

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Leviticus 23 lists the “holy convocations” of God. These words are translated from two Hebrew words, *qodesh* (H6944) and *miqra'* (H4744) and are shortened to the modern term *holydays*. Convocation literally means a *called out assembly* and that is what sets these days apart. While each holyday is unique in its meaning and purpose, the underlying importance is that they are all times that God appointed for the assembly of HIS people to meet with Him; they are HOLY appointed times because they are established and scheduled BY God, FOR God, and TO God.

LEVITICUS 23:2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The [appointed times] [H4150 = mow`ed] of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these *are* My [appointed times] [H4150 = mow`ed].

LEVITICUS 23:4 ‘These are the [appointed times] [H4150 = mow`ed] of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times [H4150 = mow`ed].

LEVITICUS 23:37 ‘These are the [appointed times] [H4150 = mow`ed] of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—

Most people recognize the significance of holydays but their primary purpose is clouded because most Bibles wrongly translate *mow`ed* (H4150) as *feast* instead of *appointed time*. The primary objective of holydays has to do with the fact that they are specific *times* or *seasons* and it is not for the purpose of having a ‘feast’.

For many years Passover has been excluded as a true holyday but does that make sense? God begins by stating that *all* the days included in Chapter 23 shall be “proclaimed”—literally, *called out* (H7121 = *qara'*)—to be holy convocations in verse 2. He then lists the weekly Sabbath as a holyday in verse 3, repeats the command that all the days are to be proclaimed as holy convocations in verse four, and then proceeds to list the remaining holydays, including Passover. God concludes by again demanding that all the days specifically listed are to be called out as holydays.

It seems the primary reasons Passover is not kept as a holy convocation is because it is not specifically called one. Many also assume it is not a holyday because work is not explicitly forbidden. However, work cannot apply since Passover is called a work or *service* because the people were originally required to sacrifice a lamb:

EXODUS 12:25-27 “It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service [H5656 = `abodah]. 26 “And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service [H5656 = `abodah]?’ 27 “that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’ “So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

The word translated *service* is the same word used for the forbidden *servile work* on the first and seventh days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, Festival of the Harvest of Firstfruits (aka Festival of Weeks or Pentecost), the Day of Trumpets, and the first and eighth days of the Festival of Tabernacles. Forbidding work on a particular day does not automatically establish it as a holy convocation—it is simply a typical requirement or limitation.

What is most important and what distinguishes all the holydays listed in Leviticus 23 is the fact that each is an APPOINTED TIME established by God as HOLY for His people to ASSEMBLE before Him. Notice:

DEUTERONOMY 7:6 “For **you are a holy people to the LORD your God**; the LORD your **God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure** above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

EXODUS 25:22 “And there *[in the Tabernacle]* **I [the LORD] will meet with you, and I will speak with you** from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

The central theme for all holydays is they are times God's people are called to assemble before Him for the purpose of being WITH Him and that concept is carried into the New Testament as reflected in the use of two words: *ekklesia* and *fellowship*. It is not a coincidence that people who are holy to God are called the *ekklesia*—a *called out assembly*¹:

MATTHEW 16:18 “... on this Rock **I [Jesus Christ] will build My [ekklesia]** **[G1577 = called out assembly]**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The *ekklesia* began with Jesus Christ, who is the First of all Firstfruits² who are being added to His *called out assembly*:

COLOSSIANS 1:18 And He *[Jesus Christ]* is the head of the Body, the **[ekklesia]** **[G1577 = called out assembly]**, ...

ACTS 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And **the Lord added to the [ekklesia] [G1577 = called out assembly]** daily those who were being saved.

The meaning of the Greek word *ekklesia* is exactly the same as the Hebrew word *miqra'* meaning convocation—a called out assembly. The holydays are appointed times to assemble before God but it is important to note that it is not about a gathering of people to a physical *place* but at a particular *TIME*; that is, a date on the calendar. Only during the days of the ancient Israelites was there a common location for the people to gather. But ever since the Holy Spirit was poured out³, the Body of people called the *ekklesia* is scattered physically around the world:

¹ Eph. 5:23.

