

SHAVUOT: GOD'S APPOINTMENT WITH YOU

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APPOINTMENTS

Have you ever been stood up on a date? Have you ever had a special day or a special appointment with someone you love, and they forgot? How did that make you feel?

A few years ago I totally forgot my son's birthday. And he never lets me forget it. Have you ever done that? Or has anyone ever done that to you? Those things hurt, don't they?

Now how much worse would it be if you forgot someone's special day, year after year after year? Can you imagine their hurt and the disappointment? They would question your love, your commitment to them, your devotion to them.

Well, unfortunately that is what most of us are doing to our Heavenly Father. You see, he has established special days, special appointments with His people. And for the most part, we have forgotten them, year after year after year. And I have no doubt that our Father looks down upon us with disappointment, questioning our love, our commitment, and our devotion to Him.

Today happens to be one of those special days. One of those special appointments that our Father has with us. It's one of the most special days in the entire year. A day to celebrate, which is what I hope we'll do today, as we learn more about how to love Him the way He asks us to.

I'd like to talk to you this morning about these special appointments that our Father has asked us to keep. And then I want to focus on that special appointment of today – called **Shavu'ot**.

WHOSE APPOINTMENTS?

If you have your Bibles, open them to Leviticus 23. We'll start with the first 2 verses. I'm reading from the ESV (English Standard Version, so yours might read a bit differently, depending on what translation you are using):

Leviticus 23:1-2

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.

Now at this point I need to take just a minute and talk about the name of our Father. Because in your English Bibles, it says, "The LORD spoke to Moses". And LORD is in all capitals. That means it really doesn't say "the LORD" in the original Hebrew. Instead, in Hebrew, is the actual personal name of our Father. Do you know what it is? Do you know His name? In Hebrew it is written with 4 consonants as YHWH. Since there are no vowels, we don't know for sure how to pronounce it, but there are two very good possibilities. Most scholars think it is pronounced as **Yahweh**. Another good possibility, which I happen to think is more likely, is that it is pronounced **Yahuah**.

Why is that important? Because in Scripture we are told to remember his name.

Exodus 3:15

Say this to the people of Israel, “**YHWH**, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.” **This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.**

His name is not God, although he is the God of gods. His name is not Lord, although he is the Lord of Lords. His personal name is **Yahuah**. Or **Yahweh**, if you prefer. So this morning I will refer to our Father by his personal name. **Yahuah**. Just as He asked us to. Look again at Lev 23:1-2

Leviticus 23:1-2

YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the **appointed feasts of YHWH** that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are **my appointed feasts**.”

“appointed feasts” – feasts bring to mind eating, and that is misleading. Some versions say appointed festivals... that brings to mind a party or a fair, which is also misleading. So what are they talking about?

In the original Hebrew, there is just one word here: “**mo’edim**”. This word means “set times, established times, special times, appointed times”. We could just simply say, “appointments”.

Notice that Scripture says these are the appointments of Yahuah. **HIS** appointments. they are not Jewish holidays... they are **HIS** days. His appointments with His people.

So what are His appointments with us? The first one He gives us it to happen every week.

THE SABBATH**Leviticus 23:3**

“Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to YHWH in all your dwelling places.”

His first appointment with his people is the Sabbath. The seventh day of the week. Of course this goes back to the Creation of the Universe in Genesis:

Genesis 2:2-3

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Since the beginning of time, God set apart the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath, and made it holy. And he asks his people to do the same. We are not to work, but instead are to rest. We are to gather together as “holy convocation”... some versions say a “holy assembly”. The point is that we are to rest and gather together as a holy people, set apart for His purposes.

The Sabbath is the Our Father’s **weekly appointment** with us. The rest of Leviticus 23 gives us instructions on **seven annual appointments**. Let’s look at them one at a time.

PASSOVER (PESACH)

Leviticus 23:4-5

“These are the appointed feasts of YHWH, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is YHWH’s Passover.

If you came to Epic’s Passover celebration, you know what this is all about ~3500 years ago, was the **original Passover**, when God’s people – YHWH’s people - were enslaved to the Pharaoh of Egypt, and were delivered from that slavery and given a new beginning. The Destroyer that was to kill the firstborn of all the households **passed over** those who had the faith to be obedient and sacrifice the lamb and put the lamb’s blood on the doorposts.

And then some 1500 years later, on that very same day of Passover -- Jesus – his Hebrew name is Yeshua – was crucified as the perfect lamb of God. The original Passover in Egypt is a picture, a symbol, of what would take place when Yeshua’s blood would save us all.

