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THE HOLY DAYS OF ISRAEL - Biblical & Post-Biblical

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Ariel's Summer Messianic Bible Program at Shoshanah Campus 2025

What this course is NOT intended to do:

make you Jewish, make you want to be Jewish, make you give up your church membership
push you toward Mosaic Law observance (being under Grace in Messiah is far better)

What this course is intended to do:

familiarize you with the same calendar and Holy Days known by Messiah and the Apostles
help you understand the historical narrative of both the Old and New Testaments
give a grid to understand that the plan of salvation develops through the Covenants & Holy Days

Overview and Definitions of the Jewish calendar

A. Lunar vs. Solar calendar

1. The differences: Lunar month=29.5 days ($12 \times 29.5 = 354$)
2. Consequence: the necessity of a leap month to keep holy days in their seasons
3. Jewish holy days have a dual anchor
 - a. They fall on a specific date of a Hebrew month - Lunar anchor
 - b. They must occur within their season - Solar anchor

B. The Biblical foundation of the cycle of Jewish holy days: Leviticus 23

1. Secular nations have separate civic and religious calendars
2. Israel was to be a theocratic nation with a national/sacred calendar

C. Shabbat/Sabbath 7th day, most primary unit in Jewish observance

1. Biblically it was to be a day of rest, not corporate worship
2. In the Diaspora it became both a day of rest and worship assembly

- a. Thousands of Rabbinic rules added to the Biblical commands
 - b. Violating/Breaking Shabbat only permissible to save a life
3. Its current observance in Orthodox Judaism

THE SEVEN HOLY DAYS OF LEVITICUS 23

I. PASSOVER - PESACH - Leviticus 23:5

- A. The historical background and the original Jewish New Year's
- B. The historical narrative
- C. Observance during Biblical times
- D. Observance after the destruction of the Temple 70 A.D.
 - 1. The Elements - added elements seen in the NT Last Supper narrative
 - 2. The Seder, the order of service
 - 3. The Haggadah, the liturgical booklet
- E. Home based holiday, thus with Hanukkah, the two now most widely observed
- F. The Messianic connection
 - 1. John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God . . . "
 - 2. Application of the Pesach elements to Himself Last Passover Supper
 - 3. Messiah our Passover - First Cor. 5:7

II. UNLEAVED BREAD - CHAG HaMATZOT - Leviticus 23:6 – 8

- A. dispute between Pharisees and Sadducees regarding start time
- B. customs, prohibitions and practice

III. FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS - CHAG HaBIKURIM - Leviticus 23:9 – 11

- A. dispute between Pharisees and Sadducees regarding the date
- B. observance during Biblical times

C. renewed observances after the reestablishment of Israel

D. Messianic connection - First Corinthians 15:12-23

1. Previous resurrections were back to natural life, with eventual death
2. Yeshua conquered the power of death over mankind, and His own resurrection is the proof, He is the first fruits, the first of more to come

IV. FEAST OF WEEKS (Pentecost) - SHAVUOT - Leviticus 23:15, 16.

A. reason for the holiday

B. dispute between Pharisees and Sadducees regarding start date

C. Rabbinic additions

1. Promoted belief that the Torah was given on this date
2. Rabbinic customs including dairy foods

D. Messianic connection

1. New Testament mentions illustrate its importance: Acts 2:1-4, 20:16, 1st Cor. 16:8
2. Birth of the Church - Acts 2:1-4
 - a. Two Loaves picture - Lev. 23:17 Jews & Gentiles, w leaven
 - b. First Fruits of wheat, First Fruits of harvest of Jewish believers - Matt 13:24-30

