

4TH QUARTER 2016



JEWISH VOICE TODAY MAGAZINE

YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH *Blessing*

YESHUA AND THE FALL FEASTS

UNDERSTANDING
THIS SPECIAL TIME ON
GOD'S PROPHETIC
CALENDAR

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Bringing hope and healing to Gondar

FROM JEWISH FEASTS TO THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR

How (and why) did it happen?

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SHALOM



Dear JVMI Partners and Friends,

Over 2,500 years ago, the prophet Isaiah declared, ***“Prepare the way of the Lord.”*** I believe this is exactly what we are seeking to accomplish together in our mission to transform lives and see all Israel saved. Romans 11:25-26 tell us that when the blindness fully comes off the eyes of the Jewish people, the Messiah will return.

The coming year, 2017, will mark the 50th anniversary of Jewish Voice, and we are planning to make it the most far-reaching and effective year of outreach in our history. We’ve just completed scheduling for eight medical clinics—the most we’ve ever attempted to undertake.

This is a wonderful season on God’s calendar, and in this issue of *JVT*, we wanted to prepare the way for you to celebrate the Fall Feasts—to gain a new appreciation of both their historical and prophetic significance, as well as how they can enrich your relationship with the Lord.

The Fall Feasts or “appointed times” of the Lord not only serve as a reminder for what He has done in the past, but provide a prophetic picture of what is yet to come. By understanding the original meaning of these sacred times, we get a clearer vision of the future. Everything God does, He does by design.

We’ve also included an in-depth report from our recent medical clinic outreach in Gondar, Ethiopia.

This was a powerful week of ministry as over 13,950 came for medical treatment—and more than 2,700 accepted Yeshua as their Savior and Messiah. These medical outreaches, which you’ve helped make possible, have been a vital strategy to transform the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of Jewish people and their neighbors living in abject poverty.

The Lord has uniquely positioned and equipped us to reach Jewish people around the world, and we will continue to do so with your partnership until all Israel is saved or Yeshua returns. God continues to open new doors of opportunity for us in countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Somaliland, and we must seize these opportunities while there is still time.

We are so thankful that you share our vision and passion for proclaiming the Gospel and transforming lives. You are truly a vital part of everything that we do.

Thank you for your partnership, and may the Lord speak to you and encourage you in the pages that follow.

Your Co-Laborer in Messiah,

Jonathan Bernis
President and CEO
Jewish Voice Ministries International



Visit jvmi.org/shalompartnership to learn how you can become a Shalom Partner **TODAY!**



YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH *Blessing*

BY JONATHAN BERNIS

*These are the appointed feasts of Adonai, holy convocations
which you are to proclaim in their appointed season.*

—Leviticus 23:4 TLV



You have an appointment. In fact, you have more than one. And since these appointments were set by God Himself, that makes them rather important. Yet many Believers pay little or no attention to them at all, much less observe them.

The appointments I am referring to are the feasts mentioned in the Scripture above. The Hebrew word translated both “appointed feasts” and “appointed season” in that verse is *moed*. It means “appointed time” or “set time.” The plural of *moed* is *moedim*.

These annual Feasts—four in the spring and three in the fall—were set by God as times to meet with His People in a special way. Under the Mosaic Covenant, observance of these Feasts was required for the Children of Israel. Doing so required focus and intentionality. It meant ceasing from the busy routines of daily life and expending time and resources.

As I write, we are in the season for the Fall Feasts. They are:



Rosh Hashanah
 (“head of the year” in Hebrew);
also known as *Yom Teruah* or
the Feast of Trumpets



Yom Kippur
or the Day of Atonement,
beginning nine days after
Rosh Hashanah



Sukkot
or the Feast of Tabernacles,
beginning four days after
Yom Kippur

Of course, in the light of Messiah’s coming, we now see clearly how the details of each of these Feasts pointed to Him and were either fulfilled with His first coming or will be fulfilled in connection with His return. This presents the question of whether they have any relevance for us today.

Acts 15 makes it clear that under the New Covenant, Believers from the Nations are not *obligated* to keep the *moedim* God established for the Jewish people. Nor do they in any way affect our salvation. But that does not mean we are not wise to take note of them and experience the blessings that can flow into our lives when we understand how they find their fulfillment in Yeshua (Jesus).

In other words, to ask if observing these Feasts is “mandatory” under the New Covenant is to miss the point. We should not see them as an obligation, but rather as an opportunity!

In fact, each *moed* represents an appointment with blessing. When approached with the right heart, honoring and celebrating these ancient, recurring God-appointments can be a source of tremendous spiritual enrichment. Following are just four of the many benefits:

1. INTIMACY WITH GOD

When the God of the Universe offers to meet with you, why would you decline that invitation?

Certainly, one of the greatest blessings found in the New Covenant is our direct access to God’s throne of Grace so we can find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16). But this access doesn’t just *happen* most of the time. To experience God in a fresh and deeper way, we usually need to be willing to stop our daily routines and meet with Him. It is when we draw near to God, He, in turn, draws near to us (see James 4:8). Observing His *moedim* is an opportunity



to do just that. The result is a fresh, new intimacy with God.

2. UNDERSTANDING WHO YESHUA IS

The true meaning of the *moedim* is found in Messiah Yeshua. We should seek to understand and celebrate the Feasts because they are vivid prophetic pictures of His redemptive work as Messiah and Savior of the world.

The Spring Feasts were fulfilled in detail with Yeshua's first coming. He was the Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the World. He was our Firstfruits of life from the dead. Shavuot (Pentecost) 50 days later saw the outpouring of the Spirit. This happened on the very same *moed* that the law was given at Mt. Sinai to inaugurate the Mosaic Covenant some 1,500 years earlier. And just as the Spring Feasts testified of His first coming, the Fall Feasts lay out the prophetic picture of His return.

When you determine to observe God's "set times," I believe you will discover some aspect of Yeshua's person, work, and ministry that you have never before seen. Your faith will be strengthened, your love deepened, and your heart filled with gratitude afresh. You will know Yeshua better.

