

Did Yahweh Suspend the Feasts?

By Larry Acheson

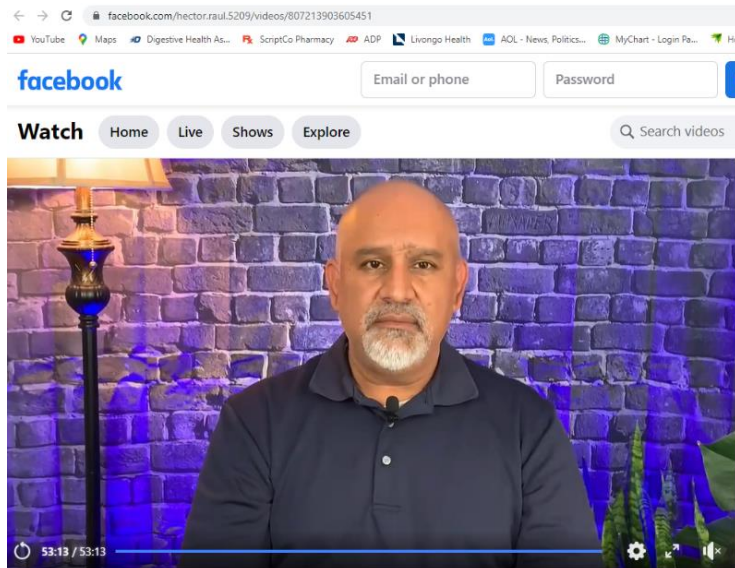
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This study presumes that you, the reader, are already familiar with the feasts outlined and commanded in Leviticus 23. My family and I have commemorated the feasts since 1987 and we cannot imagine discontinuing this practice, even though circumstances often require that we stay at home as a family.

In August 2022, a fellow believer named Mike sent me the link to a video produced by a man named Hector. Hector once supported commemorating the feasts of Yahweh, but has now decided that the feasts are “suspended.” When I first began listening to the video, I thought, “Is this some sort of clever ploy aimed at getting believers to take the feasts more seriously?” I wasn’t prepared to hear the actual path this man has chosen to follow.

Not the Message I was Expecting

For some background information, June and I have for a long time taken exception to what seems to be an all-too-common thread intertwined within the Sacred Name Movement, dictating



that we are at least *borderline sinning* if we don't “go somewhere to meet with other believers” for the feasts. So when I first began watching and listening to Hector's video, I was mentally expecting a much-needed response to this sort of approach, as in maybe he's decided to keep the feasts at home instead of joining a group or assembly at their feast observance. If so, then I would have agreed that he should *not* feel obligated to “go somewhere” for the feasts. However, that which I expected was likely the furthest thing from Hector's mind.

Keeping the feasts at home presents its own set of challenges, and there will always be someone to point out our shortcomings, so I tend to focus on the most important things. The absolute most important thing about commemorating Yahweh's feasts is setting apart His holy days. I do not personally believe one is sinning if he or she works for a secular employer during the feast; this belief, in and of itself, is a controversial one that meets the unmitigated disapproval of many within the Sacred Name Movement. But working on one of Yahweh's set apart *holy days* is another matter, and shouldn't even be a point of controversy. Thus, as I began listening to Hector's message, my brain told me he was about to demonstrate that

there's nothing sinful about staying home during the feasts and even working your regular job during the feasts—but *what about honoring Yahweh's holy days?* That was what I needed to find out. Thus, as I listened, I tuned my mental radar into determining whether or not he was teaching that we should continue observing Yahweh's **holy days** during the feasts.

As an aside, I want to make it clear that *optimally*, I agree that we should try to go somewhere to meet with like-minded believers for the feasts *and* use feast-time wisely, i.e., focusing on the things we have in common instead of things that divide us, quickly shutting down any disagreements before they turn into arguments, sharing meaningful testimonies about our faith and our unique “wilderness journeys,” etc. Feast time should be a mutual celebration of love that is not only directed towards our Heavenly Father and His Son, but also to each other. As much as my wife and I enjoy fellowshiping with others and participating in these *love feasts*, sometimes it's not so easy for us to get away for various reasons, and as those who know us are aware, June and I have our own valid reasons, which we are willing to share with those who need to know more. So we maintain that if you cannot get out to be with others for the feasts, *at least* observe/commemorate the **holy days**, as in abstaining from servile work on those days.