And we are told to remember that day. It is an appointment with our Father that He has asked to keep. For a very good reason.

UNLEAVENED BREAD (MATZOT)

The next day after Passover, was the beginning of a 7-day period called Unleavened Bread. This is the 2nd of the annual appointed times.

Leviticus 23:6-7

And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to YHWH; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.

The people of Israel originally took with them unleavened bread when they left Egypt. This appointed time remembers that great deliverance, when they walked through the parted Red Sea, that valley of death, and emerged into the freedom on the other side. And 1500 years late, on the very same day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, our Messiah Yeshua, spent his first night and day in the tomb. His body, the bread of life, was broken for us, buried, like a seed in the ground, that it might sprout forth new life again. He literally went through the valley of death, to emerge into new life on the other side.

FIRSTFRUITS (RASHEET)

And during that week of Unleavened Bread, on the day after the Sabbath, which would be a Sunday, we are told to set apart another day as a special appointment:

Leviticus 23:9-11

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

So the people were to lift up as an offering the firstfruits of their harvest. And on this very same day, some 1500 years later, Yeshua was lifted up, resurrected from the dead, becoming the firstfruits of the harvest.

That's why Paul refers to Yeshua as being the "**firstfruits**" in his letter to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:20

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.

We call this Resurrection Day... but Scripture calls it "Firstfruits".

So do you see why these appointments times are so significant? They are important days historically. But they had future meaning as well. On Passover, Yeshua was crucified. He was buried in the tomb during Unleavened Bread. And He was resurrected on Firstfruits.

The first three appointed times are all in the spring – Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. These are symbolic of events primarily related to the first coming of Yeshua.

FALL APPOINTED TIMES

There are also three appointed times in the fall, which are symbolic of events primarily related to the second coming of Yeshua. We'll look very briefly at these:

Trumpets (Yom Teruah) – Leviticus 23:23-25

Symbolizes the second coming of Yeshua, when he returns to gather His people together in the last days.

Atonement (Yom Kippur) – Leviticus 23:26-32

Symbolized judgment day, when all will come before His presence, and those whose names are not written in the book of life are condemned to eternal judgment, but those have been cleansed by their faith in the work of Yeshua will be found righteous before our Father.

Tabernacles (Sukkot) – Leviticus 23:33-43

Symbolizes our millennial reign with Yeshua, when we live with him for 1000 years, in His very presence. Some suggest that perhaps Yeshua was also born on this day, although we can't prove that to be true.

Do you see why these appointed times are so significant? Do you begin to understand why our Father asks us to remember these days? These days are special – they point to key events, critical days, in the history or future of His entire creation. Four times in this chapter alone, we are told:

Leviticus 23:21

It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

In other words, you are to remember this appointments for all time, no matter where you are.

WEEKS (SHAVU'OT)

There is one more appointed time. It occurs in between the 3 spring appointment times and the 3 fall appointed times. In Hebrew it is called Shavu'ot, which means "weeks". Shavu'ot occurs exactly 7 weeks after Firstfruits, or 50 days after the Sabbath during Unleavened Bread.

Leviticus 23:15-16, 21

"You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to YHWH... You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

Today is Shavuot. Today is 7 full weeks after Firstfruits (which we called here at Epic Resurrection Sunday.

THE FIRST SHAVU'OT

What is Shavu'ot all about? What makes this day so special?

We are not specifically told in Scripture WHY to celebrate this day... WHY this day is an appointed time. But the Rabbi's of old searched Scripture for clues, and found some good ones. According to tradition, the day of Shavu'ot marks the very day our heavenly Father, **Yahuah**, gave his Word to Moses and the people on Mount Sinai. This is the day he gave his 10 commandments (the 10 words, Scripture calls it). Is that true? Although Scripture doesn't specifically state it this way, it does seem to be very likely.

Exodus 19 records this event. The people of Israel have just been delivered from Egypt. There were the 10 plagues, and then Passover, and the Red Sea was parted and the people were set free. And after traveling for about 7 weeks, they finally came to Mt Sinai. And then the God of Israel, His name is Yahuah, speaks to His people. When exactly did that happen? Exodus 19:1 tells us:

Exodus 19:1

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

We won't read the entire chapter, but I at least want to outline what happens, and take an educated guess on when it happens:

DAY 1 - The people arrive at Sinai on the first day of the third month.

DAY 2 – Moses goes up the mountain the first time and hears promises from YHWH. He goes down and tells the people. They say we will obey.

We don't know for sure which mountain this is. But it was likely a big mountain. If it is the traditional location of Mt Sinai (which can't be proven) then it takes about 6 hours to climb up. The point is that it was likely a full day to go up and down the mountain.