² 1 Cor. 15:20.

³ Rom. 5:5.

JOHN 11:52 ... that **He [Jesus Christ] would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.**

MATTHEW 18:20 “For **where two or three are gathered together in My [Jesus Christ’s] name, I am there in the midst of them.**”

Still, the holydays remain centered on the central idea that each is an APPOINTED TIME established by God as HOLY for His people to ASSEMBLE before Him—wherever they are. Why? Again it comes down to meeting with God for the purpose of FELLOWSHIP. How important is that fellowship? Notice:

1 JOHN 1:3, 7 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have **fellowship [G2842 = koinonia]** with us; and truly our **fellowship [G2842 = koinonia]** is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ... 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have **fellowship [G2842 = koinonia]** with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Fellowship is the reason God brings anyone into the *ekklesia*. Having a relationship is why God desires children:

MATTHEW 19:14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; **for of such [that is, CHILDREN] is the kingdom of heaven.**”

A fellowship with God and Jesus Christ cannot be fully experienced in a physical body but it does help describe the depths of the relationship They desire:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12 For as **the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.**

ROMANS 12:5 so **we, being many, are one body in Christ,** and individually members of one another.

The way that the members and joints in a body are linked together gives a sense of the unity, integration, and singular purpose that is intended among those in the *ekklesia*. And it is not just any body. Our relationship with each other, God the Father, and His Son is linked through the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ’s own Body. It is beyond any human imagining or experience so it can only be somewhat compared to a marriage. A relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is one-sided—for now. They know our thoughts and hearts in ways we cannot fathom. The fullness of the agape love and peace of God and Christ cannot be grasped and, yet, it is reflected in the purpose for the “holy convocations” (called out assemblies) and as a *fellowship* with the *ekklesia* (again, called out assembly). This is revealed in the deepest and most sacred of all the holydays—the *COMMUNION* of the Passover:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the **communion [G2842 = koinonia]** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the **communion [G2842 = koinonia]** of the body of Christ? 17 For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Communion is the same word translated *fellowship* in other verses. Fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is the purpose for eternal existence in the Kingdom

of God. The members and joints in a flesh and blood body are intimately linked together and that is the relationship intended among the *ekklesia*. In fact, communion with God the Father and Jesus Christ is the reason behind the Passover symbols of the body and blood of our Savior. As a part of His Body, we are to have a fellowship or communion that is a deeply spiritual oneness.

So why would Passover *not* be a HOLY convocation? On Passover, all assemble before God the Father who sacrificed His very Son so that we can have an eternal fellowship with Them. While work was necessary on Passover, Leviticus 23 leaves no doubt that Passover is an appointed time as well as a holy convocation. Those who refused to observe it were cut off from God⁴. At the very least, it is a sacred and solemn day to the Most High God to remember His Son. No other holyday comes with such warnings:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:26-27 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore **whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty** of the body and blood of the Lord.

HEBREWS 10:29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy **who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing**, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

The central point and purpose of the holydays is fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. While each one portrays a major event in the works of God to add children into the *called out assembly* that is the Body of His Son, each day is an appointed time to commune with the Most High Creator who was revealed to be our FATHER and Jesus Christ who is our elder BROTHER⁵:

JOHN 20:17 Jesus said to her [*Mary*], "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to **My brethren** and say to them, 'I am ascending to **My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.**' "

Brethren, always remember the significance of the holydays is communion with God the Father and Jesus Christ. While the Passover is not specifically considered to be a holyday by most, it is, perhaps, the most sacred, solemn, and important holyday of them all. It made possible true fellowship with our Father and our Savior. Godspeed that day when we have that perfect communion!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁴ Num. 9:13.

⁵ Also Matt. 12:48-50; Heb. 2:11.