

Follow the Shepherd

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Over the course of the past couple of months we have been discussing the subject of bearing fruit.

Of course, that is a concept built into the Appointed Times, and all those in covenant with YHWH should be observing the Appointed Times at their precise times. That is why I am always emphasizing time, and the importance of reckoning time as YHWH prescribes.

As we are passing through Month 12, most would naturally think that next month would be Month 1, and the beginning of a new yearly cycle.

That would be true if we operating within a solar calendar, or a calculated calendar which has fixed months and days with a leap year or other mechanism built in to coincide with the solar cycle.

That is not how the Creator reckons time though.

We know from the Torah that the two great lights in the heavens are there *"to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and Appointed Times (moadim), and for days and years."* Genesis 1:14

Seems simple, right?

The sun and the moon are like hands on a clock.

This notion is specifically reinforced by Psalm 104:19 which declares:

*“He appointed the moon for
Appointed Times;
the sun knows its going down.”*

Again, the moon is for Appointed Times. The reason for this is because the moon determines the months, and the Appointed Times are keyed to certain days in certain months.

Most Jews do not follow the Torah when it comes to the Calendar. They do not reckon time using the sun and the moon. They utilize a calculated calendar created by the Rabbis.

So, if you use the Jewish Calendar, you are submitting yourself to the Pharisees and their progeny – the Rabbis.

Likewise, if you follow the Gregorian calendar, you are submitted to the Pope and the Catholic Church.

It is amazing how religions are so connected with calendars, and disconnected with how YHWH reckons time.

It makes you think that maybe religions are actually established to draw people away from YHWH, rather than toward Him. Something to think about.

Well, the calendar of YHWH is connected to His creation, not some man-made calculation. So, if you want to actually meet with Him, at

His Appointed Times, you need to be using His markers and His method of reckoning time.

For decades now, I have been cautioning people regarding following all of the variant calendars available, if they do not subscribe to the Torah.

That is not a good strategy for winning a popularity contest, by the way.

I have made a lot of people angry by bursting their bubble as they experienced the thrill of finding a new calendar and chasing after some supposed new revelation.

I have rattled people who are entrenched in a teaching or tradition. Some are simply entranced by a particular teacher and will follow their guidance without testing it against the Scriptures.

I also upset some people who desire unity at any cost. They believe that the Calendar is a divisive issue, and we need unity more than division.

Sadly, they fail to heed the words of Yahushua and ignore what He came to do. He specifically stated:

“³⁴ Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” Matthew 10:34-39

You may have noticed that I have been quoting a lot of the Words of Yahushua lately. I do this because I think His teachings often get lost in the religious constructs that men have built.

For instance, we just passed through the Christmas season and growing up, one of my favorite Christmas songs was Silent Night. It set such a peaceful scene with the newborn Messiah sleeping “in Heavenly Peace.” It reinforced the sad and gentle Jesus that Christianity often presents to the world.

Well that “holy infant so tender and mild” actually grew up speaking some very blunt words. He offended many and came with a sword. Swords are sharp and they cut things. Yahushua specifically stated that He came to separate, not unite.

This week I was working cattle with a friend and he was telling me how he culls his herd and separates the ones that don’t fit in. He took me to his herd, and they were a very nice community that all got along very well. They were pleasant and peaceful.

We then went to another location to get a heifer that he had separated, and I understood very quickly the need do such a thing. Watching that heifer get corralled into the trailer was like watching a bull fight. That 1,300 pound heifer was mean, and was ready to kill anyone who got in front of her. In fact, I think she was trying to kill the guy corraling her.

I told the guy that he wasn’t getting paid enough. He just smiled. That’s what he does all day long. It sure made me appreciate cowboys a lot more than I did previously.

It reminded me that Yahushua, the Shepherd, is in the process of culling His flock. He wants sheep that will fit in.

If you look closely at His message, you will see that He was constantly saying things that made people turn and leave.

Remember when Yahushua said: “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:54

This was a “hard saying” and after that the Scriptures record “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” John 6:66

He didn’t try to get them back. He let them go. He was not looking to increase numbers. He was looking for a lean, but healthy flock.

Our job is not to unify with those who are not in Yahushua’s flock. That is absurd.

In fact, Yahushua specifically told the Pharisees: “*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*” John 10:16

He was the Messiah of Yisrael, but the Pharisees were not in His fold. So, the only unifying that will be performed is by the One Shepherd.

I suggest that instead of jumping into another flock, you listen to the Shepherd's voice and focus on following Him only where He leads.