DAY 3 – Moses goes up the mountain a second time to tell YHWH people will obey. YHWH says prepare the people today and tomorrow, for on the third day I will

come down. So Moses must go down the same day. This is also the first day of preparation.

DAY 4 – Second Day of preparation

DAY 5 – Third day of preparation – the people gather at base of Sinai. Moses goes up for the third time. YHWH covers Sinai in smoke and fire and thunder. YHWH sends Moses back down to tell people not to come close, and to bring Aaron back up.

DAY 6 – Moses and Aaron go back up, and YHWH gives the Ten Words

So I put this on a chart to help me explain things. They arrive at Sinai on day 1 of the third month, and it seems like it would have been on about day 6 at the soonest that YHWH first spoke to the nation of Israel. Now let's look at this date in relation to the appointed times in the First month... Passover is on the 14th, the week of Unleavened Bread starts on the 15th. And somewhere during that week will be a Sabbath day, with the day after the Sabbath being the day of Firstfruits. Now just for fun, let's assume Firstfruits was 3 days after Passover, like it was during the year when Yeshua was crucified. He was crucified on Passover, and 3 days later on Firstfruits he was resurrected. In that case, Firstfruits would have been on the 17th, and exactly 7 weeks later would be Shavuot, which then falls right on Day 6 of month 3, the very day we estimate the Father spoke his very first words to all His people.

Wow! That is really cool. It seems the tradition is right. On Shavuot, THIS VERY DAY – TODAY – the God of Israel first spoke to His people as a nation, as a community. That's Today – a day he told us to remember for all generations no matter where we live.

But more importantly, WHAT DID YHWH SAY? This was the first time ever in the history of the universe that the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, YHWH by name, actually spoke, audibly, to His people.

There was thunder, lightening, smoke, clouds, fire, loud noises, and the earth itself shook. And the Creator of the Universe would speak for the first time to His people. What would He say? What would be His first most important words be?

Ex 20:2 I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt

Ex 20:3 You shall have no other gods before me.

Ex 20:7 You shall not take the name of YHWH your God in vain.

Ex 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH your God. On it you shall not do any work

Ex 20:12 Honor your father and your mother

Ex 20:13 You shall not murder.

Ex 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

Ex 20:15 You shall not steal.

Ex 20:16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Ex 20:17 You shall not covet.

Ex 20:18 Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off

Ex 20:22 And YHWH said to Moses... “You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven.”

These are the VERY WORDS of our Father, the very words of Yahuah to His people. To us. Timeless words, just as applicable to us today as they were to the nation of Israel 3500 years ago.

THIS is what we celebrate on Shavu’ot. This is what we celebrate today. The Father giving his Word, His Torah, His instructions for life, to us, His people.

This is more than just a book. These are the recorded words of Yahuah. His communication to us. For centuries, probably back to the time of the Messiah, at the beginning of their gathering in the synagogue, when they take the scroll of Scripture to read, they hold it up, and the people shout and cheer. And the leader walks around the people reach out and touch the scroll. The very words of God. They honor and value what is written there. The old scrolls, when they worn and tattered are never thrown away. They are stored with honor, or buried with honor. And the written words are always treated with greatest respect. You would never set the written word on the floor. You would never put a glass or drink, or anything for that matter on top of the written word. You would never give it toss over to the couch or the chair. Sure, on one hand, it’s just paper, you might say. BUT, on the other hand, on this paper, is written the very WORDs of God. So it’s no longer just paper any more, is it? It is holy. Just as He is holy. His Word is who He is.

ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE

Every year, on Shavu’ot, for hundreds of years, thousands of years actually, the giving of His Word is remembered. These Scriptures are read, just as we have read them today.

It’s interesting that traditionally, another passage was also read, along with the Exodus passage. This was the vision of Ezekiel, when, as Ezekiel puts it, “the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God”

Ezekiel 1:1

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, **the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.**

Ezekiel 1:4

As I looked, behold, a **stormy wind** came out of the north, and a **great cloud**, with brightness around it, and **fire flashing forth continually**, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal.

Ezekiel 1:13–14

As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was **like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.**

Ezekiel 1:24

And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings **like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army.**

Ezekiel 2:1-2

And he said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.” **And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me** and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

Do you see why they read this passage on Shavu’ot? There are so many similarities here – fire, smoke, lightening, sounds... and as Yahuah spoke to Ezekiel, in the midst of all this, we are told that the Spirit entered him. God’s Spirit, like His Word, is the very essence of God himself. It is who He is. When He speaks to us through His Word, it is His Spirit that enters us. **His Word and the Spirit and intimately connected**, which leads me right into the last Scripture I want to share with you.

