



## YHWH'S APPOINTED TIMES

When we are asked by leaders in our congregations to do something or to believe something in regards to Scripture, we should always be like the Bereans and test everything against Scripture itself ([Acts 17:11](#))... the whole of Scripture ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#)). If a person feels "led by the spirit" to speak, behave, or believe a certain way, they should test that spirit ([1 John 4:1](#)) and see whether what that spirit is telling them to do is in agreement or disagreement with Scripture.

Let us take a journey together through Scripture and see what it says about YHWH's appointed times... a "walk in the Word" so to speak. As we take this walk, may we say, believe, and do what is right, be merciful in our speech and actions, and walk humbly with the Lord ([Micah 6:8](#)).

Included as an appendix to this article are references to most (if not all) verses in Scripture directly related to the calendar. If you find a verse that is not referenced and think it should be, please contact the author. Scriptural quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted. Bolded text or other emphases in the Scriptural references are the author's.

## YHWH'S CALENDAR

King David declared in [Psalm 31:15](#), "My times are in your hand". Indeed, every minute of every hour of every day are in YHWH's hand. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." ([Colossians 1:17](#)) When we examine Scripture we find that YHWH has created a pattern for marking time: days, weeks, months, and years. He has also declared some days to be special above others. Let us start with the basics and ask the question: "What is a day according to YHWH's Word?"

### Days

The Hebrew word for "day" is **יוֹם** (*yom*). The word refers to the common, 24-hour day. Although much of the world mark days that begin at midnight, Scripture reveals that days begin at evening:

## Genesis 1:5

YHWH called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

This is consistent with the remainder of Scripture in which we find many examples of items or people becoming and remaining unclean for the remainder of the day "until evening". This is because "at the evening" (at or around sunset) a new day has begun. YHWH established the pattern during the first days of Creation.

## Weeks

The Hebrew word for "week" is עֹבֵד (shavuah). Days are grouped into a 7-day week. This was established by YHWH during Creation when He established the seven day pattern. In Western, English-speaking cultures we call these days Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The origins of these names are not found in Scripture. Instead Scripture always refers the days of the week in ordinal (numeric order) fashion:

יוֹם	<i>yom rishon</i>	1st day
וַיְשׂוּרָא		
יוֹם שֵׁנִי	<i>yom sheni</i>	2nd day
יוֹם		
יְשִׁלִּישׁ	<i>yom shelishi</i>	3rd day
יוֹם		
רְבִיעִי	<i>yom rev'i</i>	4th day
יוֹם		
יְחַמִּישׁ	<i>yom hamishi</i>	5th day
יוֹם שֵׁשִׁי	<i>yom shishi</i>	6th day
יוֹם		
שִׁבְעִי	<i>yom shevi'i</i> (Shabbat)	7th day

## Months

Hebrew for "month" is חֹדֶשׁ (*chodesh*). Rather than specifying a fixed number of days, months in Scripture are always based upon the observed lunar cycle. In fact, rather than "month" *chodesh* might be more accurately translated "moon" or "new moon". Although the moon completes an orbit of the earth in about 27 days the observed lunar cycle is about 29.5 days<sup>1</sup>. As a practical result months are either 29 or 30 days in length.

Like the days of the week are not named but are numbered, so, too, Scripture generally numbers the months rather than naming them. We find the months numbered up to the twelfth (e.g. [2 Kings 25:27](#), Ester 3:13). Scripture does also, however, provide some examples of names of months after the Israelites return from captivity as found in the example of Ester 3:13 where it notes:

### Ester 3:13

Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is **the month Adar**, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

We only find references to month names like this in a handful of verses and never where YHWH is speaking in regards to the months. These names are Babylonian in nature and were adopted by the Jewish people during their exile in Babylon.

## Years

The Hebrew word for "year" is שָׁנָה (*shanah*). Scripture only numbers months up to the twelfth month which roughly corresponds to the solar year. 30 days per month gives a lunar "year" of 360 days. The Earth's solar year (the amount of time it takes the Earth to fully orbit the Sun) is 365.2422 days<sup>2</sup> and we find that each Scriptural year (360 days) is off from the solar year by about 5.25 days. To account for the difference in days there are "leap months" that have been instituted to sync the Scriptural (lunar-based) year with the solar year. In every 19-year cycle a "leap month" (1 Adar) is added in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19.<sup>3</sup> Without these "leap months" the months would occur earlier and earlier each year until they looped back around. More detailed information on this "leap month" can be found at the Judaism 101 website.

