

TRADITIONS - TRADITIONS!

By Rood Crew Commentator, Glenn McWilliams

One of the most precious memories from my childhood is that of the occasional family slideshow. Every now and then on a quiet winter night, when the sky grew dark, my father would dig to the back of the cramped coat closet like a pirate digging for buried treasure. After several minutes of muffled complaint, out he would come with the old slide projector, retractable screen, a little TV dinner tray, and some boxes of old slides. Instantly our living room would be transformed into a miniature theater. Emerging from the kitchen were the smell of popcorn and the sound of exploding kernels ricocheting off of the aluminum sides of the electric popcorn popper. Soon, the lights would be turned off, the Hi-Fi turned down, and - with the flip of a switch - we would all be staring in anticipation at the bright light reflecting off of the white blank screen. For hours we would all marvel at my father's slides from Japan, where he spent two years of his life in the Army before my brother and I were born. We would view family pictures of times, events, pets, and loved ones long lost to memory. We would relive family vacations, graduations, birthdays, holiday gatherings, and an occasional spectacular sunset, snowfall, or some other creative act of God captured on film. In between episodes, my brother and I would jump to place our contorted hands before the intense beam of light being cast upon the empty screen: each twist and turn of our fingers casting shadow pictures of dogs, rabbits, camels, birds, butterflies, monsters, funny faces, and anything else our over-active imaginations could conceive.

After numerous *oohs*, *aaahs*, laughs and tears, the seemingly endless supply of slides would be exhausted, the popcorn would run out, and the show would come to an end. We would wince as the lights were suddenly turned on. Now, with the popcorn gone, the lights bright, and our hearts gently warmed, Dad would fold up the screen while the projector fan hummed quietly in the background, and we would all look intently at one another and remember that we were family. Those fading photographs were the semi-permanent witnesses that we were indeed connected to one another by more than just blood. We were a family with a history and a heritage that was uniquely our own. Within the frames of those slides were recorded our shared moments and memories, hard times, good times, great times. Those occasional slideshows in our little living room theater served as the reminder that we belonged to one another. Eventually, like the slides themselves, these feelings would begin to fade, exhausted by the stress and strain of daily schedules and the march of time. Responsibilities, duties, and desires would eventually pull us all in opposite directions and away from one another. And so, when it seemed that we were all becoming strangers to each other, passing one another without concern or connection, my dad would again venture into the closet and search for the hidden treasures buried behind the moth balls and winter coats. The shadow pictures would begin all over again.

Most of our families have such traditions. We all need special times to connect or reconnect us with our history, our heritage, our friends, our people, and our family. This is the reason we have traditions. For most people, this is what the "HOLIDAYS" are all about. Holidays are about the things that bind us together. In the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, Teviah answers the

question, “What keeps the fiddler from falling off the roof?” with one word: **TRADITION!** This is a profound insight. It is indeed tradition that binds us together and protects our identity. When we loose these traditions we often find ourselves feeling cut off, isolated, confused, feeling like we’re on shaky ground.

For most American believers in Jesus, these foundational traditions have generally focused upon the three big holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. For many families, these are the only times within the year where the extended family has the time, and/or the desire, to gather together as a family. Year after year, the “Christian” influence upon our culture has accommodated and encouraged the building of traditions that identify us and bind us together, both as individual families, and also as a part of a larger family called “the Church”. It should not surprise us then that it is precisely these same time-honored family traditions that often become the greatest stumbling block for those believers in Y’shua that have been stirred by the Holy Spirit to leave traditional Christianity and begin living a Torah-observant life.

Many Torah-observant Believers in Y’shua as the Messiah find themselves, either suddenly or eventually, in conflict with their family’s traditions and customs. Newly discovered truths concerning the origins of Christianity’s feasts and traditions tear at the very heart of the Christian family itself. It is precisely these moments that evoke remembrances of Y’shua’s words to those who would be his followers:

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew.10:37), and again, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26), and yet again, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The Father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother...” (Luke 12:51-53).

Anyone who has ever tried to explain to their family that they were no longer going to celebrate Christmas and Easter or attend Church on Sunday mornings knows first-hand what Y’shua was talking about. These are some of the most difficult and volatile situations that a family will ever endure. To break from these time-honored family traditions that every year identify and bind the family together is tantamount to breaking away from the family itself. But this need not be the case. I believe that with a little effort, much of the hurt, heart ache, loneliness, and offense can be avoided in these matters. In fact, I believe that it is possible, with a little love, knowledge, and understanding, to not only preserve the family, but to strengthen it as well. Therefore, let us turn our attention to the matter at hand.