Another contingency on which I thought Hector *might* be focusing involves the common use of the phrase “keep the Passover.” We are accustomed to hearing folks ask, “Where are you guys going to **keep the Passover?**” For those who want to probe a little more deeply, *keeping the Passover* is an expression that in Hebrew means “*prepare* the Passover,” i.e., killing and preparing the Passover lamb. Since June and I are persuaded that we should *not* kill a lamb for Passover, at least not here in the USA, we try to be careful to say we *commemorate* the Passover instead of we “keep” the Passover. So yes, I thought that *maybe*, when Hector says we shouldn't *keep* the feasts, the point he may have been driving at is that we need to *commemorate* the feasts because we are not to be killing a lamb or offering sacrifices, at least not here in the USA.



I mention all this because, frankly, I thought at first that Hector was simply going to suggest that we tweak the words we so loosely use when we say we “keep the feasts.” It is true that we cannot “keep the feasts” according to all the rites and ceremonies as outlined in Torah, but if Yahweh declares a day to be holy, then I don't think it's up to us to determine that it *isn't* (or that it's “suspended”). So I frankly thought that at some point Hector was going to say something like, “Now when I say we should not *keep* the feasts, what I mean is we cannot ‘keep’ them in terms of all the priestly functions, so the best we can do is put ourselves in the place of the common, non-priestly populace. We can abstain from servile work on the high days of the feasts, we can assemble with others and do those things to help us to best honor the Father in our limited capacity, but we are not to attempt to carry out any of the priestly functions.” Something like that. And I would have agreed with him, as would all the assemblies we have visited over the years. In summary, I thought Hector's focus was going to be more about *semantics* than practice and belief. I was mistaken.

Throwback to Dispensationalism

I played Hector's video twice, but the first time I admit I actually scrolled through much of it without listening to everything, in hopes of catching some type of commentary related to the sanctity of Yahweh's holy days. I couldn't find it, so I asked the guy who sent me the video link (Mike) if Hector mentioned anything about the holy days of the feast. Mike conceded that he had likewise not listened to the entire video himself.

The following day I determined to listen to the whole thing and let's just say I was absolutely stunned. ***This was no joke.*** Hector truly believes the feasts, including the holy days, are "suspended." Here's a direct quote taken from the 0:33 mark of his message:

Now I want to tell you that I *don't* believe the feasts are done away with; I actually feel and I believe the Bible teaches us that they [the feasts of Leviticus 23] are currently suspended—*not done away with*—but I *do* feel that they are *suspended*.

I compare Hector's teaching to Baptist theology in which they teach that the Sabbath hasn't been "done away"; rather, we are now living in a different "dispensation" and the Sabbath will once again be restored in the distant future, as stated in Isaiah 66:23. It is this same principle that Hector applies to the feasts. Since he now applies this principle to the *feasts*, I can only wonder if and when he will eventually extend it to the *weekly Sabbath*. Hector expends the next 52 minutes explaining his position. I will display a few pertinent excerpts here in my rebuttal.

I do not support Hector's conclusion for a number of reasons, but my chief objection has to



do with his complete and utter silence regarding the *holy days*, i.e., those days of the feasts on which we are commanded to do no servile work. He doesn't mention the words "holy days" or "high day Sabbaths" at any time, which strongly indicates that those special days have little or no meaning for Hector. To him, **everything** about the feasts is now "suspended." Now please consider: Would a "suspension" of feasts represent the *status quo*, or would it represent a *change*? This is an important question that doesn't seem to enter into Hector's mind. Here's a

pertinent direct quote, taken from the 51:35 mark of the video:

Our heavenly Father has lifted the elements of His feasts, He's lifted the recipes of His feasts, and **He does not change.**

From my perspective, "lifting the elements," "lifting the recipe," etc., these acts represent a ***change***, and yet Hector is adamant that Yahweh doesn't change. I am persuaded that Hector's confusion stems from his not understanding that the **ONLY** thing about the law that has changed

since Yeshua's ascension to the role of High Priest is that portion of the law which pertains to the priesthood. If Yeshua is the High Priest who offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice atoning for sins once for all, this sacrifice, performed "once for all," has an impact on whether or not we are to continue offering animal sacrifices. As we are told in Hebrews 7:12:

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

So does the change in the priesthood mean the entire law has been wiped out, annulled or "suspended," rendering the feasts "unkeepable" in our day and age? No, only those aspects impacted by the priestly functions are affected. Everything else is status quo. More on this later.

The Uzzah Factor

If you cannot commemorate the feasts without making the tiniest of mistakes, then don't even bother. That's the approach suggested by Hector. The following excerpt is taken from the 28:28 – 29:23 mark of his video:

Yes, "forever" does mean "forever"—non-stop; but if you don't have the elements to keep the feasts as He's commanded them, then in essence you're—you're not walking in obedience because "doing the best we can" is not mentioned in the Scriptures. There is no commandment to keep the feasts "as best as you can" with minimal recipe, your *own* recipe, your *own* formulation, your *own* way, your *own* calendar, et cetera, et cetera. He only gives us a command and He identifies **His** feasts with **His** recipe, **His** formula, and it involves a tabernacle, a temple, a priesthood—a tabernacle OR a temple—the priesthood, and animal sacrifices, none of which are available today.