I actually produced a video while in Jerusalem that touched upon this subject. It is titled [*Walking in Darkness for the Sake of Unity.*](#)

Sadly, through the years, I have watched people chase after the Pharisees, and try to unify with them. Their actions are an attempt to force together the two sticks prophesied in Ezekiel 37.

These individuals fail to recognize that it is King Yahushua Who will rule over the two unified sticks. (Ezekiel 37:24)

I addressed this issue in [*A Message to Joseph Concerning Judah.*](#)

There are too many people trying to do things that are assigned to the Messiah alone. It is pure folly, and if they get in the way with His plans, He will remove them.

You should not be concerned about unifying with other religious or ethnic groups in order to fulfill prophecy. Your primary focus should be on unifying with Him.

That is at the heart of the Shema.

“Shema (hear and obey) Yisrael, YHWH your Elohim, YHWH echad (unified).” Deuteronomy 6:4

If we are part of Yisrael, the Covenant Assembly of YHWH, we hear and obey YHWH, and we become unified with Him and His purpose.

We obey with every part of our being. That is why the following verses provide: *“⁵ You shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, with all your nefesh, and with all your strength. ⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.” Deuteronomy 6:5-6*

Obedience is an expression of our love. That is why the Words are

supposed to be in our heart, and that is why Yahushua said: *“If you love Me, keep My Commandments.”* John 14:15

In other words, don't just say you love me – show me!

We are specifically told: *“Therefore you shall keep (shamar) My Commandments, and perform (asah) them: I am YHWH.”* Leviticus 22:31

Another way of saying this is “you shall guard My Commandments and do them.”

In fact, according to Deuteronomy 6:17 we are told to “diligently keep” the Commandments.

In the Hebrew text we literally read “shamar shamar” – “watch watch” or “keep keep.” The emphasis on obedience is overwhelming all throughout the Scriptures.

This is exactly what we are doing when we observe the Appointed Times at the proper time.

Further, He shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His Commandments. That was written in stone by the very finger of Elohim as part of the Second Commandment. (Exodus 20:6 and Deuteronomy 5:10)

We are promised health and healing if we diligently obey the Commandments. (Exodus 15:26)

We are also provided with great promises of blessings if we keep the Commandments and do them. (see Leviticus 26)

So, if you love YHWH and want His mercy and blessings, then you

should be guarding the Commandments and doing them. Through that process, you become one (echad) with Him.

That is the picture provided through the sheep following the voice of the Shepherd.

A critical way that we become unified with YHWH is by meeting with Him at the specific times that He provides. He has a schedule of weekly and annual appointments that we must keep.

Sadly, every year I see people veering off course and following the Pharisees, some calendar that was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls or some other ancient text.

Just because some group followed a solar calendar 2,000 years ago does not mean it was correct, or Scriptural.

I see people using the text of I Enoch as a justification for following a fixed solar calendar.

They incorrectly believe that Enoch wrote this document, and therefore they treat it as Scripture.

They fail to understand the popular practice of pseudepigraphy, which involved the false ascription of a particular authorship to various works.

The text of I Enoch is not a pre-flood document written by the Enoch we read about in the first millennia. Rather, it is a Second Temple apocalyptic text.

While I find it useful to expand our understanding of some pre-flood events, I recognize that it was written by different authors at different times, and it is a compilation of different texts.

It is critical to use caution and discernment when examining ancient manuscripts that are not subject to the same levels of scrutiny as the Torah and other accepted Scriptural texts.

In particular, the portion of I Enoch known as The Book of Luminaries sets forth a purely solar calendar, with fixed days for certain months.

This conflicts with the Torah, as do all of the variant solar calendars. As a result, adherents of these solar calendars find themselves at odds with the Scriptures.

The only way you can justify following one of these solar calendars found in the Dead Sea Scrolls is if you totally ignore the fact that the moon is for months.

People attempt to do this by pointing out that the Hebrew word for the moon is “yerach,” and the Hebrew word for month is “chodesh” – literally “renewal.” They argue that they aren’t the same words, so there must be no connection.

Well, that argument is simply a non-starter. Consider the fact that the Hebrew word for the sun is “shemesh,” while the Hebrew word for year is “shanah,” and day is “yom.” They are not etymologically connected.

That is because we are talking apples and oranges. The names of planetary bodies versus fragments of time that they help demarcate. They don't need to be the same words.

The people who are discounting the moon and following a fixed calendar are making a grave mistake. The simple fact is that the moon is extremely significant when it comes to telling time.

That is why it is described as a faithful witness in the sky. It is up there as a witness, along with the sun. They are two witnesses.