3. REST AND RENEWAL

Much like the Sabbath, God designed His *moedim* to be resting places. They are deliberate interruptions to the busyness, stresses, and distractions of daily life. And, as with honoring the principle of the Sabbath, marking God's Feast days in a special

way causes us to press the "pause" button for a season and focus on Him.

There is a refreshing—both physical and spiritual—that flows from such pauses. God, our Maker, knew we needed them. So observe the appointed times of the Lord and find rest for your soul.

4. ENCOUNTER HIS GLORY

Honoring an appointment to meet with God is to set ourselves up for an encounter with His glory.

In Numbers chapter 20, Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel encounter God in the "Tent of Meeting." The Hebrew phrase there is the *ohel moed*, which could be translated literally as the "tent of appointment." Let's explore what happened there:

So Moses and Aaron went from before the assembly to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of Adonai appeared to them.

—Numbers 20:6 TLV

I can testify personally to the reality of this principle. To pause and honor God's *moedim* is to meet with Him personally, and any meeting with God is likely to result in an encounter with His glory.

THE FALL FEASTS

As I mentioned above, the Spring Feasts were connected to Yeshua's first coming, and the Fall Feasts prophesy of His return. When we look at the Feasts through this "Messianic lens," we see a beautiful picture unfolding—a picture of our Savior and soon coming King who was, who is, and who is to come.

Here in the season of Fall Feasts, the *moedim* paint a wonderful picture of the Bridegroom's return to gather His Bride to Himself. I encourage you to keep these appointments—not out of a sense of obligation or requirement, but rather as an acceptance of a remarkable invitation.

Our Heavenly Father has made an appointment to meet with us. Why on Earth would we not keep it? It is an appointment with blessing. 🌿

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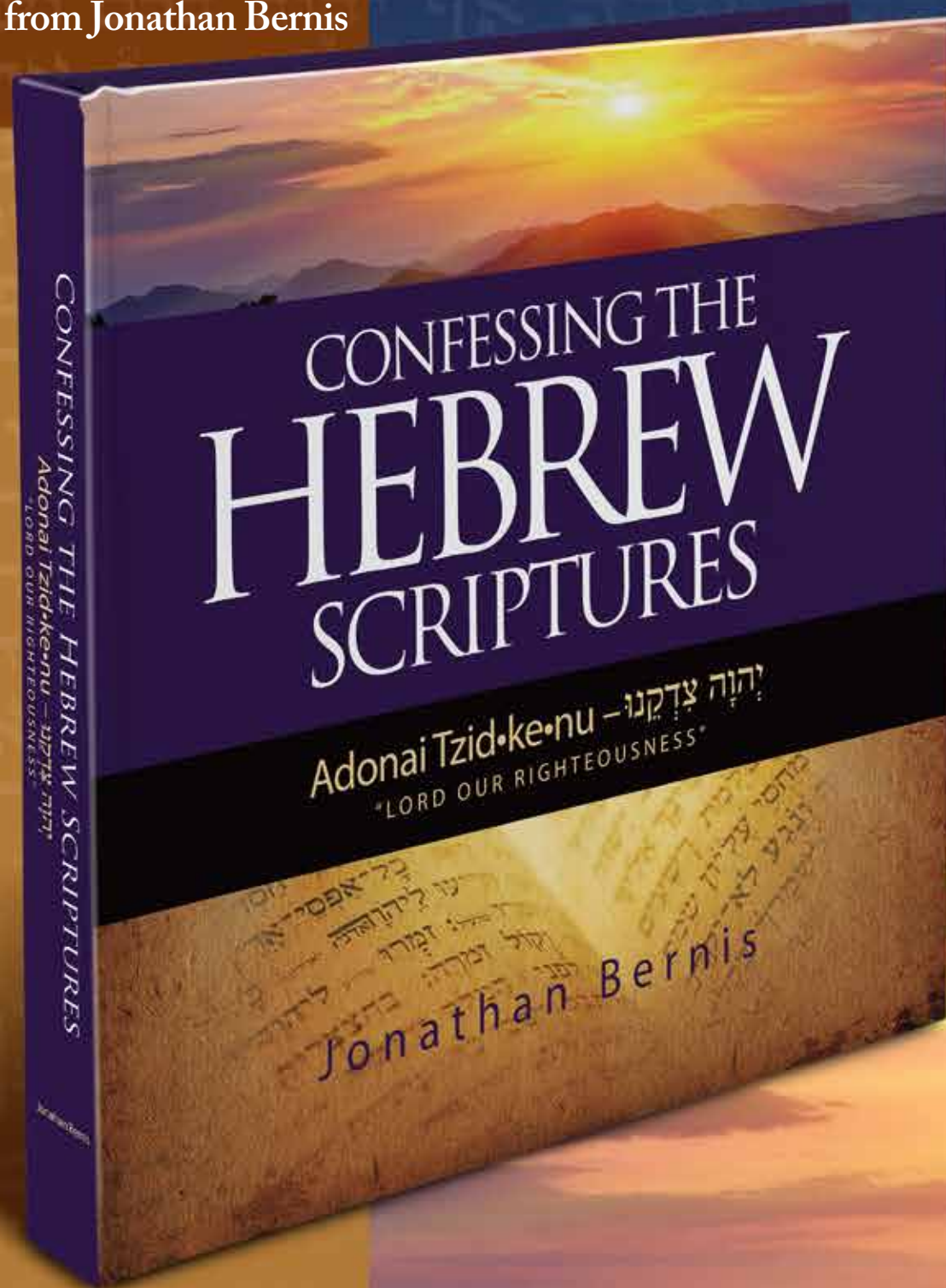
Several times a year, Jewish Voice and teams of outreach partners like you volunteer their time to offer desperately needed, free medical and dental care to poverty-stricken Jewish communities in Africa and other places the Lord directs us.

JOIN JVMI on an international medical outreach mission and bring the compassion and care of Yeshua to those in need.

VISIT jvmi.org/2017outreach or call 800-299-9374 to learn more and partner with us.



NEW from Jonathan Bernis



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Receive your copy of *Confessing the Hebrew Scriptures: Adonai Tzidkenu, Lord our Righteousness* book and accompanying CD as our way of saying "thank you" for your gift of \$40 or more to support the global ministry work of Jewish Voice. 8688

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YESHUA AND THE FALL FESTIVALS

DIVINE PICTURES OF THINGS TO COME

BY JOHN D. GARR, PH.D.

