge" was translated from the Hebrew word, *Da-ath*, which refers to an intimate knowledge and relationship with our God which only He can provide. It is one of the seven spirits resting on Messiah per Isaiah 11:2. When we are born anew, His Spirit resides in us. We need to bring our natural knowledge/flesh nature into submission to Him.

It has become the norm to not only forget but also actively reject the full Word of God, saying only the NT matters. And because so many people in general and people in authority do so, the majority of people find it acceptable. Perhaps they think there is safety in numbers? Perhaps thinking that since only a minority of people are speaking of the importance of the Whole Word for today ...and many of them outside the institutional church...that they can afford to ignore the message? Why would the Spirit of the Living God speak to those outside the established institution of the church?

I ask:

- Where have we ever seen the majority of people to walk in Truth?

- Where in the Scriptures is Yeshua/Jesus ever quoted as teaching that He was going to change God's instructions?
- Surely during His three years of teaching He would have found a time and place to give these instructions if that were true?

I suspect this is an aspect of accepting "knowledge" in the western sense—what we learn seems more certain than the spiritual sense of accepting what the Word says as true. The artificial dichotomy between the Old Testament and the New, "God of Wrath" and "God of Grace" lives on. Church doctrines teach that Jesus (and Paul) taught a new religion different from that of the Father/OT. These are manmade doctrines, not God directed doctrines. Paul told us:

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

2 Timothy 4:3 NASB

Yeshua/Jesus said that He only did what the Father did; that they are One, unchangeable; that the disciples were trained by following Him as He followed His Father and that they should go and do likewise. Walking after Him is a visual metaphor that also refers to following the cloud and the fire as the Israelites obeyed our God in their deliverance from Egypt. "**Halachah**"—**the way we walk**, is a literal translation of the Hebrew word for how we live our lives while honoring the God of Israel; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; The Father of Yeshua, the only begotten Son of God. This is part of the reason He is called **the Way**, the Truth and the Life! The calendar we keep has direct bearing on the way we walk before Him.

The calendar of holy days and work days as found in the Bible is not the same as our cultural/secular calendars in everyday use. When we see how thoroughly we have been indoctrinated through the secular calendars we will no longer be surprised at the question of whether or not Messiah will find faith when He comes. (Luke 18:8) Even the substitution of "holidays" for "holy days" distances us from His way.

Our Father's calendar provides a full pattern of Holy Days-Feast Days that annually walk us through Messiah's full work on our behalf: from His first coming as Suffering Servant which is pictured through the Spring Feasts, to His anticipated second coming as Conquering King, which is pictured through the Fall Feasts.

The first and second century
followers of Jesus kept God's
holy days.

They have been portrayed as only for Jews since about the third century, but as the fullness of time for our Messiah's return nears, He is calling all back to the beginning, to be one again as we walk after Him. He has been so gracious to us, not loathing us so as to utterly destroy us while we are yet in captivity! (Lev. 26:44) **We were not condemned when we did only what we knew to do.** He has known of and

allowed this division for a season, what we would call Jew and Gentile. But His Word declares that the time will come when all are to come together again as one flock with One Shepherd, Messiah.

In order for His grace to be real, there will come a time for judgment for those who reject His ways. I believe that time is drawing near and am speaking bluntly in the hopes of exhorting all with eyes to see and ears to hear to return to His ways, turning back from ours.

The adversary also has a full calendar, dictating the way we walk and live. It contains elements of truth because the best lies always do! It is so very complex that it is difficult to be brief. In one sense, they are entirely contrary and gear us up to receive the adversary, the anti-christ, rather than the Real Messiah. In another sense, the false calendar/holidays are a distorted reflection of the truth found in the Biblical holidays. I know how hard this all is to take in. Don't take my word for it, or anyone else's! Search it out for yourself.