V. FEAST OF TRUMPETS (Rosh HaShanah) - YOM TRUAH - Leviticus 23:23 – 25

A. The original Biblical occasion and names

B. Rabbinic innovations and customs

1. The previous month of Elul is one of anticipation and repentance
2. Belief that the world was created on this date, thus Jewish New Year's
3. Use of the shofar – Rams horn
 - 'Tekiah' - one long, straight blast
 - 'Shevarim' - three medium length blasts rising in tone
 - 'Teruah' - nine quick staccato blasts
 - 'Tekiah Gedolah' - the final great blast, note held as long as able
4. Tashlich service - Micah 7:18-20

C. start of the 'Yomim Noraim', the days of awe, 10 days of repentance

D. Messianic connection - see holy days chart

1. The sound of the trumpet signals rapture of believers in Messiah, 1st Thess 4:13-18

2. The specific shofar sound of the 'Tekiah Gedolah' is cited, 1st Cor. 15:50-58

VI. DAY OF ATONEMENT - YOM KIPPUR - Leviticus 23:27 – 31

A. Biblical intent and practice

1. A day of no work and affliction of the soul, reflection, repentance

2. The meaning of the word kippur

3. The one day of the year when the high priest entered the holy of holies

B. Rabbinic innovations and practice

1. Fasting and affliction of the body

2. The three atonement substitutes: Repentance (Teshuvah), Prayer (Tefillah)
Acts of Charity (Tzdakah)

3. Synagogue service

a. Use of the High Holy Days Prayerbook (Machzor)

b. Two prayer services are added to the usual daily three:
Kol Nidrei (All vows), Shacharit (Morning), Musaf (blessing by Levites), Mincha (afternoon),
Ne'ilah (closing the gate).

c. Recitation of prayers of Confession: Al Chet and Ashamnu (we have sinned)

d. Blowing of the shofar to signal the closing of the Gate of Return

C. Messianic connection - while the animal sacrifice in the temple covered sin, the better sacrifice of Messiah removes it.

- Messiah's coming is for both Jews and Gentiles - Isaiah 49:5-8
- Messiah's death offers atonement - Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - Believe and Confess
- Messiah's death by means of public execution - Psalm:22
- Messiah is a better high priest - Hebrews 5:1 - 7:28
- Messiah institutes a better covenant - Hebrews 8:1-13
- Messiah offers a better sacrifice - Hebrews 9:11-10:28
- Rabbinic legend of the Two goats

D. Messianic Fulfillment of Yom Kippur

1. Future Jewish recognition of the offense of rejecting Moshiach - Hosea 5:15 - 6:3
2. Future Jewish embrace of King Messiah & start of Kingdom - Zechariah 12:10 - 13:1

VII. FEAST OF TABERNACLES - SUKKOT - Leviticus 23: 33 - 44

A. Biblical name, background and practice (Neh. 8:13-18, Zechariah 14:16-19)

1. Sukkot is the plural of Sukkah, a temporary dwelling
2. Reminder: God dwelt with Israel in booths 40 years, so live in booths for seven days
3. Use of the four species of plants (Arba Minim)
4. The eighth day was Shimini Atzeret (eighth day of assembly)(Lev. 23:39)
5. The water drawing ceremony, with allusions to Isaiah 12:3
6. Four tall golden lampstands illuminated the temple courtyards, shining light into all of Jerusalem

B. Rabbinical and current practice

1. The temporary dwelling must be built intentionally as a Sukkah
 - a. Dwelling must be temporary, with a natural vegetation roof loose enough so that the stars can be viewed at night
 - b. Partial permanent structures can be modified to conform as a sukkah
2. Meals are to be eaten in the sukkah, Orthodox men and boys sleep in the sukkah
3. The Etrog is a lemon like fruit, Willow, Myrtle & Palm branches form the Lulav
4. The eighth day overlaps Simchat Torah, the 'Rejoicing over the Torah'.
 - a. The last part of Deuteronomy is read, then first part of Genesis, full cycle
 - b. Synagogues have joyous Torah processions with flags and sweets