There are two critical issues at the heart of this volatile situation that require careful understanding. The first issue is the enormous amounts of emotion and sentimentality that overlay most of our family traditions. As has already been stated, these family traditions are often seen as the glue that binds the family together. To threaten these traditions is seen as

threatening the family itself. The second issue is the forbidden pagan practices that unfortunately underlay many of these same beloved family traditions. For the Torah-observant believer, this is where the conflict begins.

Most believers will acknowledge and agree that Christmas and Easter are indeed rooted in a pagan past and are filled with numerous pagan symbols and forms of worship. December 25th, for example, is not and never was the birthday of Y'shua. Instead, this widely celebrated date marks the birthday of a pagan fertility god named Tamuz. Both the Christmas Tree and the Yule Log are also pagan symbols borrowed from the Babylonian, Druid, and Norse traditions that commemorate the winter solstice. Santa Claus himself is simply a remake of the Canaanite god Marduk, the god of prosperity, to whom people sacrificed their infants in hopes of receiving gifts. The 40 days of Lent are set apart for the grieving of Tamuz worshippers. This 40 day period was observed in the ancient orient by denying oneself some sweet pleasure in this life, so that it may accompany Tamuz into the afterlife. The Christian celebration of Easter is named after the fertility goddess Eos, Ishtar or Astarte, whose worship is mentioned in the Bible as an abomination to the LORD. The tradition of dying Easter eggs comes from the practice of dipping eggs in the blood of the sacrificed infants of the cultic prostitutes of the temples of Ishtar. All of these "traditions" are condemned in the Torah. YHVH forbids even the mention of the names of other gods and the incorporation of any of their worship practices in our worship of Him ([Exodus 23:13](#); [Deuteronomy 12:30-32](#)).

Clearly, these pagan practices have no place in the body of Messiah. Yet, for centuries our families have been celebrating such pagan practices without even realizing it. We inherited customs and traditions from the generations before us, many of which date back to the "Old Country" from which our families came. Thus, we ourselves may be one of those who the prophet Jeremiah said would come from among the nations saying, "[Our fathers have inherited only falsehoods and futility and there is no value in them.](#)" ([Jeremiah 16:19](#)). Over the years, many of these practices have lost much of their original religious significance, or have been deceitfully given some "Christianized" meaning - a practice which is clearly condemned and forbidden in the scriptures ([Deuteronomy 12: 30-32](#)). We must realize, however, that what makes these celebrations and traditions important to most people is not their religious significance, either old or new, but the sentimental significance with which they have been filled. These traditions hold meaningful memories. Most people can no longer explain why their families do what they do around these holidays. For many, these practices are now simply sentimental traditions that identify them as part of the family.

As the truth concerning the origins of these practices becomes more widely known, the difficulty in suddenly forsaking generations of tradition and warm memories in order to start something new is also more widely known. But, as we shall see, this does not need to be the case. Becoming Torah-observant does not mean we must give up either family or tradition.

It is the goal of this teaching to help believers who are trying to understand and embrace the TORAH-OBSERVANT LIFE, to make the transition gracefully and meaningfully without destroying their relationship with their Christian friends or their family.