## YHWH'S SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Hebrew noun מוֹעֵד (*moed*, [Strong's #4150](#)) is translated in the New American Standard Bible (NASB) as "appointed time", "meeting", or "season". It literally means "an appointment". The word is used 281 times in 213 verses.

### First mention

The first time *moed* is used in Scripture is in Genesis 1:

#### Genesis 1:14-15

Then YHWH said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for **seasons** and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

Scripture tells us that one of the purposes for "the lights in the expanse of the heavens" is to delineate the "seasons". In this context "seasons" does not mean the traditional "spring, summer, fall, winter" seasons but more literally "marked or appointed periods of time". Merriam Webster provides a good definition of season in this sense:

Season (noun)- a time characterized by a particular circumstance or feature<sup>4</sup>

So what "circumstance or feature" characterized these times? First and foremost is that they are established by YHWH in His sovereignty for His purposes.

## Avraham and Sarah

We find an example of YHWH's sovereignty in the second place the word *moed* is used in Scripture:

#### Genesis 17:21

"But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this **season** next year."

Avraham and Sarah had been childless well into their old age. This served YHWH's sovereign purposes of giving them a child at the time **He** had established. It was the *moed*, the appointed time, for the birth of *Yitzchak*. There could be no time other than that which YHWH had established. We see throughout the rest of Scripture the terrible consequences of death, violence, and hatred that resulted from Sarah's unwillingness to be patient and wait for YHWH's appointed time. Instead she tried to have a child through her maid servant, Hagar. When Sarah laughs at YHWH's declaration that she will have a child YHWH confronts her and says:

Genesis 18:14

"Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the **appointed time** I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Here the word *moed* is translated as "appointed time". This is consistent with the primary meaning of the word. Scripture confirms what YHWH declared:

Genesis 21:2

So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the **appointed time** of which YHWH had spoken to him.

## COVENANT MOEDIM

Some of the appointed times given in Scripture are for specific individuals (such as Sarah and Abraham above) and others are intended for all of the family of YHWH. These are often given as "ordinances" of YHWH. The Hebrew word usually translated as "ordinance" is the Hebrew word *chukkah*. The word has the sense of "a royal command" that does not need to have any particular rhyme or reason for it. The King has ordered it and it must be done. *Chukkah* ([Strong's #2708](#)) is derived from the Hebrew word *chok* ([Strong's #2706](#)) which means "an enactment" or "an appointment". Here we see the "appointment" nature of the word *moed* reinforced.

The first of these covenant *moedim* is found in Exodus 13:

Exodus 13:3-7, 10

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten.

"On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth.

"It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month.

"For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD.

"Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders.

"Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance [chukkah] at its **appointed time** [moed] from year to year.

Thus YHWH has commanded His people, Israel, to keep the *moed* of *Pesach* [Passover].

## YHWH'S *MOEDIM*

Leviticus chapter 23 provides a detailed list of YHWH's appointed times.

### **Shabbat (Sabbath)**

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:1-3](#)

**Lev 23:1** And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying,

**Lev 23:2** "Speak to the children of Yisra'ël, and say to them, 'The appointed times of יהוה, which you are to proclaim as set-apart gatherings, My appointed times, are these:

**Lev 23:3** 'Six days work is done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a set-apart gathering. You do no work, it is a Sabbath to יהוה in all your dwellings.

- **Date:** the seventh day of each week. It (roughly) corresponds to Saturday in the western calendar.
- **Event:** memorial of the seventh day of creation on which YHWH ceased from his work of creating.
- **Pictures of Messiah:** Messiah Yeshua is Lord of the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:8](#)). In Him we find our Sabbath rest ([Hebrews 4:9](#)).

*Shabbat* is a very special day. It is the very first thing in Scripture that YHWH sanctified for Himself ([Genesis 2:3](#)). Even before the Israelites had reached Mount Sinai He gave them the Sabbath. ([Exodus 16:23](#)). It is the only day YHWH included and honoured in the 10 Commandments ([Exodus 20:8](#)). There He commanded us to remember it and keep it holy.