Every event on God's calendar is very important to all Believers in Yeshua. Despite the fact that most Christians have consigned the biblical festivals to a long-forgotten history of the Jewish people, these festivals are just as vital to Christian identity today as they were in Bible days. The festivals which Yeshua and the apostles celebrated as they joined their Jewish families and communities in worship of the God of Israel still have profound significance for the Messianic Jewish community and for all Christians today.

Pictures of the Messiah

The greatest value of the festivals for Believers in Yeshua is that they reveal truths about the Messiah, just as Paul, the Jewish rabbi and Christian apostle, pointed out in Colossians 2:16–17: "These [Sabbath and festivals] are a shadow of things to come, the reality of which is the Messiah." All of the seven festivals outlined in Leviticus 23 are prophetic pictures of the Messiah.

There could not be a more perfect picture of the person and work of *Yeshua HaMashiach* than the three spring festivals. Yeshua was recognized as the Lamb of God who would remove the sin of the world by no less a prophet than John the Baptizer (John 1:29), so it should have surprised no one when Yeshua was crucified on the very day of Passover. The Savior was also the personification of *matzah* (unleavened bread) in that he never succumbed to the leaven of sin (1 Peter 2:22). In fact, he was the bread of life who came down from heaven to give everlasting life to all who would believe upon Him (John 6:33, 41, 50). Finally,

Yeshua was also the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23) who was resurrected on the very day of the Festival of Firstfruits following His crucifixion.

Just as surely as God fulfilled the spring festivals by filling them with the grace of Messiah, so the fall festivals will also be fulfilled by Yeshua at the end of the age. Without a doubt, God "will send Yeshua Messiah" who for the present "must remain in heaven" until the time comes "for God to restore everything as He promised long ago through His holy prophets" (Acts 3:20–21). When the Messiah comes, moreover, He will fulfill all the events in the fall festivals that God has promised throughout Holy Scripture.

Rosh Hashanah: Trumpeting the End of the Age

The High Holy Days of the Fall Festivals begin with the celebration of *Rosh Hashanah*, which is described in Scripture as *Yom Teruah*, "the day of blowing [of shofars]" (Leviticus 23:24). The

penetrating sound of the shofar (ram's horn) harkens back to the day when Abraham, at God's bidding, offered Isaac in the *Akedah* ("binding") on the altar on Mount Moriah only to discover that God had provided the sacrifice, a ram caught by his horns in a thicket (Genesis 22:8, 13). The shofar blasts that are sounded on *Rosh Hashanah* to initiate the Ten Days of Awe are designed to call God's people to introspection and to repentance.

Rosh Hashanah is filled with prophetic insight, foretelling the future time when, as the end of the age approaches, God has ordained a great day of awakening. The divine shofar will be blown on *Yom Teruah* (*Rosh Hashanah*), and this clarion call will be designed to summon Israel, the Church, and the world to repentance and restoration. Joel 2:1 speaks of this *Yom Teruah*: "Blow the shofar in Zion . . . let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near." The importance of this event cannot be overemphasized, for Scripture declares that it will be God Himself who will blow the shofar to signal the end of the age (Zechariah 9:14), just as tradition maintains that God Himself blew the shofar in the beginning of time in order to initiate the creation of the universe on *Rosh Hashanah* (Talmud: *Rosh Hashanah* 27a). The last shofar sound will issue forth this proclamation: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

Yom Kippur: A Final Day of Atonement

In biblical times, *Yom Kippur* was the culmination of the Ten Days of Awe that began on *Rosh Hashanah*. It was the one day on the divine calendar when God annually summoned His people to repentance and renewal. This was a day of fasting and soul-searching in which the people of Israel examined themselves "to see that they were in the faith," a practice that carried over into the nascent Messianic community of the first century (1 Corinthians 11:28). Again, what Israel did for centuries was designed by God to be prophetic

of what would occur at the end of the age.

Subsequent to the prophetic *Rosh Hashanah* blowing of the shofar in Zion to awaken all people, *Yom Kippur* speaks of another profound End-Time event when "all Israel will be saved," when "the Deliverer will come out from Zion and will remove ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26). This will be a time of restoration during which Israel is destined to recognize the Messiah and to be reconciled to Him (Zechariah 12:10). It will be the ultimate fulfillment of Israel's final Day of Atonement when God Himself will open a "fountain for sin to the house of David" (Zechariah 13:1), proclaim all of those who obey the sound of His shofar to be righteous (Isaiah 60:21), and inscribe their names in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27).

Sukkot: The Messiah Is Coming

The Festival of *Sukkot* is the final Torah festival on God's calendar. This festival celebrated the end of all the harvests, but it also required the Israelites to remember their journey from

Egypt to Canaan by living for seven days in *sukkot* (booths or huts). *Sukkot* was described as "The Season of Our Joy" (*Zeman Simchatenu*) and was the greatest time of celebration on the calendar. In fact, the first-century celebration of *Sukkot* in Jerusalem was beyond spectacular. While recalling the transitory nature of human existence, this festival also featured time to search the heavens for signs of the Messiah's coming.

In Scripture, *Sukkot* is called both "Tabernacles" (Leviticus 23:34) and "Ingathering" (Exodus 23:16). Interestingly, when it is called "Ingathering," it is said to occur "at the end of the year" or "at the turn of the year." This correlates perfectly with Yeshua's declaration that "the harvest is the end of the age" (Matthew 13:39). The second coming of Yeshua, therefore, corresponds to Tabernacles, the prophetic time when the Messiah will "send his angels with a great shofar and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:31). In that *Sukkot* speaks of "ingathering," it also predicts that at the end



of the age, both Jews and Gentiles—all the righteous of the earth—will be gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate the last great festival (Tabernacles).


This *Sukkot* will celebrate the inauguration of the universal kingdom of the Messiah in God's capital city, Jerusalem. This was the event of which Paul spoke, the time when in an administration "suitable to the fullness of the times," God Himself will "bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Messiah" (Ephesians 1:10). At that time, the righteous will rule with *Yeshua HaMashiach* (Revelation 20:6), and together they will "possess the everlasting kingdom of God forever and ever" (Daniel 7:18).