Without question, one of the strongest prohibitions in all of the scriptures is against the practice of Idolatry. In [Genesis 12](#) we witness YHVH calling Abram to leave his idolatrous father, kinfolk, and country, and go to a new land and become a new people exclusively devoted to YHVH. In the story of the Exodus, we witness YHVH systematically judging and revealing the impotency of the false gods and idols of Egypt. By turning the Nile river into blood, YHVH defeated Hapi, the god of the river ([Ex. 7:14](#)). By the plague of frogs, Heqt the frog goddess is exposed as powerless against YHVH ([Ex. 8:1ff](#)). The plague of lice and swarming things buried Seb the earth god ([Ex. 8:16ff](#)). Next, YHVH smites the livestock of Egypt and bullies Hathor, the cow-faced goddess, to defeat ([Ex. 9:1ff](#)). God then sends a plague upon the Egyptians, exposing Imhotep, the god of medicine, as impotent ([Ex. 9:8ff](#)). YHVH brings down Nut (Isis), the sky goddess, by a destructive hailstorm ([Ex. 9:13ff](#)). Seth, the protector of fields, is plowed under by a plague of locust ([Ex. 9:23ff](#)). The evil star Ra'ah is cast down to defeat by the power of YHVH ([Ex. 10:10f](#)). God snuffs out the light of Horus, the sun god, with a plague of darkness ([Ex. 10:21f](#)). Next, YHVH exacts justice from Amunre, the god of the first born, by destroying the firstborn of Egypt ([Ex. 11:1ff](#)). Baal-Zephon, god of war and protector of Egypt is defeated in the wilderness ([Ex. 14:1ff](#)). Finally, Pharaoh himself - a god in Egypt - was swallowed up in the Red Sea in [Ex. 14:25ff](#). It is the clear defeat of all the false gods that caused the children of Israel to proclaim, "Who is like unto thee, O YHVH, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" ([Exodus 15:11](#)). It was this great display of power over the false gods of Egypt that inspired the children of Israel to accept YHVH's unique invitation to become his "Peculiar treasure", "a kingdom of priests", and "a holy nation."([Exodus 19:5-6](#)). The prohibition against idolatry becomes explicit in the Sinai covenant:

"I am YHVH thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God..." ([Ex. 20:2-5](#)).

This prohibition is again emphasized when YHVH says:

"Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." ([Ex 20:23](#)).

The prohibition is further strengthened with the command:

"make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." ([Ex. 23:13](#)).

YHVH again explicitly states:

"Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images." ([Ex 23:24](#)).

Finally YHVH commands the children of Israel concerning the paganism of the world around them:

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto YHVH thy God;... ” (Dt. 12:30-31)

In these few scripture verses, YHVH our God makes clear his prohibitions against other gods. The children of Israel are forbidden to:

1. *Worship other gods or goddesses*
2. *Worship, make, sell or otherwise benefit from the images of other gods*
3. *Speak the names of other gods*
4. *Practice pagan forms of worship even if they are unique to a particular god*
5. *Incorporate any pagan worship practices into the worship of YHVH*
6. *Allow them to exist, and finally*
7. *Make covenant with idol worshippers.*

Because of these prohibitions, those who desire to keep the Torah must purge pagan practices from their lives no matter how dear and familiar they have become. When Paul describes the two trees in [Romans chapter 11](#), it is the Gentile believers that are referred to as branches from a wild olive tree. These wild branches, desiring to become a part of Israel (the cultivated tree) - with all of its covenants and promises - must be cut off from their natural wild tree and grafted into the cultivated one. This requires that the wild branch be cut off from its pagan past and made one with Israel ([Romans 11:13-25](#)). Once grafted in, the Gentile believers become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel and inheritors of the promises of God ([Eph. 2:11-20](#)). This citizenship in Israel requires us to put away our past pagan practices, for there is no place for other gods or their worship among the children of Israel.

Most Christians recognize that when they come to faith in the Messiah and are baptized, they are to put away the past sins of their life. As Paul wrote to Timothy, *“Let everyone that nameth the name of the Christ depart from iniquity”* ([2 Tim. 2:19](#)). We should take note here that the word “iniquity” is a translation of the Greek word “anomos”, which means “Torah-lessness” (without Torah or without Law).

Thus, Paul is saying that all who name Y’shua as their sovereign master should depart from the Torah-less life of their pagan past. Like adultery, deceit, theft, and murder, idolatry is a sin that must be put away. We must remember that the Torah prohibits us from directing our former pagan practices toward YHVH. As fellow citizens with the saints of the commonwealth of Israel, we enter the covenant and become a part of the body of Messiah. We also become part of the kingdom of priests that YHVH called Israel to be. As such, we are, by our obedience to the TORAH, the embodiment of God in the world. This is the purpose of the Torah. Torah is the revelation of God. Torah is the image of God. To lead the Torah-observant life is to manifest the revelation of God in the world. This is what Y’shua meant when he said he did not come to destroy the Torah and the prophets, but to fulfill it ([Matthew 5:17](#)). To fulfill the Torah means

that he came to give it substance and meaning, and leave a pattern of obedience for others to follow. Y'shua did this by walking out the Torah in his life. Since we are the priests and body of YHVH, what we do in our lives reflects directly upon him.

Paul teaches this in his letters to the Corinthian believers. Paul writes:

“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Messiah? Shall I then take the members of Messiah, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid...Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:15-19).