Scripture refers to this as a *b'rit olam* [an "eternal covenant"] ([Exodus 31:16](#)), and also calls it an *ot hu olam* [an "eternal sign"] between YHWH and the children of Israel ([Exodus 31:17](#)).

### **Pesach (Passover)**

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:4-5](#)

**Lev 23:4** 'These are the appointed times of יהוה, set-apart gatherings which you are to proclaim at their appointed times.

**Lev 23:5** 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the evenings, is the Passover to יהוה.

- **Date:** The 14th day of the first month (Nisan 14)
- **Event:** The memorial of being "passed over" by the angel of death in Egypt
- **Pictures of Messiah:** The death of the "Lamb of YHWH" as our *Pesach* offering: marking us and setting us apart as YHWH's people. Scripture refers to this as an *olam chukkah*, an "eternal command".

### **Chag Matzah (Feast of Unleavened Bread)**

- **Scripture:** [Exodus 13:6-8](#), [Leviticus 23:6-8](#)

**Lev 23:6** 'And on the fifteenth day of this month is the Festival of Unleavened Bread to יהוה – seven days you eat unleavened bread.

**Lev 23:7** 'On the first day you have a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.

**Lev 23:8** 'And you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה for seven days. On the seventh day is a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.' "

- **Date:** The 14th-21st of the first month (Nisan)
- **Event:** Delivery from slavery and bondage in Egypt
- **Pictures of Messiah:** He **is** the unleavened Bread of Life [leaven is symbolic of sin]. Scripture refers to this as an *olam chukkah*, an "eternal command".

## Yom HaBikkurim (Day of the First Fruits)

- **Scripture:** [Exodus 23:16](#), [Leviticus 23:9-14](#)

**Lev 23:9** And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying,

**Lev 23:10** “Speak to the children of Yisra’el, and you shall say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I give you, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest.

**Lev 23:11** ‘And he shall wave the sheaf before יהוה, for your acceptance. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest waves it.

**Lev 23:12** ‘And on that day when you wave the sheaf, you shall prepare a male lamb a year old, a perfect one, as a burnt offering to יהוה,

**Lev 23:13** and its grain offering: two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to יהוה, a sweet fragrance, and its drink offering: one-fourth of a hin of wine.

**Lev 23:14** ‘And you do not eat bread or roasted grain or fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your Elohim – a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

- **Date:** The first day of the week following Pesach
- **Event:** Thanksgiving for the first fruits of the Land
- **Pictures of Messiah:** The resurrection of Messiah Yeshua, Himself. By His resurrection He **is** the "first fruits" of those who are asleep ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)). Scripture refers to this as an *olam chukkah*, an "eternal command".

## Shavuot (Feast of "Weeks", Pentacost)

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:15-21](#)

**Lev 23:15** ‘And from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, you shall count for yourselves: seven completed Sabbaths.

**Lev 23:16** ‘Until the morrow after the seventh Sabbath you count fifty days, then you shall bring a new grain offering to יהוה.

**Lev 23:17** ‘Bring from your dwellings for a wave offering two loaves of bread, of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour they are, baked with leaven, first-fruits to יהוה.

**Lev 23:18** ‘And besides the bread, you shall bring seven lambs a year old, perfect ones, and one young bull and two rams. They are a burnt offering to יהוה, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet fragrance to יהוה.

**Lev 23:19** ‘And you shall offer one male goat as a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old, as a peace offering.

**Lev 23:20** ‘And the priest shall wave them, besides the bread of the first-fruits, as a wave offering before יהוה, besides the two lambs. They are set-apart to יהוה for the priest.

**Lev 23:21** ‘And on this same day you shall proclaim a set-apart gathering for yourselves, you do no servile work on it – a law forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

- **Date:** The eighth "first day of the week" after *Yom HaBikkurim*
- **Event:** The memorial of covenant establishment of the people of YHWH. First at Sinai and second in Yerushalayim with the giving of the Holy Spirit.
- **Pictures of Messiah:** The giving of His promised Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).

## Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets, Judgment Day)

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:23-25](#)

**Lev 23:23** And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying,

**Lev 23:24** “Speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you have a rest, a remembrance of blowing of trumpets, a set-apart gathering.

