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WHY IS **PASSOVER** IN APRIL THIS YEAR...?

APRIL 22, 2016

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD - APRIL 23-29

CELEBRATING THE FEASTS OF THE LORD
ACCORDING TO GOD'S BIBLICAL CALENDAR

Even though the azaleas & dogwoods are blooming in Georgia this week, it's not time to celebrate Passover. Sometimes Passover is in March, but this year... God did not determine it to be so. God is the Lord of the Harvest. He sends the rain and sunshine and makes the crops bear fruit and grow. When the first sliver of the new moon was sighted in March in Israel, the barley in the Land was not ripe. So, a 13th month (Adar II) was added to God's Biblical Calendar and Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread will be April 22-29, 2016.

What time is it? Does anybody know? Does anybody really care? Remember the song in 1969 sung by the music group Chicago *Does anybody really know what time it is?* When does the calendar year begin? In the spring? In the winter? When does a new day begin? In the evening at sunset? After midnight at 12:01am?

God knows what time it is! He created time. **God's Biblical Calendar** always begins in the spring. Yet, the man-made Gregorian calendar starts in January. Of course, we know which Calendar came first 😊

God defines a day as beginning at sunset. His pattern was established at Creation. *"...and there was evening and morning, one day... and there was evening and morning, a second day"* (Gen1:5,8,13,19,23,31). As believers, we need to be aware of God's Biblical Calendar. **God's ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah55:8-9)**. Do you pay attention to the sun setting every day? When I first began to understand God's pattern, I used to go outside and look at the sunset and say aloud, *"The heavens are declaring the glory of God"* (Ps19). This simple act helped me be more conscious of one of His ways. I always thank God for the beginning of a new day and put my armor on at this time (Eph6:10-18).

When we speak about the calendar, we usually say from month to month and week to week. But listen how God speaks. *"And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.*" Isaiah 66:23. The word for "moon" is *chodesh* in the original Hebrew. God's calendar is determined by the moon. It begins with the sighting of first sliver of the new moon, but an extra month has to be added periodically to keep the 1st month in the spring. The first month is also referred to as the month of Aviv because it's the month the barley is aviv (ripe) - Deut16:1 NIV.

It seems odd the two calendars are so different?!? Because there are many differences, I really want to encourage you to wake up and be alert at this present hour. Your children or grandchildren could see the return of the Messiah. Will they know God's ways? Will they recognize the ways that oppose God's Biblical ways? *"Although we live in the world..."* 2Cor10:3-5. Are you teaching your children traditions of men or the ways of God? Today, God is stirring the hearts of many believers to come back to His ways and His Feasts.

I didn't come to understand God's Biblical Calendar until I was over 30 years old. Although I grew up in the church and was familiar with many of the Bible stories, it was not until after I was saved at 30 years old that I began to really read and study the Bible. I read about the Passover in Egypt and also noticed Jesus was crucified at Passover. Then I began to ask, "What time is it? When is Passover?" At that time, almost twenty years ago, there wasn't much talk in the Church about Passover & God's Timetable. In fact, when I was in seminary pursuing the LORD and working on my Master of Divinity degree, I did a research paper entitled "What Time Is It?" The research paper was 24 typed pages about God's time & the Feasts of LORD!

Throughout history, God has revealed Himself and His ways during His Appointed Times. These are very specific times on God's Biblical Calendar. Scripture is God's self-revelation. God set the "appointed times" in place during Creation. These "appointed times" were already established when Adam & Eve were formed. On the fourth day, God said, *"Let the lights in the heavens...be for signs and for seasons and for the days and years"* Gen1:14. The original Hebrew word for "seasons" is *moedim* and means "appointed times". I've just recently recorded a 2.5hr teaching workshop on **God's Biblical Calendar: Feasts of the LORD**. These DVDs have pictures & symbols for easy understanding. Call Visual Story Bible Ministries 229.873.4922 to order.

An important part of God's Passover story includes eating **matzah (unleavened bread)**. The Israelites were in slavery, God sent 10 plagues...then Pharaoh finally let them go! They left Egypt in such a hurry after Passover their bread didn't have time to rise. Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of God's Appointed Time. Unleavened bread is a *"sign in our hand and a sign in our mouths"* (Exd13:7-9) as we are eating it during the week of Feast of Unleavened Bread. We eat matzah toast, matzah PB&J sandwiches, matzah pizza, etc. Children always ask, "Why do we have to eat matzah for 7 days?" (Lev23:6). It's our responsibility to teach and tell our children & grandchildren about God's story again & again. *"Tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done...that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments"* Ps78..