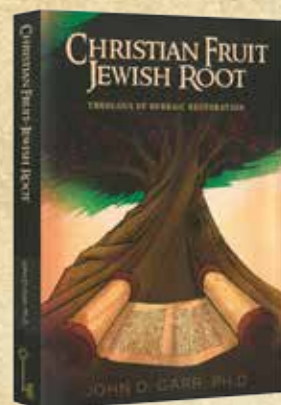
For many centuries, millions of Jews around the world have prayed for the *coming* of the Messiah. Likewise, for two millennia Christians from every nation of the Earth have awaited the *return* of the Messiah. In



the fullness of time, the expectations of both Jews and Christians will finally come to fruition. God's Word of promise is certain: "Until heaven and earth pass away, not one *yud* or *crown* will pass from the Torah until all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). What *Yeshua HaMashiach* began 2,000 years ago when He fulfilled the spring festivals will be completed when He returns to fulfill the fall festivals.

Celebrate!

Messianic Believers—and, indeed, all Christians—still have the same opportunities that the earliest apostles had to remember the most important events in salvation history when they celebrate *Pesach* and *Shavuot*. Likewise, they can hear the sound of the shofar on *Rosh Hashanah*, challenging them to pray on *Yom Kippur* for repentance and for the redemption of Israel and of the whole world. They can also join together in celebrating *Sukkot*, anticipating the return of *Yeshua HaMashiach* in what will be the climactic event of all human history—the time when God will again tabernacle with humanity (Revelation 21:3) and all the people of the Earth will live in harmony as God spreads over them His universal *sukkah shalom* (Luke 2:14; 19:38). 



Christian Fruit Jewish Root – John D. Garr, Ph.D.

For every authentic Christian fruit, there is a Jewish root! Christians owe a profound debt of gratitude to the Jewish people for the foundation of the truths and practices that we hold dear. As you read this challenging, informative, and inspirational book, you will be amazed at just how these roots are bearing fruit in your faith today!

"Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" Plaque

The "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" plaque is a beautiful encouragement to pray for Israel as God instructs us in Psalm 122:6. Resembling a stone gate, this plaque measures 7"x4" and has its own wire stand. Perfect for your home or office.

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SUKKOT:

A TIME TO BLESS AND BE BLESSED



God is a God of seasons and timing. Just as God sent Yeshua in the "fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4-5), the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) is an appointed time when He wants to draw close to you—to meet with you, bless you, and invite you to come before Him in worship.

You are to keep the Feast of Sukkot for seven days, after gathering in the produce from your threshing floor and winepress. So you will rejoice in your feast—you, your son and daughter, slave and maid, Levite and outsider, orphan and widow within your gates. Seven days you will feast to Adonai your God in the place He chooses, because Adonai your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hand, and you will be completely filled with joy.

—Deuteronomy 16:13-15 TLV

God blessed Israel, and in return Israel blessed God.

Three times a year all your males are to appear before Adonai your God in the place He chooses—at the Feast of Matzot, the Feast of Shavuot, and the Feast of Sukkot. No one should appear before Adonai empty-handed—the gift of each man's hand according to the blessing Adonai your God has given you.

—Deuteronomy 16:16-17 TLV

They gathered their harvest and rejoiced because God had blessed them. In return, Israel brought an offering to the Lord. It was an act of worship and thanksgiving. As they did, God continued to bless

them, and they continued to bring offerings of worship. It's God's cycle of blessing.

As we observe the Feast of Tabernacles, it is our opportunity to experience God's cycle of blessing as well. As God has blessed us, we respond to Him in worship, bringing a special offering to honor Him. Our giving celebrates His goodness, faithfulness, and blessings in our lives. It's a time to remember all He's done for us and express our gratitude.





A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS: GONDAR MEDICAL CLINIC



In late May, dozens of Jewish Voice staff and volunteers made the long and difficult journey to Gondar, Ethiopia, for a JvMI medical clinic outreach. The response was truly remarkable.

Thousands of people came for help, many of them walking for hours and hours—or even days—to receive medical care and spiritual healing. Many of them had never before been seen by any kind of doctor. Many of them came to us because they had nowhere else to turn for help.

They are people like Tseley, a mother who supports her two young children by crafting and selling traditional scarves and other handmade items. Her eyesight is vital to her ability to work and provide for her family. She made a grueling two-and-a-half-hour cart ride each way to get treatment for her eyes. She received immediate relief after our doctors performed a trachoma surgery to help with chronic infection and returned later to the clinic for a more detailed and involved cataract surgery. Instead of losing her ability to provide for her family, Tseley can continue to craft and sell scarves because partners like you reached out to this precious lady in the love and name of Yeshua and met her need.

Her story was repeated again and again over the

course of the week. A mother brought her six children so that they could be treated for diseases caused by drinking contaminated water. An 87-year-old man who needed glasses came so that he could enjoy the remaining years of his life with sight. A cataract patient came who had been turned away by the local hospital. Another man walked three hours each way to have eye surgery; he was able to see for the first time in 20 years.

Each story was a little different...and yet they are all the same: people in urgent need with no source of help or hope until the Jewish Voice clinic arrived. That is why they travel for many hours to reach us; we bring hope and a light in the darkness. As great of an impact these clinics make on the thousands who come for help, they also touch the lives of our team and

*Therefore, my dearly
loved brethren, be
steadfast, immovable,
always excelling in
the work of the Lord—
because you know that
your labor in the Lord
is not in vain.*

—1 Corinthians 15:58 TLV

partners in a powerful way.

Each Jewish Voice clinic is made possible by the prayers and gifts of God's people...and by those who give their time to go. From the doctors, dentists, and eye surgeons using their skills and training to heal the sick to the young people sacrificing their time to serve, every member of the team receives enormous benefits from the experience of the clinic.