And again Paul writes:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Messiah with belial? Or what part hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

As the body of Messiah and the manifested revelation of the image of God, it is of vital importance that we never bow ourselves to any other god, or associate pagan worship practices with the name and revelation of YHVH. Therefore, to serve YHVH our God, we must be completely cut off from the pagan practices of the past. As priests of YHVH, we are called upon to protect the revelation of God from defilement and desecration. We must serve YHVH alone as God.

While this exclusive devotion to YHVH and His Messiah, Y'shua, may mean we are cut off from our old family traditions, it does not mean that we must be completely disconnected from our family and forced to live in a vacuum. In fact, Paul tells us that the opposite is true! Returning to Paul's letter to the Romans, we should note that the wild branch is not simply cut off and left to wither, but is grafted into another very vital tree, where the wild branch may now partake of the root and fatness of the divinely planted tree (Rom. 11:17). This means that we do not have to forsake belonging to a community, but that we are embracing a whole new identity, community, and heritage. While cut off from our old pagan traditions for the sake of Messiah, we are grafted into a new family, a new history, and new traditions. As branches grafted in, we are new citizens of the commonwealth of Israel with a rich heritage and magnificent inheritance beyond what any other nation or family could possibly offer us. We must clearly understand that by coming into Israel through faith in Y'shua the Messiah, we not only become recipients of this unique heritage, but we also become inheritors of a very incredible future!

Unfortunately, for most believers these traditions belonging to the Children of Israel, the cultivated olive tree, are completely foreign. The Christian Church has replaced the Feasts of

the LORD and the traditions of His chosen people with “Christianized” pagan customs instead. This is the very thing Y’shua criticized the Pharisees for:

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men” (Mark 7:7-8).

It is this reality that prompted Jeremiah to prophesy of a day when:

“the Gentiles shall come unto thee (Israel) from the ends of the earth, and shall say, “Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is not profit.” (Jer. 16:19).

Likewise, Zechariah prophesied:

“Thus saith YHWH of Hosts, In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, ‘We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.’” (Zech. 8:23).

The scriptures are filled with such prophecies of the Gentiles being grafted into the people of Israel, with their rich heritage and even richer promises for the future. Unfortunately, again, these truths have been ignored by, or lost from, the teachings of the Christian Church.

As the Ruach Hakodesh - the Holy Spirit - continues to move upon believers’ hearts and reveal the truth to them, many will do as Shaul/Paul has said:

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

As we come out from our old “Christianized” Pagan family practices, customs, and traditions, we need not fear that there will be a sudden vacuum, loneliness, or sense of disconnectedness. Instead, by keeping the TORAH, we shall find ourselves enjoying some of the most meaningful and beautiful traditions, customs, and practices the world has ever known. We will find ourselves sharing with our natural family and loved ones the rich heritage and hope-filled future of our new family, the Children of Israel. As we bring our lives into rhythm with the patterns of the Torah, we shall certainly find ourselves overwhelmed with the sense that we now belong to something very special, something much more meaningful than simple sentimentality.

With this said as way of introduction, let us turn our attention to a few of these new customs and patterns of life that identify us and bind us to our new family, the Children of Israel.

One of the first things we should notice about the Torah-observant life is that it has a very unique rhythm to it. There is the daily rhythm of sacrifices - made morning and evening (Ex. 29:39) - which, until the temple is restored, has been replaced with daily prayer. We also have the regular practice of blessing YHVH after our meals (Dt. 8:10). This daily rhythm of prayer is followed by the weekly rhythm of the Sabbath. Every Friday evening as the sun sets, the Sabbath begins. This day is set apart in any number of ways, from the lighting of candles and reciting the traditional blessings, to simply turning off televisions and computers, and ceasing from weekday labors. This is a time for rest, refreshment, and study of the Torah. This weekly rhythm is followed by a monthly rhythm based upon the cycle of the moon. Each month, we go outside at sunset and watch for the emergence of the first tiny sliver of the New Moon. At this time, we blow our shofars/ram's horn trumpets, and declare it to be a new month. By watching for the New Moon, we help keep all of the other rhythms in step. It is by the sighting of the New Moon that the pattern for the yearly Feasts of YHVH are set in rhythm.