C. Messianic connections and fulfillment - John 7:1 through 10:21.

1. Two incidents illustrate belief that arrival of Messiah linked to Sukkot/Kingdom
 - a. Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1 -8

b. Triumphant entry - Matthew 21:1-17

2. Use of water drawing ceremony re Mayim Chayim/Living Water. Jn 7:37-39

3. Use of lampstands re "I am the light of the world". Jn 8:12

4. The fulfillment of Sukkot in the Messianic kingdom. Zechariah 14:16-19

POST-BIBLICAL RABBINIC HOLIDAYS

L'ag B'Omer - 18 Iyar, 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer, which begins the 2nd day of Pesach

- Traditionally, the date on which the plague at Rabbi Akiva's Yeshiva ended
- Date of the death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, major figure in Kabbalah in Safed/Tsfat/Meron
- Large bonfires have become popular, connected with Sefirah/Emanations of bar Yochai
- Community street festivals and family trips popular at this time

The Three Weeks - a period of mourning the destruction of the Temple in the middle of the summer

the period begins on 17 Tammuz, ending three weeks later on Tisha b'Av
no weddings, no celebrations, no dressing up, dietary restrictions

Tisha B'Av (Ninth of Av) is the most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. It's observed with a 24 hr. fast beginning at sunset. Events cited in Jewish history, happening on 9 Av, reasons for the observance:

- 1446 BCE the divine decree that the Jewish people remain in the desert for 40 yrs
- destruction of the 1st Temple by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar (586 BCE)
- 70 C.E. the walls of the 2nd Temple compound were breached by the Romans under Titus.
The Temple itself would be destroyed several days later
- 135 CE capture of Betar, last Jewish fortress to hold out in Bar Kochba rebellion against Romans
- 135 CE Jerusalem was plowed up and turned into a non-Jewish city Aelia Capitolina
- 1290 CE King Edward I signed the edict banishing all Jews from England.
- 1492 CE the ninth of Av was the last date by which all Jews who would not be baptized had to leave Spain. Over 300,000 chose to leave, suffering terrible privations till they found stable new places of abode. Many never made it – victims of pirates, robbers, and starvation. Of those who succumbed and converted to Roman Catholicism in order to remain in Spain, most secretly retained their Jewish identity for generations; they were known as Marranos. Some were caught by the Inquisition, tortured by the Roman Catholic Church and burnt at the stake
- 1914 CE World War One began on Av 9. It uprooted large Jewish populations and threw most Jewish communities into chaos. It brought in its wake the Russian Revolution which systematically crushed Judaism in the USSR, the Cossack/Ukrainian White Army massacres of Jews throughout the Ukraine (1918-1921) and the conditions which gave rise to Nazism and the Holocaust.

Hanukkah - (Dedication) celebration of the victory over Syrian Hellenists & rededication of the temple

The rise of Greece as world power saw Hellenism dominate, some Jews assimilated, the Maccabees & others rebelled and established Jewish independence for a short time

a later legend said that that the Maccabees found a one-day supply of the purified oil, but it miraculously lasted for eight days indicating God's acceptance of the rededication. The origin of the eight days length story was likely a holdover from Sukkot being ignored. Messiah Yeshua travels to the Jerusalem Temple for observance of Hanukkah - John 10:22,23. Celebration today has been greatly popularized, candles are lit for eight days, presents are given to kids, Hallmark cards are sent, Adam Sandler song videos go viral, lines of Jews form outside Chinese restaurants. Oily Latkes (Potato pancakes) are eaten by Ashkenazic Jews, Sufganiyot (Doughnuts w filling) are eaten by Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews & wannabees.

Tu B'Shevat - Occurs 15 Shevat. Called Rosh HaShanah La'Ilanot, literally "New Year to the Trees".

Purim - observed on 14 Adar. Joyful celebration of the survival of the Jewish people in Persia c.475 BCE

Uncle Mordechai and Esther stayed in Babylon/Persia after Babylon's defeat 536 BCE. Prime Minister Haman (BOO!!), arch-typical anti-Semite, worried the Jews are different, seeks permission to kill them.