In Gondar, we were joined by a number of partners who had been part of these clinics before, but we were also blessed by the presence of new faces. For 20-year-old Hannah Cruz from Michigan, the experience was eye opening. She told us she wasn't really sure what to expect, but after a week spent helping sick children, many of whom are suffering from life-threatening illnesses caused by things we never have to worry about, she was very grateful that she made the journey to Gondar.

Hannah said, "It just made me realize how blessed I am. Coming on this trip was definitely worthwhile and something God called me to do. I would tell [someone thinking about coming on an outreach] to not be scared. I feel like everyone should be open to it. It makes me feel good to see others being helped. I'm just really glad that I came."



BY THE NUMBERS

- 2,788 people professed their faith in Yeshua as the Messiah and Savior
- 13,950 patients seen
- 2,451 pairs of eyeglasses distributed
- 133 cataracts and trachoma eye surgeries performed
- 167 minor surgeries performed
- 1,525 people received dental care
- 6,731 LifeStraws® distributed

Though our team has returned from Gondar, the needs go on, and we will return there again and again to reach out in the name and love of Yeshua. When he preached the Gospel to Cornelius, Peter said, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him” (Acts 10:38 NIV). When we hold one of these clinics, we are walking in His footsteps, doing the work that He began. This is our privilege and our responsibility.

For nearly 50 years, Jewish Voice has been on the front lines of the battle to take the Good News of Yeshua to the world. Now, as we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary with a special “Prepare the Way” campaign, we are more thankful than ever for friends who have stood with us through the years and made it possible for us to reach and touch the lives of so many all around the world. Our commitment in the coming year is to:

- Prepare the way for the return and restoration of the Jewish people to the Lord and to the land of Israel

- Prepare the way of the Lord who will return in glory to Jerusalem as the Jewish people proclaim *Baruch HaBa b'Shem Adonai!* (“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”)
- Prepare the way for the Nations and the Church to worship the God of Israel in Spirit and in truth, understanding the times and what God is doing with His Chosen People, Israel

According to the promises of God, we are focused on the future and seeing what is not yet become a glorious reality. We invite you to join us on this journey as together we live out the ancient words of Isaiah: “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3). Together, we will bring the Good News to those who have never heard it before. Together, we will reach out to the Jewish people and the Nations and declare that Yeshua has come to bind up wounds, restore hope, and tell you of a glorious destiny and future. This is our mission...this is our calling...this is our moment. 🇮🇱



DON'T LET THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE HOW TO DIVIDE YOUR ESTATE

Through your participation in the Abraham Promise Fund, you will make a lasting, long-term impact on countless lives.

When you make a legacy gift to the Abraham Promise Fund, you will be a part of proclaiming the Good News of Yeshua to hurting Jewish people all around the globe for generations to come.

Jewish Voice has also partnered with the Financial Planning Ministry to provide FREE WILL AND TRUST PLANNING to JVMI partners like you if you have a need. You will have peace of mind knowing your gifts will be blessing God's Kingdom well into the future.

JOIN with us and create an enduring legacy of reaching the Jewish people with the Gospel!
CALL 1-855-550-1455 or VISIT jvmi.org/apf to learn more.

TO THE JEW FIRST AND ALSO THE NATIONS



Zemzem is 70 years old and lives two hours away from our Gondar clinic site. The \$1 bus fare might not seem like much to you or me, but for Zemzem, it is incredibly expensive. But it's worth it to her as the alternative is a much more costly visit to a doctor. She made sure she arrived at our clinic on the very first day during one of our first trips to Gondar. You see, Zemzem is blind in one eye and losing sight in the other. She is desperate for medical attention. But she's not the only one.

There are thousands—elderly and children, men and women, mothers and babies—just like Zemzem waiting for us to return to clinic sites in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. For most of them, this is their only opportunity to see a medical professional. They suffer with painful eye diseases, dangerous infections, and wounds that won't heal without proper care.

The need is great, but we aren't dismayed! Just like Esther, who stood in the gap on Israel's behalf, God has called us for "such a time as this."

"Such a time as this" to bring medical relief to those with nowhere else to turn.

"Such a time as this" to battle sickness and poverty with medicine and much-needed water purification.

"Such a time as this" to conquer despair with the eternal hope of Yeshua.

Because of you, precious Jewish people, including the most frail and vulnerable—children and the elderly—are receiving compassionate care and hearing the Good News of Yeshua.



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Will you be like Esther and come to the aid of the Jewish people? With your prayers and financial support, we can bring hope, love, and compassion to those who need it the most.

**Prepare the way of the Lord!
They need you now more than ever.**



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These treasured Jewish people need your support now more than ever.
Send your gift today for "such a time as this." Thank you!

THE FUTURE GREAT ASSEMBLY

BY PERRY STONE

■ How an ancient Jewish observance paints a prophetic picture of the return of Yeshua.



There is a lesser-known command given to the Israelites to gather at the Temple every seven years for the Great Assembly. This Great Assembly is a beautiful picture of the gathering together of the saints of God—both Gentiles and Jews—in Heaven. In the days of the Temple, every seven years was a sabbatical for the entire land of Israel. We read: *Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat.* —Exodus 23:10-11 NKJV *But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land.* —Leviticus 25:4-5 NKJV

Every seventh year was designated as a year of rest for all the land. Also, every seventh year, the Great Assembly occurred. The primary purpose was to strengthen the entire community of Israel spiritually by encouraging them to study the Law and observe God's commandments. Nearly all men, women, and children were involved, and the *gerim*—a Hebrew word for *male foreigner*—who converted to Judaism were also invited. This is a noticeable difference, as the three main feasts were attended by all males over age 20. Women could attend, but it was voluntary and not obligatory. The family of Jesus—including His mother Mary and their friends—attended these feasts (Luke 2:41).

But at the Great Assembly, the entire family was present. When the saints gather together in heaven, John identified them as “out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Revelation 7:9).

Called the *Hakbel* (Great Assembly), the event took place following the seventh year (Jubilee), on the beginning of the eighth year. During the Great Assembly, the huge multitude gathered together at the sound of gold trumpet blasts.