For far too long, the Christian Church has referred to these yearly feasts as the "Feasts of the Jews", or as "Jewish Holidays". This is done to make a distinction between that which is practiced by "the Jews" and that being taught and practiced by the Christian Church. But these Feasts are not "the Feasts of the Jews", as the Church teaches, but they are the "Feast of YHVH", as Scripture teaches. It is YHVH, not the Jews, that commands that His people keep these eight special celebrations. In [Leviticus chapter 23](#), YHVH describes these special celebrations with two very powerful words. The first is the word "Moedim", which is often translated into English as "Feasts", but more accurately means "Appointed Times". These celebrations are, in fact, times appointed by YHVH our God for a specific purpose. It is YHVH who plays the fiddle we dance to: the Creator of the Universe is the one who sets the rhythm of our lives by commanding us to keep certain appointed times. The second word that YHVH uses to describe these special celebrations is "Miqra", which is often translated as "Convocation", but in Hebrew means "Rehearsal". Rehearsing is what we do to prepare ourselves for some specific event. This yearly rhythm of "Appointed Times" is commanded so that by rehearsing them, we learn their prophetic significance as appointed by YHVH, the Lord of heaven and earth. As we shall soon see, each of these times appointed for Rehearsal not only celebrates some past event of our history, but also helps to prepare us for some future event.

In other words, each of these special celebrations declares both the history and mission of the Children of Israel, as well as the life and ministry of Y'shua the Messiah. Again, we find the list of these celebrations in Leviticus 23. The weekly Sabbath; the Passover; the Feast of Unleavened Bread; Feast of First Fruits; the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost); The Feast of Teruah (Trumpets); Yom haKippurim (Day of Atonements); and the Feast of Succoth (Tabernacles) are the eight commanded Feasts of the LORD. These feasts are ripe with the identity and traditions of the people of God. These feasts are also filled with vital prophetic images that declare God's promises concerning future events, as well as the identity and work of Y'shua the Messiah. Being judged by their pagan family members for leaving their old ways and keeping the Torah, The Apostle Shaul encourages the believers in Colosse saying:

"Let no man therefore judge in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Messiah." (Colossians 2:16-17).

The Author of the Letter to the Hebrews makes a similar statement about the Torah as a whole:

“For the Torah having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things...” (Heb. 10:1).

Shaul states this message yet another way in his letter to the Corinthian believers when he writes:

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1Cor.13:12).

Clearly, the Torah itself and the Feasts of which it speaks are prophetic shadow pictures of “Good things to come”. Just as my brother and I would move our hands in certain patterns to cast shadow pictures upon the blank screen, so too, we who observe the Torah, by moving our lives in certain patterns, cast the shadow pictures of the Messiah’s life, his work, and his return upon the blank screen of the world. It would seem wise then that we not forget, forsake, or abandon these commanded practices, but that we observe, study, and learn from them all that they proclaim.

Let us look just briefly at each of these Moedim and discover what they declare of our past and future. We will begin by examining the Sabbath, which is as old as creation. The Sabbath declares YHVH ELOHIM as the Creator of the universe. For six days He worked, but on the seventh day He rested and set apart the SEVENTH day. So, by celebrating the Sabbath on the Seventh day, we declare YHVH ELOHIM as the Creator of the world. But, remembering that with YHVH one day is as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8), we look forward to the seventh millennium as the time when Messiah will reign upon the earth, restoring all things to a new creation. Thus, by keeping the Sabbath, we look forward to Messiah’s reign as our great rest from the struggles and sins of the world.

The Passover is the historical celebration of how YHVH heard the cries of our ancestors as they suffered in bondage in Egypt, and then with a mighty hand delivered them to freedom. But this was not without cost. By the blood of a lamb the Children of Israel were spared from the judgment of Elohim. This same celebration also foreshadows our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death - also not without cost - but that was won by the blood of Messiah, the Lamb of Elohim. Thus, the story of Passover declares the death of Messiah.

The second of the Spring Moedim is the Feast of haMatzot, or unleavened bread. Historically, this feast reminds us of how our ancestors were driven out of Egypt in haste, and did not have time to let their bread rise. So, with all of their possessions packed and ready to go, they left Egypt by the command of Pharaoh, just as YHVH had promised. By eating matzah, we recall how the Children of Israel traveled in haste. Prophetically, however, leaven is a form of corruption and rot, and therefore symbolizes sin. It was Y’shua himself who took bread and said, “this is my body”. So we see in the Feast of haMatzot how the body of Messiah remained uncorrupted by sin, and did not rot in the grave.