In the first sense, much of our "normal" holiday calendar is a part of sun god worship, not Son worship. All the common holidays we celebrate in America, with exception of Thanksgiving, are in some way related to worship of the venerated sun gods. They may seem to have grown up around various traditions and may seem disconnected, yet when viewed as an entirety, they make up a similar all-inclusive life style imitating our Father's plan. Doc Marquis, a former Satanist, does the best exposition of how this network of "holidays" is a web, a schedule for ritual behaviors that seek the power offered by the evil one; albeit in public ways that seem so harmless. Manichean and Mandeian sun god worship practices began to be incorporated into Biblical Christianity around the third century. St. Augustine of Hippo converted to Christianity from Manichean sun god worship. One wonders what practices he brought with him. I can't help but view the various sun god practices that revolve around perverted sexuality, that were "sanitized" and incorporated into Christianity, as a part of the stronghold that grips a church filled with sexual sin. Our adversary prefers that we do not know the origin of his power in our lives! That way, we are hindered in recognizing the root of the sin and it can continue to draw people down.

The two common holidays that seem to be distorted images focus on His birth and death.

The Spring Feasts that picture Messiah's first time here, are Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. The Passover is only an evening, while the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a full seven days. We know He is called the Passover Lamb, and that leaven is a metaphor for sin so, like unleavened bread, He is without sin. First Fruits represents Resurrection!

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of those who slept. ...²³ but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 NKJV

So how is it that it has all become associated with the name "Easter?" Do you know that "Easter" comes from the Germanic spring fertility goddess, Ostara? There are various spellings, as is common for gods and goddess legends, but a little research will prove the customs that became associated with our Messiah's death and resurrection, such as easter eggs, bunnies, egg rolls, new clothing for easter morning, and Sunrise service are aspects of fertility rituals and far from harmless. I know how shocking

this all was when I first learned of it. It took me quite some time to pray, study, digest and decide what to do! Sunrise service was always a great joy to me!! I am told that witches find it extremely funny that Christians are naming a fertility goddess while thinking they are honoring the God of the Bible. Calling it 'Resurrection Sunday' is a step in the right direction, yet still rejecting what our Father calls it! And the practice of "resurrection eggs?" Just as the Israelites couldn't make a Golden Calf a part of worship of our God, neither should we expect to "baptize" a pagan fertility symbol and make it for our God!

You can check this out in Acts 12:4 KJV where the word "Easter" is used. It was translated from the Greek word, *Pascha*, G3957, which is of Aramaic origin, H6543, *pesach*, or Passover.

The second distortion revolves around a celebration of His Birth, which we were never instructed to do. Many think the celebration of Christmas goes right back to Bethlehem. A little research will demonstrate that this isn't true. If it were spiritually neutral and harmless, it wouldn't be a problem!

It's not.

The earliest European settlers in the new America actually prohibited the celebration. It didn't become a regular part of American culture until the wave of German immigrants in the 1800's overwhelmed the objections. Many Christians know that His birth was not really in December, but tolerate this without examining it. Where did the date of December 25 come from? An Iranian sun god, Mithras, is said to have been born on that day. The 25th was the winter solstice, more recently changed to the 21st. **The rebirth of the Sun.** Mithraism was a popular religion among the Romans. When you look into it, you will see so many amazing "parallels" that it is nearly impossible to tell whether it is Jesus of Nazareth or Mithras being described. (Search: Mithraism) Constantine, a leader who was said to have converted to Christianity, in actual practice appears to have synthesized Mithraism and Christianity.

If there were to be a celebration of His birth, it would most likely actually occur at the Fall Feast of Tabernacles. The picture of the temporary booths that sheltered the Israelites, tabernacles, is reflected in the words of John who wrote that the Word became flesh and dwelt or "tabernacled" among us. The Mithras practices have overshadowed the set apart day designed by our Father and lured and lulled millions over generations to take a practice that is not directed by our God and "Christianize" it. This is exactly what the Word tells us never to do...use a pagan practice and say it is for Him. (*Deuteronomy 12:1-32; Mark 7:1-13*) It is called "whoring after other gods," like a wife betraying her Husband. Like steeples, Christmas trees are phallic symbols, and paired with the wreath, represent more fertility rituals. This practice does not come from any of our God's teachings but from ancient pagan practice.