This is the second noticeable indicator, as all other feasts and holy days were introduced by the sounds of the shofar (horn of an animal) or the silver trumpets (see Numbers 10:2-10). Here, gold trumpets were sounded. Gold is the most valuable of precious metals, and the Ark of the Covenant, the menorah,

the golden altar, and table of showbread were made of gold or wood covered with gold. Gold never fades or tarnishes and was fought over by empires throughout history because of its value. Gold represents God and His Divine nature.

When the Body of Believers is caught up to meet the Lord in the air at the gathering together



(1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Ephesians 1:9-10), the Lord Himself descends with the “trump of God” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The only allusion to God and a trumpet in the Bible is in Exodus 19:19-20. The voice of God sounds similar to the blast of a trumpet, such as on Mount Sinai, where the moment the voice of the trumpet grew louder and longer, God came down, and Moses went up. When the trump of God blasts its sound, the Lord will descend, and we will be caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Since a gold trumpet was used to gather the Great Assembly at the Temple Mount, then it is possible the trump of God is a gold trumpet, not a silver one, nor the horn of an animal.

On this day in Jerusalem, a large platform called a *bimah* (which is *bema* in Greek) was erected in the center of the Temple Mount, just below the 15 steps outside the doors of the main house where the Levitical choirs would assemble to sing. Once the crowds arrived, the king would ascend to the *bema* and be seated as the sacred Torah scroll was carried by the head of the Temple Mount synagogue. He would give the scroll to the High Priest's deputy, who then passed



the sacred books to the High Priest.

The High Priest would hand the Torah to the king, who stood up to receive the Torah and then would remain standing to read aloud selected passages from the Word of God. The king would begin reading in Deuteronomy, the book with the moral, ceremonial, and sacrificial laws of God, and read to the section that says you shall love the Lord and obey His voice (Deuteronomy 30:20). The king could read the later portions while seated, but it was preferred that he stand.

The fact that the High Priest and the king were together on the same platform is significant considering that Yeshua is presently the High Priest of our faith, ever living in heaven to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). Then in Revelation 19, He takes the new position of King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). Yeshua is a King after the order of Melchizedek, the first king-priest in the Bible, who was priest of God and king of Jerusalem (see Genesis 14). We know there is a judgment in Heaven called the judgment seat, or *bema*, of The Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:10). This *bema* judgment occurs in heaven and is mentioned in Revelation 11:18.

How does the imagery of the Great Assembly with the king and the Torah scroll compare to the great gathering together in Heaven? In John's apocalyptic vision, he saw the Lamb (Messiah) take from the right hand of God a seven-sealed scroll that can only be opened and read by Yeshua Himself. As Yeshua breaks six seals, there is an announcement of six different judgments that will strike the Earth—one judgment for each of the six seals. The breaking of the seventh seal transitions into three woes (see

Revelation chapter 6–9). Yeshua the Priest breaks the seals, and this is the beginning of Yeshua's transition from a Priest to a King!

I believe Paul had the imagery of this Great Assembly in mind, when he wrote these words:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

—Hebrews 12:22–24 NKJV

Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord.

—1 Thessalonians 4:17 TLV

Paul is speaking of the gathering of the saints, accompanied by angels, in the heavenly Mount Zion. The phrase “the spirits of just men made perfect” refers to both the dead who were raised and the living who were changed from mortal to immortal. Paul also uses a term for this meeting: the general assembly. In Greek, this phrase is *paneguris*, which refers to a mass meeting and also universal companionship. It can also refer to a festive gathering of people to celebrate public games or solemnities. It was used among the Greeks to describe the crowds gathered for the Olympic Games. Just as these Greek games were viewed by massive numbers of observers, in Paul's writings, the spectators are the angels of God. Should the Rapture of the Body of Believers occur during one of the feasts of Israel, then this assembly in Heaven would literally be a festive gathering on a sacred festival appointed by God.

W.E. Vines points out that the Greek word *paneguris* comes from *pan*, meaning *all*, and *agora*, meaning *any kind of assembly*. He points out that the word refers to an assembly of all people, in contrast to the council of national elders, or the people gathering in honor of a god or a public festival, such as the

Olympic Games. The word church, used for Body of Believers, in Greek is *ekklesia*, meaning a *calling out*, which referred to a body of citizens who gathered to discuss the affairs of the state. In Israel, however, when the people were gathered together (such as at Mount Sinai), it was a national gathering and not a gathering of individual groups of people, such as would be in a local church.

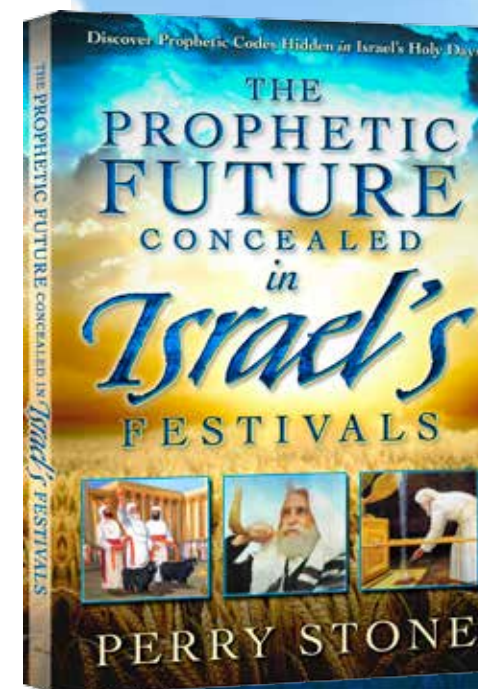
Another word linked to assembling together is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 where Paul wrote: “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus The Messiah and our gathering together to Him...” The phrase *gathering together* is a direct reference to the church of called-out Believers, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life, being gathered together at the return of Yeshua. In 1 Thessalonians, we are *caught up together* (4:17), and in Ephesians we are *gathered together* in Yeshua, both those in Heaven and in Earth (Ephesians 1:9–10).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1, the phrase *gathering together* in Greek is *episunagoge*. The word is also used in Hebrews 10:25 when speaking of Believers on

Earth not forsaking the *assembling of yourselves together*. Yeshua used the word *episunago* when He said that He wanted to gather Jerusalem under His protection, as a hen gathers its chicks (Matthew 23:37). He also used the word in Matthew 24:31 when He spoke of gathering His elect from the four winds of Heaven.