While Esther believes she can hide her Jewish identity, the core presence of HaShem is there, as Mordechai informs her: "if you do not help, help will arise from 'another place', in Hebrew an alternative name for God. The tables are turned, Mordechai triumphs. The Nazis and Purim: many massacres during the Shoah occurred on Purim. Julius Streicher, chief Nazi propagandist as he was on the gallows: "Purimfest 1946". Purim is celebrated by the reading of the Megillah (book of Esther), drowning out the name of Haman with groggers, masquerades by all and liberal alcohol consumption.

Various Hasidic dynasties have particular celebrations based on dramatic events in their history. Example: Chabad/Lubavitch: Gimmel Tammuz - Yartzeit of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

ISRAELI & GLOBAL JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Yom HaShoah - day of remembrance for those murdered in the Holocaust/Shoah. Occurs on 27 Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, a week after Passover. EVERYTHING in Israel stops for two minutes.

Yom HaZikaron - day of remembrance for the soldiers who fell in the defense of Medinat Yisrael. Occurs on 4th of Iyyar. In recent years victims of terrorism are also memorialized.

Yom HaAtzmaut - day of celebration for establishment/independence of the modern state of Israel. Occurs on 5th of Iyyar.

GLOSSARY - HEBREW WORDS

Baruch HaShem - blessed be the name

Chag - holiday

Chuppah - wedding canopy, used in Israel to refer to the actual ceremony

Galut/Diaspora - Jewish community dispersed after 70 A.D.

Kaddish - the Aramaic prayer of praise said in remembrance of a deceased loved one

Kashrut - the rules of kosher food items

Ketubah - Hebrew marriage contract document

Kiddush -from root for 'holy', refers to the blessing/prayer over wine
 Kippah - the small cap worn by Orthodox Jewish men, Yarmulke is the Yiddish equivalent
 Kosher - literally 'acceptable', used to refer to foods and practices
 Kotel HaMaravi - the Western wall in Jerusalem, a portion of the temple mount retaining wall
 Menorah - the classic seven branched lampstand, the nine branch for Hanukkah is Hanukiah
 Meshugah - literally 'crazy', can be said in an affectionate way. Meshuganah is Yiddish equivalent
 Mezzuzah - the box containing the scroll with the words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21
 Minyan - in traditional orthodoxy, the 10 Jewish men minimum required to recite certain prayers
 Motzi Blessing - the blessing/prayer said over bread
 Mitzvah - literally 'commandment', meaning has expanded to "good deed"
 Shiva - "sitting shiva" refers to relatives sitting at home mourning a loved one
 Simcha - any joyful occasion, often used for invited gatherings, anniversaries, weddings, etc.
 Talmud - depending upon edition, a 24 to 30 volume set of Mishna & Gemara, completed c. 550
 Tefillah - prayer, most often liturgical and prewritten, can be spontaneous
 Tenach - combination of three words: Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim (law, prophets & writings)
 Torah - literally "instruction", strictly/commonly the five books of Moses, often expanded to the
 Tenach, often expanded by the Orthodox all Jewish writings and traditions of all time
 Traif - the Yiddish version of Treifah, something not kosher to eat
 Tuchus - the Yiddish way of pronouncing the Hebrew Tachat, your bottom.
 Tzitsit - the leather boxes bound on arm and forehead, containing scrolls seen in Deuteronomy 6
 Yarmulke - headcovering, type and style is often an indicator of the community of the wearer
 Yom - literally 'day'. Used in the creation account

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 Strassfeld & Seigel. THE FIRST JEWISH CATALOG, THE SECOND, THE THIRD
 THE JAZZ SINGER, 1980 movie, Neil Diamond. For those unfamiliar, it will help you understand the
 strong emotional 'pull' of Yom Kippur on Jewish people historically.

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