SHAVU’OT IN ACTS 2

Every year Shavu’ot was celebrated in this way. People would travel from all over the nation, in fact from wherever they lived in countries far away, they would travel to Jerusalem, to the temple, and gather on Shavu’ot to celebrate the giving of the Torah, the giving of the Word of God Himself to his people. And they would assemble in a holy convocation, as commanded in Scripture, and they read these passages. They would read Leviticus as we did. They would read Exodus as we did, about the clouds and the smoke and fire and the thunder and the strange sounds. They would read Ezekiel as we did about the fire and thunder and wind and smoke and strange sounds. And they would celebrate His Word, even without knowing all the reasons why.

We have record in Acts of one year when they gathered for Shavu’ot, shortly after Yeshua was crucified.

Acts 2:1

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

Pentecost is from the Greek word **Pentecoste**, used in place of the Hebrew Shavu’ot.

Hebrew **Shavu’ot** = weeks = 7 full weeks from the day after the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread

Greek **Pentecoste** = 50th = 50 days after the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread

All together in one place – this would have been the temple. The temple is also often referred to as “the house”, and you will see this in the next verse.

Acts 2:2-4

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

It was God, communicating again with his people. Giving his instructions for life to His people. This time not words of instruction to be recorded on tablets of stone, but rather

an Instructor, HIS SPIRIT, to live in our heart. And he did it, in much the same way as He did 1500 years before, and **on the very same day**, an appointment, a set time, a day he told them to set apart for all generations! His Word given 1500 years earlier, and now His Spirit, intimately connected, given on the very same day. His appointed times are for a reason. Always.

Do you see why His appointments are so important? These aren't "Jewish holidays". These are special days of appointment that our Father has asked His people to remember for all generations. And for very good reason. The most critical, important events of all time, for all creation, have taken place, or will take place on these very days. Passover, and the Death of the Messiah. Unleavened Bread and the burial of the Messiah. Firstfruits and resurrection of Messiah. Shavuot and the giving of His Word as well as the giving of his Spirit. And the remaining appointed times in the Fall are every bit as significant.

Yet for most of us, Shavuot is not even a glitch on our radar screen. And if we have heard of Pentecost, let alone remember when it is, we don't really celebrate it. **I want to celebrate God's gift of His Word.** And I want to celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit. We have a God who talks to us. Who speaks to us through his Word, and through his Holy Spirit. Let's never forget how valuable that is.

NEXT STEPS

1. Make today a day of rest. I know you've all got big plans for today. But if God Himself asked you to change your plans today, would you do it? Well the fact is, He has asked that very thing. Today is Shavu'ot. We are commanded to do no work today, but rather to set this day apart as a day of rest. Will you start here, with this, today?
2. Celebrate his Word, and His Spirit, today. Spend today reading Scripture, and letting His Spirit speak to your heart, as you rest from your work.
3. Make plans to begin keeping YHWH's appointments. His weekly Sabbaths and the 7 annual appointed times are for us. They have meaning. God is calling His people back to His Word. He is calling his remnant back to him. Our traditions and man-made holidays have taken us far far away from the Truths He has given us in His Word. I guarantee you will be blessed as you begin to keep his appointments.
4. Treat His Word as Holy. It is more than paper, for written on those pages is the very essence of the Father himself. Treat His Word with respect and honor. Keep it off the floor, keep your junk off of it, handle it as your most prized possession.
5. I have been talking about how we have a God who speaks to His people, but maybe you have never really heard his voice. Perhaps you are not sure if you are one of His people. That can change right now. You can decide to TURN from the path you are on... and begin walking to the Father. If you are feeling convicted to do this, I would encourage you during our worship time to walk over to the prayer room and ask someone there to pray with you as you commit your life to Yahuah, the God of Israel.
- 6 The prayer room is open for anyone. If you are feeling lead to find a quiet place to speak to the Father in prayer, please free to use this room at any time. Someone will be

there to pray with you if you like, or you are welcome to pray alone, just you and your heavenly Father.

7. Also, we have communion tables located in each corner of this room. There are pieces of unleavened bread and that you can dip in the cup, as you remember what Yeshua has done for you, and proclaim His return.

8. Finally, if you have been feeling the Father speak to you today, please let the leadership here at Epic know what decisions you have made or would like to make, so they can pray for you, and support you. Just jot a note on the back of your Connection Cards and turn it in on the way out.

Let's close in prayer.