

## Walking in the Appointments of YHWH: A Devotional Journey

### 1. The Divine Calendar: From "Parties" to "Appointments"

In Nehemiah 8:9, we find a pivotal moment in the restoration of the people of Israel following the Babylonian captivity. As Ezra the priest read the words of the Law, the people wept. This was a "Back to Basics" (BTB) realization: they were grieving because they finally understood how far they had drifted from YHWH's will during their exile. This historical context is vital for us today. Many of us have been on a cultural schedule, seeking after Elohim with our hearts but consistently missing the mark because we neglected the specific instructions of His Word. To clear away cultural distractions, we must move past what we *think* the Word means to what it actually says. Central to this restoration is the Hebrew word *Moed* (H4150). While frequently translated as "feast," the English word "feast" suggests an abundant meal for our entertainment—a "party hardy" mindset. However, *Moed* is strategically linked to the root *Ed* (H5707), meaning "witness," and *Yahad* (H3259), which carries the future-tense construction of "I will witness." It also points to the concept of "betrothal." A *Moed* is a signal, a fixed time appointed beforehand where the congregation meets with YHWH to bear witness to His holiness. Consider the contrast between our cultural comfort and the biblical requirement:

| Cultural Definition: "Feast"            | Biblical Definition: "Appointment" ( <i>Moed</i> )     |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| An abundant meal for personal enjoyment | A fixed time, season, or signal set by YHWH            |
| Centered on entertainment and ceremony  | An assembly convened for a definite purpose            |
| An optional social event                | A non-negotiable meeting (like a doctor's appointment) |
| Determined by cultural preference       | A public witness of the congregation's fidelity        |

To understand the weight of this, consider the "loathsome ceremony" of the modern doctor's office. You dedicate time, clean yourself up, and sit in a "hollow place" called the waiting room. You pay your penance of time, waiting for the door to crack open. When your name is called—"Glorious rapture!"—you are inspected for "blemishes" in your vitals, much like a sacrificial lamb. Your heart races when you hear the clipboard move outside the door, only to find you aren't meeting the "Doctor," but a "practitioner." YHWH views our neglect of His appointments similarly; He has set specific times to meet with us in His "House of Healing," yet we often treat His time as a nuisance or an optional social gathering.

### Self-Reflective Questions

1. Do I approach YHWH's set times with the same intentionality and "penance of time" I give to a physical doctor's appointment?
2. Is my participation in the *Moedim* a true "witness" ( *Ed* ) of my devotion, or am I just looking for a "feast" of entertainment?
3. Like the people in Nehemiah 8, does the reading of the Law cause me to weep for the appointments I have missed while following a cultural calendar?

### Actionable Challenge

Treat this upcoming week as a "Kingdom rehearsal." Open your physical or digital calendar and explicitly mark the Sabbath and upcoming biblical appointments (Leviticus 23) as priority events. Remove any conflicting social engagements to show that you are ready to be "called by name" into His chamber.

## 2. Spiritual Fidelity: The Tent and the Heart

Strategic clarity in our walk requires undivided worship. YHWH uses the imagery of betrothal and marriage to describe His relationship with us because spiritual infidelity—syncretism—is the greatest threat to our restoration. In Ezekiel 23, YHWH illustrates this through the metaphors of two sisters: Aholah and Aholibah. The linguistic roots here are profound. Aholah (Samaria/Israel) represents *Shamar-own*—"what they guarded," which was their own rules and cultural traditions rather than YHWH's. Her name means "she has her own tent," symbolizing a religious improvisation where one lives by their own rules. Aholibah (Jerusalem/Judah) means "My tent is in her," representing the people intended to be the dwelling place of YHWH's *Moed* structure. Yet, both became "old in adulteries." They painted their eyes and decked themselves with "cultural ornaments" to make themselves attractive to the world. They attempted to bring the "multitudes at ease" into the sanctuary, mixing holy incense and oil with cultural habits. YHWH views "mixed worship" as a betrayal of the marriage covenant. When we attempt to keep His Sabbaths while simultaneously painting our "spiritual eyes" with the eye-paint of the culture to fit in, we are acting as the daughter who is "out of the house" even while claiming to be in it.

### Self-Reflective Questions

1. Am I living as Aholah, keeping "my own tent" and my own religious rules, or as Aholibah, allowing YHWH to place "His tent in me"?
2. What "cultural eye-paint" or ornaments have I added to my faith to make it more attractive to the world around me?
3. Does my worship reflect the "witness" of a faithful spouse, or the "loathsome ceremony" of a rebellious child returning home without repentance?

### Actionable Challenge

Identify one specific cultural tradition or habit you have "mixed" into your biblical observation. This week, perform a "spiritual housecleaning" and commit to removing that element entirely, ensuring your "tent" belongs solely to the Master.