Following up on the opening quote from Hosea, where the prophet laments the lack of knowledge, forgetting and rejecting His ways, there is a reference to a spirit of harlotry being among those who reject His ways. (Hosea 4:12 NKJV) In the immediate fulfillment of this prophecy, He was speaking to the situation of Israel having turned her back on her God, and whoring after other gods. This, too, is a situation in which interpretations have falsely separated the people of God. All who call on the Name of the Lord God of Israel become grafted in members of His family, and therefore are considered part of Greater Israel. (Ephesians 2:11-13 among other references) Just as the mixed multitude in Egypt recognized Israel's God as God and became grafted in to Israel, so are we, today. I believe Hosea was speaking to us today, issuing a warning to us as grafted in Israel that if we do not have knowledge of the ways of our God, forget or outright reject them, there is a spirit of harlotry within those who call themselves believers.

CONTEXT! CONTEXT! CONTEXT!

Yes, I know. Someone will bring up Col 2:16-17,

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday,
or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:
Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."*

And they will say "We are not to judge others by whether they do or do not participate in practices that have nothing to do with salvation."

There are quite a few fallacious interpretations here that need to be addressed in order for Truth to shine.

Salvation seems to have been elevated far beyond its place. It is not the goal, but merely our entrance to this journey! Sanctification follows: both immediate and ongoing as we walk and grow in every way into Messiah Who is our Head.

Holy days and dietary practices are direct commandments about how we are to live and walk after Him. The Biblical definition of righteousness has to do with walking His path in His ways according to His Law, being different—set-apart—for Him. In both Old and New Testaments there are multiple references to the need to **act** on what is believed, to be doers not just hearers.

Obedience to His ways
doesn't bring us salvation,
but once saved, it is the fruit
and confirmation of our love
and honor to Him.

Check the context in which Paul's words are found. He was writing to those who now know both the Father and the Son (Col. 2:2). The assembly in Colossae were primarily Gentile in background. They faced persecution for choosing the God of Israel. They are being encouraged to walk in the path that they have been taught by the disciples-- who were taught by Messiah to walk after the Father and honor His ways; to continue in what they now know and not be discouraged by others who "judged" them for doing so.

"A shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Here is both an issue of Hebraic worldview and of translation. The word translated as "but" can also be translated as "moreover." The Greek word, *de*, G1161, is a conjunction, a participle that can be adversative or continuative. Try reading it as: a shadow of things to come; **moreover** the body is of Christ. This is yet another example where the Greek tendency to place one thing in opposition/adversative to another influences the choice of translation. In Hebraic understanding it is more a matter of "if this, how much more so that!"

I would suggest that a shadow can't exist unless there is something of substance to create it. I venture to say that the holy days/holidays of our God are indeed a shadow of the greater substance to come! We have already seen what made the shadow of the Spring Feasts, and soon we will see what makes the shadow of the Fall Feasts. By walking after His shadow now, we are rehearsing for walking after Him in the fullness of all that will come after His return. In a previous article, I already noted that we are told that all will be celebrating the Fall Feasts in the future. (Zechariah 14:16)

Honor the calendar our God set and His Son walked out among us. Return to the knowledge of God that will keep you from being destroyed! Let the fruit of your life be that of our Messiah and not the fruit of rejection, rebellion and harlotry. It is always easier to give up something that proves to be untrue when you have something of genuine value to go to!

Don't take my word, or anyone else's. I know some will question and even ridicule what is stated here. Be a good Berean and study the Whole Word to find out if what I write is true! Check the historical context as well as the Scriptural context. Be one of the "five virgins" who has the oil and is not turned away by Messiah for lack of intimate knowledge of Him! (Matthew 25)

Next time: You didn't know that Believers are grafted in to become part of Israel? You thought that the "church" replaced Israel! What does the Word say? Please contact us at info@set-apart-ministries.org or (920) 634-2760 with questions or comments.

Check out our ***Introduction to Contemporary Messianic Worship*** series—in the Wisconsin Christian News event calendar! Third Saturdays—January-April, 2018.