**Lev 23:25** ‘You do no servile work, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה.’ ”

- **Date:** The first day of the seventh month (Tishri 1)
- **Event:** The memorial of the entrance into the Promised Land.  
This is traditionally a day when our deeds from the past year are judged.
- **Pictures of Messiah:** This pictures of Mashiach's future return ([1 Corinthians 15:52](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#))

## Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:26-32](#)

**Lev 23:26** And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying,

**Lev 23:27** “On the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a set-apart gathering for you. And you shall afflict your beings, and shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה.

**Lev 23:28** “And you do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before יהוה your Elohim.

**Lev 23:29** “For any being who is not afflicted on that same day, he shall be cut off from his people.

**Lev 23:30** “And any being who does any work on that same day, that being I shall destroy from the midst of his people.

**Lev 23:31** “You do no work – a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

**Lev 23:32** ‘It is a Sabbath of rest to you, and you shall afflict your beings. On the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you observe your Sabbath.’ ”

- **Date:** The tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri 10)
- **Event:** The day when names are inscribed in the Book of Life.  
Judgments are traditionally sealed and annual atonement is provided.
- **Pictures of Messiah:** This provides a picture of Messiah's future restoration of the nation of Israel.  
Scripture refers to this (three times in six verses) as an *olam chukkah*, an "eternal command".

## Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)

- **Scripture:** [Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43](#)

**Lev 23:33** And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying,

**Lev 23:34** “Speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Festival of Booths for seven days to יהוה.

**Lev 23:35** ‘On the first day is a set-apart gathering, you do no servile work.

**Lev 23:36** ‘For seven days you bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. On the eighth day there shall be a set-apart gathering for you, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. It is a closing festival, you do no servile work.

**Lev 23:39** ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather in the fruit of the land, observe the festival of יהוה for seven days. On the first day is a rest, and on the eighth day a rest.

**Lev 23:40** ‘And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of good trees, branches of palm trees, twigs of leafy trees, and willows of the stream, and shall rejoice before יהוה your Elohim for seven days.

**Lev 23:41** ‘And you shall observe it as a festival to יהוה for seven days in the year – a law forever in your generations. Observe it in the seventh month.

**Lev 23:42** ‘Dwell in booths for seven days; all who are native Yisra’elites dwell in booths,

**Lev 23:43** so that your generations know that I made the children of Yisra’el dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Mitsrayim. I am יהוה your Elohim.’ ”

- **Date:** Tishri 15-23
- **Event:** The memorial of when Israel dwelt in tents [*sukkot*] during our wandering in the desert.  
It is also a picture of the future when YHWH will spread His tabernacle over us ([Revelation 7:15](#)).
- **Pictures of Messiah:** This pictures Messiahs' birth when He tabernacled among us ([John 1:14](#)).

Scripture refers to this as an *olam chukkah*, an "eternal command".

**Lev 23:37** 'These are the appointed times of יהוה which you proclaim as set-apart gatherings, to bring an offering made by fire to יהוה, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a slaughtering and drink offerings, as commanded for every day –

**Lev 23:38** besides the Sabbaths of יהוה, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your voluntary offerings which you give to יהוה.

**Lev 23:44** Thus did Mosheh speak of the appointed times of יהוה to the children of Yisra'ël.

## Rosh Chodesh (Head of the Month/New Moon Festival)

- **Scripture:** [Numbers 28:11-14](#)
- **Date:** traditionally this occurs when the first sliver of the waxing moon is sighted
- **Event:** a monthly reminder of YHWH's sovereignty over all creation. This ties back to [Genesis 1:14-15](#).
- **Pictures of Messiah:** This is a picture of our renewal in Mashiach ([Colossians 3:10](#)).

## SPECIAL SABBATHS

Throughout the year, there are four sabbath days that are made special in some additional way but are not associated with a festival, rosh chodesh, or other *moed*. All of them are described in Scripture, however, the specific dates are set by tradition. On these special sabbaths, two Torah portions are read: the first seven *aliyot* [readings] are taken from the regular weekly *parashah* and the *maftir* [the ending reading] is read from another portion associated with the special sabbath. These four special sabbaths are:

- Shabbat Shekalim
- Shabbat Zachor
- Shabbat Parah
- Shabbat HaChodesh

### Shabbat Shekalim

This is the date when the annual half-shekel is given by the sons of Israel to support maintenance and operation of the Temple (see [Exodus 30:11-16](#)). This contribution is used as a means of taking a census since the sons of Israel are not to be counted in the normal manner ([Exodus 30:12](#)) but are to be counted by the "ransom" provided by the half-shekel.