### 3. Shabbat: The Oil for the Lamp

The weekly Shabbat is the strategic foundation of the entire biblical calendar. It is the first and most frequent *Moed*, acting as the "onboarding" process for those who desire to dwell in the Master's house. Shabbat is a "ceasing" ( *Shabbat* - H7673) from the work of the meat-suit and the noise of the culture. The sermon describes Shabbat as the "oil that lights the way to all other appointments." There is a rigorous logic here: if you neglect the weekly light, you cannot navigate the rest of the year. The entire "midst" of the biblical calendar—the count to Shavuote—is determined by the counting of seven Sabbaths ( *Hashabbat* ). Without the weekly metronome of the Sabbath, it is impossible to "count" or anticipate the higher appointments. Missing the weekly Shabbat leaves you in the dark, turning your faith into a fragmented series of "Easter and Christmas/Passover and Yom Kippur" style appearances where the middle of the journey is entirely lost.

#### Self-Reflective Questions

1. Is my Sabbath a true "ceasing" from the culture to diagnose what needs to be strengthened, or is it just a day for "entertainment and lunch"?
2. Am I using the "oil" of the weekly Shabbat to keep my lamp trimmed for the more complex seasons of the year?
3. If the Sabbath is the metronome of my life, is my spiritual rhythm steady, or am I consistently "off-beat" because I ignore the count?

#### Actionable Challenge

Begin your Shabbat preparation on Thursday evening this week. Complete all shopping and "servile work" by Friday afternoon so that you can enter the "holy convocation" ( *Kodesh Mikra* ) with a heart prepared to dwell, not a heart distracted by catching up.

### 4. The Cycle of Redemption: Spring to Fall

The yearly cycle is a strategic roadmap teaching the believer how to "draw near" ( *Karab* ) and then "dwell near" YHWH. A crucial distinction for the scholar-disciple is between a *Moed* (appointment) and a *Hag* (H2282). While all are appointments, a *Hag* is a pilgrimage or procession—a "moving witness" where the people journey together toward the Master.

- **Pesach (Passover):** A *Moed* where we receive immunity from the penalty of death and sin.
- **Unleavened Bread:** A *Hag* (pilgrimage) where we spend a week learning to recognize and avoid leaven (sin).
- **First Fruits (Wave Sheaf):** A lesson in humility, bringing the first of the harvest back to YHWH before we touch it ourselves, the first fruits offering.
- **Shavuote (Pentecost):** The culmination of the fifty-day count, where we receive the Ruach Ha Qodesh to become a powerful *Ed*—a witness.
- **Fall Festivals:** Beginning with **Yom Teruah** (a day of tumult, signaling, and shaking), leading to the **Day of Atonement** (afflicting the soul while the High Priest Atones for you before YHWH), and ending in **Sukkot** (dwelling in tents, the kingdom). Each step prepares us to inhabit the Kingdom. Ignoring the "Spring" makes it impossible to survive

the "Fall" judgment. We must observe the "middle" through the counting of Sabbaths to ensure our witness is complete.

#### Self-Reflective Questions

1. Am I a "pilgrim" in the *Hag* of Unleavened Bread, actively processing away from sin, or am I standing still: redeemed from sin, but not dead to it?
2. Do I recognize the "shouting" of Yom Teruah as a signal of joy for the Kingdom or as a shout of terror because I am on the wrong side of the wall?
3. How am I practicing "humility" by giving YHWH the first of what He has grown in my life?

#### Actionable Challenge

Review Leviticus 23 this week and identify the "Hag" seasons. Research what it means to make a "procession" in your faith—moving from a state of stagnant belief to a state of active, public obedience.

#### 5. The Rehearsal is Over: Preparing for the Bridegroom

The word for "holy convocation" is *Mikra* (H4744), which technically means a "rehearsal" or a "recital"—something told again and again. These are not theatrical performances; they are "dress rehearsals" for the return of Yeshua. There is a strategic urgency to these rehearsals because, at some point, the rehearsal is over. In Matthew 25, the parable of the Ten Virgins provides a chilling for the improvident believer. Midnight is the "midst of the night" when work has *already ceased*. The foolish virgins had no oil because they had not gathered the "weekly guiding light" of the Shabbat during the work week. When the *Mikra* (cry) went out at midnight, they tried to buy oil, but the "markets of grace" were closed. Because they had ignored the rehearsals, they were forced to "improvise" their holiness at the door. The Bridegroom's response—"I know you not"—is the result of them never taking the time to meet Him on His terms. We must ensure that what we call "faith" is recognized as faith by the Mashiach. If we treat His appointments as holy today, the day He calls us out will be holy. If we do not, we will be left searching for oil we never owned.

#### Self-Reflective Questions

1. If the "midnight cry" went out tonight, would I be operating from a place of "rehearsed holiness" or frantic "improvisation"?
2. Do I "know" the Messiah through the intimacy of His appointments, or do I only "know about" Him?
3. Is my lamp currently filled with the oil of consistent obedience, or is it going out because I neglected the weekly Shabbat?

#### Actionable Challenge

Treat this coming Sabbath as if it were the final dress rehearsal before the wedding of the Lamb. Focus your mind, trim your lamp, and enter the assembly with the gravity of one who knows the Bridegroom is at the door. Ultimately, we must ask ourselves: when the Bridegroom arrives, will

He recognize His own schedule and His own "witness" in us, or will we be strangers at our own wedding?