Paul spoke of the gathering together (*episunagogue*) unto Yeshua, which is the initial event of the dead in Yeshua being raised and the living being changed from mortality to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51–55), rising from Earth to meet Yeshua in the air. Their arrival at the Temple of God in Heaven, accompanied by the angels, is called the Great Assembly (*paneguris*).

The scenes John gives us in Revelation are a clear parallel to the seven-year gatherings of Israel at Jerusalem's Temple. It is significant that Gentile converts were permitted on the mountain of God during this special gathering, just as the Jews and Gentiles alike will be welcomed at the Great Assembly to worship our Messiah, Priest and King in Heaven. 🌟



In this book, international Bible scholar Perry Stone unlocks the prophetic future hidden in the feasts of Israel. Not only is the future concealed in the past; it is also hidden in the seven feasts. Discover truths many Christians are unaware of, and explore how patterns, cycles, and types are used to reveal future events!

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- Learn the significance of Chanukah for Believers
- Understand the meaning of the Purim Code and the Haman Code found in the story of Esther

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The insights in this book will surprise and enlighten you.

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BY MICHELLE VAN LOON

FROM JEWISH FEASTS TO THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR:

How (and Why) did it Happen?

I grew up in a typical American Jewish home where our family celebrated all the traditional Jewish holidays. Since I came to faith in Yeshua as Messiah during the waning days of the Jesus Movement in the 1970s, I've worshipped with other Believers in many different kinds of congregations.

For years, I simply took it for granted that each of these streams followed a different calendar. Messianic congregations used the Jewish calendar. Most of the non-denominational churches I attended leaned on our culture's calendar, marking days like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter. Traditional liturgical congregations followed the historic church calendar from Advent to Ordinary Time.

But after my first trip to Israel in 2007, I wondered how the Christian calendar came to be. Most of the first followers of Yeshua were Jewish. How did the Church end up with a calendar so different from the one with which they'd begun? What story does the Jewish calendar tell us about our eternal God? What story does the Christian calendar recount each year? And how do those times and seasons form me as a follower of Yeshua on the special days—and every day?

That story began with Yeshua's mission to seek the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:21-28). He called and empowered these found sheep to carry His message of salvation to all the nations (Matthew 5:14-16; 28:16-20). As an increasing number of Gentiles responded to this

message in the years after His resurrection, tensions rose between the Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua.

While the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing in the generation after Yeshua's resurrection, Jewish Believers continued to observe the weekly Sabbath and yearly festivals. At the same time, they were gathering with other Believers to learn, pray, worship, and share communion whenever they could. These gatherings gradually fell into a rhythm centered on the day of the week in which the resurrection occurred (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

For most of the first century AD, mainstream Jews tolerated as a sect the Yeshua-following Jews among them. In the chaos and dispersion that followed the destruction of the temple in AD 70, however, a chasm began to form between the two groups. As the dispersed Jewish community tried to figure out how to survive as a people without a land, king, or temple, religious leaders clamped down on those sects that didn't fit their increasingly rigid definitions of orthodoxy. Jews began to distance themselves from their Jewish brothers and sisters who proclaimed that Yeshua was the long-awaited Messiah.

By the beginning of the second century, the Church had taken root among the pagan peoples ringing the Mediterranean and into Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia. The numbers and proportion of Gentiles grew exponentially in these young

congregations, and the Church began to disconnect from its Jewish foundations.

One of the first major breaks happened as Believers began to wrestle with how to best celebrate the events leading up to the resurrection—events that were rooted in the Jewish feast of Passover. Greek-speaking Believers called the feast Pasch, a translation of the Hebrew Pesach (Passover). In order to distinguish themselves from the Passover of the Jews, Christians clashed over which date each year they'd commemorate Pasch.

During the second century (and beyond), there were two camps: those who believed the Christian Pasch should stay on the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of Nisan (the start of Passover), and those who believed the Pasch needed to be separated from the Jewish feast day. Both sides wanted to communicate a distinctly Christian message: for the former, Yeshua was the true Paschal Lamb, which meant His followers were Chosen People. For the latter group, Jesus' resurrection was a triumph not only over the grave, but also over all old religious customs and rules.

By the fourth century, the Church had ritualized preparation for Pasch with formal fasting and prayer. This special Sunday became a day for baptism, a beautiful reenactment of resurrection life. The 50 days following the Resurrection Day observance were their own cycle of anticipation and observance leading up to Pentecost, including a worship service and readings in remembrance of Jesus' ascension on day 40.

And a new Christian holiday was added to the year. In the fourth century, Christ's birth found its way onto the official church calendar, commemorated each year on December 25. The Christian holy days thus took on the shape of the Nicene Creed, moving directly from the birth of Christ to His death, resurrection, and ascension (and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost). While other holy days and seasons were added over time, this basic structure formed the foundation of the Christian year still in use by the Church today.

I recognize there were anti-Semitic impulses driving some in the early Church to separate themselves from their Jewish foundations, even as I appreciate the story of Yeshua told by the Christian calendar. I am deeply grateful to remain rooted in the story of creation, deliverance, and re-creation embedded in the Jewish feasts. I've learned afresh from my study of both calendars that my moments and days aren't my own. Each one is a gift from the eternal God. 🌿



So often we feel rushed through life. Author Michelle Van Loon has learned that from

the weekly Sabbath to the annual Passover and from Advent to Easter, time is an opportunity to experience the eternal in the everyday. *Moments & Days* will help you rediscover the great feasts of the Old Testament, as well as the holidays of the Christian calendar, and reawaken to these appointed celebrations that will draw your attention to the significance of time and point you in fresh ways to God's faithful presence.