It was God's design that **Jesus was in the grave 3 nights & 3 days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread**. There was no leaven in Yeshua. He never sinned. *"He was in every way like us, yet without sin"* Heb4:15. His body was without sin or corruption, *"NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY"* Acts 2:27-31. Matzah does not corrupt & decay easily like regular leavened bread. Also notice matzah is pierced & striped. What an opportunity to teach about Yeshua's (Jesus) body... pierced and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Check out **VisualStoryBible.org** free teaching downloads: "Unleavened Bread" and "3 days & 3 nights"

Firstfruits, an Appointed Time on God's Biblical Calendar, is a picture of Yeshua's resurrection. On Sunday morning (the day after the Sabbath) - when the High Priest was waving the firstfruits of the barley harvest before the LORD (Lev23:10-11), Yeshua (Jesus) ascended as the "firstfruits" offering and presented Himself as the wave offering. He had been raised from the dead, *"the firstfruits of those who are asleep"* 1Cor15:20. He was the firstborn from the dead so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything (Col 1:18). He's *"the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead"* Rev1:5. HalleluYah!!! When we put our hope in Him, we know we'll receive a new heavenly body just like He did. *"So also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming"*1Cor15:23.

Let me encourage you to enter into the celebration of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread this year with your family. Passover is the story God has given us to tell year after year. Go to **VisualStoryBible.org** and freely download the **Messianic Passover Seder**. It's a great way to tell His story with your family at home. Get matzah (find at grocery stores) bitter herbs (horseradish).

Our website Teachings: Passover, 3 days & 3 nights,
Shank bone, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Biblical Calendar
Coloring Sheets for children: Passover, Red Sea Deliverance,
Crucifixion, Resurrection and Children's Drama Videos
We also have **Messianic Passover Seder** booklets for sale.
These beautiful booklets are ones you'll want to keep and
use year after year for your family Seder. They are only \$5 each.
You'll want to order one for every family member & guest at your table.
Call 229.873.4922 to order. Blessings to you & your family (Col.1:10).



The Appointed Times are listed in Leviticus 23: Sabbath, Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks, Day of Blowing, Day of Atonements and Feast of Tabernacles. Many biblically significant events occurred during these exact “appointed times of the LORD” and they all point to Messiah. We will look specifically at Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits in this newsletter teaching.

Today a lady called me about **Visual Story Bible Curriculum - a 270 page download@ VisualStoryBible.org** She said she liked Visual Story Bible because it used ‘whole brain’ teaching with hand motions, symbols, activities, body movements, pictures, drama, etc. I had never heard that term before... but I do know this... God is into ‘whole brain’ teaching! That’s how He wants us to observe His Appointed Times... with our whole brain and our whole being. He doesn’t want us to just have a head knowledge about His Appointed Times and His ways. He wants us to get involved and do them because it helps us to remember and understand. He knows we learn by doing. These Appointed Times are a *“shadow of what is to come” Col2:17*. As we observe His Feasts, He will continue to reveal more about Himself and His ways and what is to come.

The **Passover** story is a story of deliverance. In the spring, we should be talking about the Passover in Egypt and remembering how the children of Israel were in bitter, harsh and cruel slavery. Visual Story Bible activities include making a mud pit & bricks. It’s memorable & messy. Just one more way to re-tell His story. Check out our mud pit pictures @ VisualStoryBible.org. In His mercy, God delivered His people from the bondage of slavery. What a moment to teach our children about all men who are in slavery to sin. *“There is none righteous, no, not one. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” Rom3:10-23.*

We should be cleaning our ~~houses~~ to get ready for Passover. Spring cleaning was God’s idea. God said there should not be any leaven in our homes during Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exd12:14-20). Jesus cleansed His Father’s House during this time (John21:12-13). It’s also time - to cleanse our hearts. *“Let us celebrate Feast, not with... leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” 1Cor5:8.*

Let me ask you... What activities have you done or do you plan to do to tell your children and grandchildren about Yeshua’s (Jesus) death, burial and resurrection this year? We need to do biblical activities that give glory to God and a correct estimate of who He is. Whose idea was it to focus on eating puffed pastries and colored eggs? God wants us to focus on eating matzah (unleavened bread) and tell His story from Scripture. God’s story also included a lamb, not a bunny. The lamb was innocent and had to die at Passover in place of the firstborn. The lamb’s blood was applied to the doorposts so that death would pass over.

When we tell the story as God told it, then it’s easy to see Yeshua (Jesus), *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John1:29)*, as the innocent Lamb who died as a substitute sacrifice for each one of us. **Yeshua (Jesus) died on the cross at Passover, the Appointed Time of the LORD.** Because of His sacrificial death, we can each apply His blood to the doorposts of our hearts so that eternal death will pass over.

God also directed the Israelites not to break any of the little lamb’s bones (Exd12:46). When Yeshua (Jesus) was crucified at Passover as **“the Lamb of God”**, none of His bones were broken *“so the Scripture could be fulfilled, NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN” John19:36*. What a beautiful way God has given us to tell His story. It’s all about Messiah and it all points to Him.