### Shabbat Zachor

On this date, the sabbath before Purim, we fulfill the commandment given by YHWH to "remember [*zachor*] what Amalek did to you" ([Deuteronomy 25:17-19](#)). The *Torah* portion that contains the commandment is read in order to verbally recall what the people of Amalek did to Israel as they departed from Egypt. A passage from 1 Samuel is also read to recall King Saul's failure to heed this commandment.

### Shabbat Parah

This special sabbath is associated with the commandment of the Red Heifer [the *Parah Adumah*]. On this sabbath we read the chapter containing the commandments regarding the Red Heifer (Numbers 19) and the prophetic promise of Ezekiel 36 that YHWH will "sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean..." It is a reminder of the promise that the LORD will return and will remove our heart of stone, give us a heart of flesh ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)), and cause us to walk in His statutes (v 37).

## Shabbat HaChodesh

On this sabbath day, we remember the commandment from [Exodus 12:2](#), that Nisan shall be the beginning of months. This day is either the Shabbat before or the day of (if rosh chodesh Nisan falls on a sabbath day) Nisan 1. On this date we received the first commandment as a nation: sanctify the new moon. We read the passage from Exodus 12 as well as another prophetic promise from Ezekiel: the LORD will return and the "prince" of the people of Israel will provide the burnt offerings including the special offering given on the first month [*Nisan*] on the first of the month. These four special *Shabbatot* are part of the traditional synagogue order and Torah-based calendar and each of them provides a picture of Messiah and His work of redemption... and the promise of His return.

## OTHER SPECIAL DAYS

There are other special days mentioned in Scripture that are not specifically **commanded** by YHWH but that are observed as special due to their inclusion within Scripture.

### Tish B'Av (9th of Av)

- **Scripture:** [Zechariah 8:19](#) [The fifth month is the month of Av.]
- **Date:** Av 9
- **Event:** This is a day of mourning and fasting because of the repeated tragedies that have befallen the people of Israel on this day.
- On Tish B'Av:
  - The 12 spies sent by Moshe returned with a bad report of the Land (according to tradition it was on Tish B'Av). The Israelites believed the bad report which set the stage for forty years of wandering in the desert.
  - 586 BCE, the first Temple was destroyed.
  - 70 CE, the second Temple was destroyed.
  - 135 CE, many thousands of Jews were slaughtered in the Bar Kochba revolt.
  - 1095 CE, the First Crusade began in which many Jews were killed and Jewish communities were completely destroyed.
  - 1290 CE, a decree was signed ordering Jews to be expelled from England.
  - 1492 CE, Jews were expelled from Spain in one of the greatest upheavals of the Jewish people in history.
  - 1914 CE, World War 1 broke out. It was the smouldering anger and resentment from the loss of this war within Germany that brought about WWII and the Holocaust.

### Chanukah (Feast of Dedication/Festival of Lights)

- **Scripture:** [John 10:22-23](#). The story of Chanukah is detailed in the apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees.
- **Date:** 8 days between Kislev 25-Cheshvan 4
- **Event:** The memorial of the re-dedication of the Temple under the Maccabees and YHWH's miraculous work of making 1 days worth of oil last for 8 days.
- **Pictures of Messiah:** As the "light of the world", Messiah was likely conceived around this time.

### Purim (Lots/Feast of Ester)

- **Scripture:** Ester 9:20-22
- **Date:** Adar 14
- **Event:** The memorial of the triumph of the Jews over their enemies.

## FINAL NOTES

There are some who would say that these are **Jewish** holidays and festivals that are not applicable or relevant to believers today. This is not so.

YHWH declares "these are **my** appointed times" ([Leviticus 23:2](#)). He does not say to the Israelites "these are **your** appointed times." These are YHWH's special days of appointment for any who would seek Him. Scripture also tells us there is one Law for the Israelite (the native born) and the foreigner (non-native born) who travels the paths of this world with them:

Numbers 15:15-16

'As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.'

May we who are joined to Israel by the blood of Messiah in the New Covenant learn, honour, and enjoy the blessing of YHWH's *moedim*... His appointed times.