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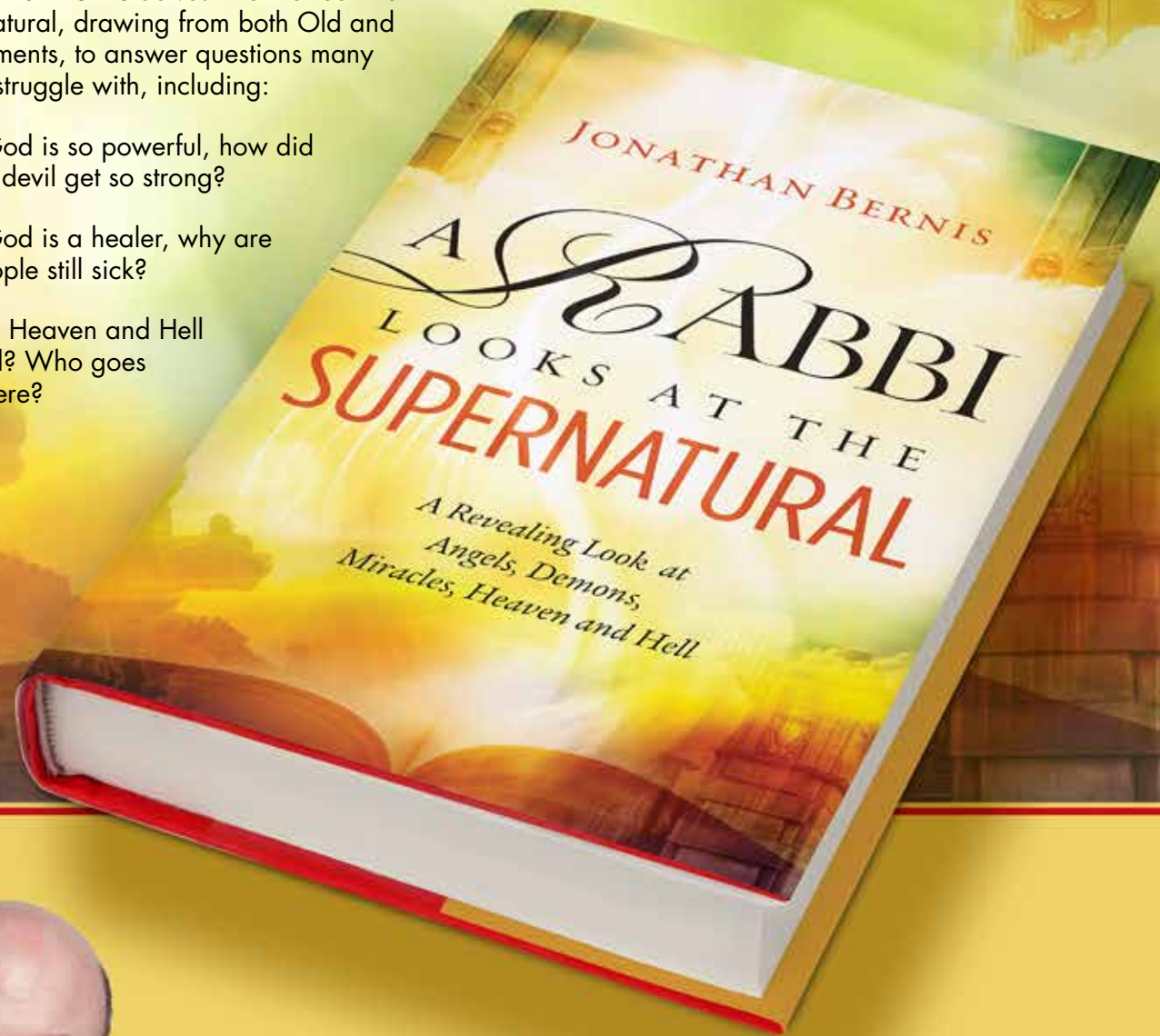
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RABBI JACK ZIMMERMAN

Hebrew School

WITH RABBI JACK

Now that the Fall Festivals are once again upon us, it's time to brush up on our Hebrew and learn a new word that will give us insight and deeper understanding into these special times on our Biblical calendar.

The word is “*mo-ed*,” which is pronounced (*moe-ED*), and in Hebrew it looks like this:

מוֹעֵד

It means, “feast,” and when plural, it's pronounced (*moe-eh-DEEM*), for “feasts.”

You'll find it in Leviticus 23:1-2, which says, “**Then ADONAI spoke to Moses saying: ‘Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them: These are the appointed moedim of ADONAI, which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations—My moedim.’**”

Oftentimes, as in English, Hebrew words can have deeper or multiple meanings, and such is the case here. When we speak of *mo-ed / moedim*, we're referring to these feasts more formally as “God's appointed times,” and that's significant in several ways.

First, that distinction dispels the myth that these feasts are opportunities for the Jewish people only. As Rabbi Jonathan Bernis noted in his article, “Acts 15 makes it clear that under the New Covenant, Believers from the Nations are not *obligated* to keep the *moedim* God established for the Jewish people. Nor do they in any way affect our salvation. But that does not mean we are not wise to take note of them and experience the blessings that can flow into our lives when we understand how they find their fulfillment in Yeshua (Jesus).”

That may have much to do with the fact that Leviticus 23 does not refer to these special appointed times as “Jewish appointed times,” or “Gentile appointed times,” but rather, “The appointed times of the Lord.” They are His. And He extends His invite to

all who wish to partake, should they so desire.

And why would anyone even look for ways to opt out? I find it puzzling that on the one hand, the Lord says, “Come and spend time and see how this special time always did and always will point to Yeshua,” and on the other hand, so many seem to say, “Does this apply to me, and is there any way I can get out of it?”

But *mo-ed / moedim* have another meaning as well. They not only refer to an appointed time, but also to an appointed sign. Look, for example, in the book of Judges:

Now there was a prearranged sign between the men of Israel and the men in ambush—they would make a great beacon of smoke rise up from the town.

—Judges 20:38

See that phrase, “prearranged sign?” That's *mo-ed*. So, it means both an appointed time as well as an appointed sign. An easy way to remember it would be to say that *mo-ed* is literally a special sign of the times! And in more than one sense, that's true.

While we're in the season of the Fall Feasts on our annual calendar, we're also in the season of the Fall Feasts on the biblical calendar. That's because Yeshua has fulfilled the first four Spring Feasts, and in these Last Days, we are in “Summer,” right before Yeshua will one day return to fulfill these wonderful Fall Feasts.

Let us look forward with joy to when that great day comes!





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