In the year that Y'shua was killed, three days after the feast of Passover came the celebration of Bikkurim, or Firstfruits. This was the time of year when the barley in the Land of Israel was ready to be harvested. All of the seeds that had been planted would emerge from the earth to bear fruit and give an abundant harvest. Before any of the grain could be eaten, a sheave of the first of the harvest would be brought before the Altar of YHVH and waved as a wave offering. Again, historically this declared the faithfulness of YHVH who brought Israel through the wilderness to a land flowing with milk and honey: prophetically, it is a picture of the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah, who came forth from the grave as the firstfruits of the dead, and ascended to the right hand of YHVH in glory.

After seven weeks and one day, there comes another Moedim: this one is called Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks. Like Bikkurim, Shavuot is a time of harvesting, but of wheat rather than barley. Traditionally, it has been the time of celebrating the giving of the Torah. It was at the time of Shavuot that Moshe received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Prophetically, this Moedim is a shadow picture of the Ruach HaKodesh that was poured out on the 120 followers of Messiah, in Jerusalem, on exactly this day. We should remember that it is the pouring out of the Ruach HaKodesh that writes the Torah upon our hearts, marking the beginning of life in the renewed covenant.

In the fall of the year we rehearse three more appointed times. The first of these is the Feast of Teruah, or Feast of Trumpets. This celebrates the blowing of the Shofar/Trumpets that assembled and warned the Children of Israel of coming danger. The sound of the Shofar is a call to action. In this case, it is a warning of judgment and a calling to repentance and assembly for the reading of the Torah. Prophetically, we see the shadow picture of the coming Day of the LORD, when Messiah comes at the blast of the Last trumpet to judge the earth.

The feast of Trumpets is followed 10 days later by Yom haKippurim, the Day of Atonements. This is a time of national fasting, prayer, and repentance. Once a year the Nation of Israel would bring their sin offering and ask to be cleansed of their sins. The Temple would also be cleansed from all its contamination. Prophetically, we see the shadow picture of Messiah, who comes to cleanse his people once and for all and to prepare them to abide with him in the Messianic Kingdom.

Finally, we have the final rehearsal, the Moedim of Sukkot. Sukkot is the Hebrew word for tents, booths or tabernacles, and celebrates the time when our ancestors dwelt with YHVH in tents in the wilderness. So, for one week each year, the men of Israel are to travel to Jerusalem, erect tents, and live in them to commemorate that lost time. Prophetically, the feast of Sukkot is a shadow picture of Messiah, once again dwelling, or "tabernacling", among men on earth. This is the picture of the Messianic Kingdom finally come.

How unfortunate it is that the Christian Church has abandoned these important prophetic shadow pictures which so clearly proclaim the work and coming of the Messiah, and which connect us to both our past and future. By replacing the word of God with the traditions of men, these important appointed rehearsals have been removed from the lives of believers, leaving them unprepared for Messiah's return. By returning to the Feasts of YHWH, believers

will again find themselves walking in rhythm with their Biblical ancestors. By keeping these holy rehearsals at their appointed times, we find ourselves experiencing the stories and events of the scriptures first hand. By living in rhythm with the Word of God, we find our faith in Messiah renewed, and our lives prepared for his coming. There is no greater or more meaningful heritage that we could receive than to be counted among the Children of Israel.

For those who are coming out of Babylon, do not be afraid. Slowly but surely, as your heart desires to keep the Torah, you will find yourself more and more out of step with the old world you were in, and more and more in rhythm with life and heritage of the Children of Israel. Slowly at first, and even awkwardly at times, life will begin to change. Soon, you too will be excited to see the shadow pictures being cast upon the blank screen of your home. Your heart will be warmed and renewed as each of the Moedim casts its prophetic shadow picture over your heart and life. Each day, each week, each month, and each year will begin to draw you into a new and living faith, as a member of the family of God. You will rejoice with each opportunity to again celebrate all that YHVH has done for your ancestors, in bringing you to this day, and in preparing you for the days yet to come. With each passing time of prayer, Sabbath, New Moon, and Moedim, the void of your exodus from the wild olive tree will be filled with the fatness of the covenants and the heritage of Israel. Before you know it, you will be inviting friends and family to come and join you in these holy rehearsals, helping to make the Feasts of YHVH a regular part of your whole family's heritage.

Shalom, shalom

Glenn McWilliams

A Rood Awakening!

Glenn@ARoodAwakening.tv