Consider this Psalm: *“It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky.”* Psalm 89:37

That takes us back to Genesis 1:14, which tells us that those two witness are there for signs, Appointed Times, days . . . and years.

Anyone who desires to diligently keep the Commandments should be asking: “How do we determine a year using the two great lights?”

Well, we will get to that next week. For now, Did you notice that there is no mention of a barley crop in the Torah?

Over 20 years ago, I was taught a Karaite tradition that they use to determine the new year.

They inspect barley crops in the Land of Israel in Month 12 to determine if there are “sufficient amounts” of “aviv barley” in “month 12” to “declare” Month 1 at the next renewed moon.

While they get the concept of a month being determined by the sighting of the renewed moon, their method of determining a new year is filled with the subjective traditions of man.

I can assure you that time is not determined by a grain crop.

They do this to insure that there is barley to offer during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but they are adding to the Torah, which is expressly forbidden. (see Deuteronomy 4:2 and Deuteronomy 12:32)

In fact, the Proverbs provide the following instruction.

*“Do not add to His words,
lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”*
Proverbs 30:6

So, if we add to His Commandments we may be classified as liars, and end up being rebuked by the Creator.

There is another group who are classified as liars.

“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:4

There are a lot of people who say that they “know” Him, and they will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. We discussed that a couple of weeks ago.

The reason is that while they may be doing what they think is acceptable, they are not obeying His Commandments. Therefore, it is important that we diligently obey Him, so we are not found to be liars.

We already know that the Pharisees and the Karaites are liars if they reject Yahushua. This is crystal clear.

“Who is a liar but he who denies that Yahushua is the Messiah? He is anti-messiah who denies the Father and the Son.” 1 John 2:22

The fact that they then add to the words confirms that they are liars.

The Pope and all who follow the Roman Calendar and the Roman religion are liars as well, according to the Scriptures.

So, are you going to follow liars and their religions, or are you going to follow the Instructions of YHWH?

I am astonished every year at all of the people who claim to believe in Yahushua the Messiah, yet they follow the “Jewish Calendar.”

That highlights the difference between saying and doing. It is exactly what Yahushua was referring to when He asked “*But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?*” Luke 6:46

Yahushua said “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” John 14:6

If you reject Him, or the instructions of the Father, then you will not get to the Father.

Now the Pharisees don’t even try to claim that their “Jewish Calendar” conforms to the Torah. It is just a man-made calculation that does not use the sun and the moon.

The Karaites attempt to justify their traditions by pointing to the fact that the first month of the year is called “aviv.”

It is important to understand that the first month is not named “Aviv”. Rather, the first month is called the month of “the aviv.” Most English translations exclude the “the,” but it is there in the Hebrew text. (Exodus 13:4, 23:15 and 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1)

I like to point out that the Hebrew word “aviv,” better referred to as “abib,” is the next ordinal word in the Hebrew aleph-bet after “ab,” which means “father.”

The word “abib” is not specifically referring to barley. The Hebrew

word for barley is “se’or.” They are not directly connected, and the Scriptural usage of “abib” is not exclusively applied to a specific stage of maturing barley crops.

To the contrary, the second ordinal word in the Hebrew language after “father” (ab) refers to “new life springing forth” (abib).

It refers to the time when everything is green. The time most understand to be “spring.”

You will definitely see green barley in the Land during Month 1, but you will also see a lot of other things turning green and new life springing forth. That is why Month 1 is referred to as the month of “the abib.”

A new year begins during the month of new life, determined by the sun and the moon.

Of course, it makes perfect sense that Month 1 would coincide with spring, since the cycle of the Appointed Times is intimately connected with the crops and the harvests.

Indeed, the presentation of offerings, and giving back to YHWH, was built right into the Appointed Times.

Last week we ended off by talking about “corban” and giving gifts.

Next Shabbat, I hope to delve further into the issue of determining the new year and the Appointed Times as it relates to corban, and giving back to YHWH.

Before that time, the wise will be looking up with their shofars in hand, anticipating the sighting of the renewed moon, marking a new month.

It will not be Month 1, and we do not need barley inspection teams exploring the Land to tell us about the condition of the barley in order to know this.

We just need to follow the Great Shepherd Who leads His sheep through His Instructions.

Berakhot

Todd

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P.S. - I have prepared an Appointed Times 2022 Chart, based upon the sun and the moon. You can download it by going to the [shemayisrael.net website](http://www.shemayisrael.net).

Shema Yisrael (Hear O Yisrael) are the words that Yahushua spoke when asked what was the First Command.

"The first of all the Commandments is: 'Hear, O Yisrael, YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one.'"

Mark 12:29

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Matthew 11:15