I should mention that Hector prefaced the above commentary with the example of Uzzah, who was struck dead when he touched the Ark of the Covenant in a well-intentioned attempt to keep it from falling while being transported in a cart pulled by oxen (2 Sam. 1-7).¹ Uzzah was "doing the best he could" with the best of intentions, but he was nevertheless struck dead by Yahweh. So Hector, equipped with this one example to alarm/terrify his audience, proceeded with the above decision, effectively "watering down" Torah obedience. "Doing the best you can" doesn't cut it in Hector's estimation, so his solution is to do *nothing*. One little mistake and you, like Uzzah, are dead, or so he reasons.



¹ For reference purposes, here's an excerpt from Hector's message (beginning at the 10:21 mark): "And what does Uzzah do? He does something that a *nice* person would do, that a *kind* person would do, that a *good human being* would do, something that *you* would do, something that *I* would do—he touches the ark and tries to prevent it from falling. But what did he *really* do? It says that Yahweh's anger burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had put his hand on the Ark, so he died. In other words, *the Father didn't change*. [This event occurred] many, many, many years later [after the law had been given], and He did not change. And Uzzah paid the price because He disobeyed."

I appreciate *The Unger's Bible Dictionary's* summary of why Uzzah was killed. Sure, he had the best of intentions, but there's much more to consider about this account than Uzzah's touching a most holy object. If we dig deeper, we find that even the *Levites* collectively neglected to follow Yahweh's instructions for transporting the Ark of the Covenant. This entire incident reflected the consequences of **more** than just one man's innocent move to prevent the Ark from hitting the ground. As per Exodus 25:13-15, the ark was to be carried by way of poles that would be placed through rings that were attached to the four corners of the ark. It was to be carried on the shoulders



of the priests. Torah says *nothing* about transporting it by a cart pulled by oxen, as though it's some ordinary piece of freight. ***This was and is the most holy object in the world!*** The Israelites, in returning the most holy Ark of the Covenant to Israel, had obviously neglected the mandate regarding how to transport it. Sadly, Uzzah paid the ultimate price for the Levites' collective failure to obey the command given in Exodus 25. In essence, he was an innocent victim.

The Uzzah incident reminds me of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster of 1986. Seven astronauts all perished because of the collective failure of NASA to heed the persistent warnings of engineers about launching the shuttle in cold temperatures. It took the deaths of those astronauts to give NASA the "rude awakening/wake-up call" they needed to correct the design flaw. NASA ignored what should have been done; the astronauts, much like Uzzah, paid the ultimate price.

Another example involves the small town near where I was raised. For years, local citizens complained and protested the fact that there was only a two-way stop sign at a major intersection where two state highways meet. A ***four-way stop*** was needed and requested. Even with numerous ongoing "fender-benders," the state's Department of Transportation ignored repeated requests to put in four-way stop signs. Finally, the hearts of our community were shattered after the news broke that a dear family of four was tragically killed when a vehicle pulled out in front of them as they drove through the intersection at the posted speed limit. The offending driver, apparently unfamiliar with the area, thought that it was a four-way stop and that the approaching vehicle would stop, so he pulled out just as the family of four was speeding through. The impact killed all of the vehicle's occupants. The grieving process in our community was intense. I remember people breaking down crying upon hearing heart-wrenching details, even though they didn't even know the family. Within weeks, the Dept of Transportation did ***more*** than just put in four-way stop signs; they installed the town's first and only ***stoplights***.



That's what it took to heed the wake-up call that our community had attempted to deliver for so many years; even today, "wake-up calls" only seem to be acted upon after authorities had *already* ignored pleas for needed improvements. Loss of life seems to be the only way "wake-up calls" are heeded. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. Sadly, that's just the way it is.

In similar fashion, I sense that Uzzah was an innocent victim, though certainly he himself should have been more aware of the special item that was being transported, along with its special “care instructions.” But if those in authority would have searched the Scriptures and studied the correct procedure in transporting the Ark of the Covenant, Uzzah’s life would have been spared. When the Ark was finally brought to the city of David (2 Samuel 6:12-15), it was *carried* into the city as per Torah instruction (*not* loaded on a cart). Again, it took the death of a mostly-innocent man to deliver the needed wake-up call.

This incident should NOT be regarded as a charge to either do things perfectly or Yahweh will reject you. We should *always* do our best to please the Father, but it’s *one* thing to misunderstand and misinterpret instructions; it’s *another* thing to blatantly ignore and even defy them. As we know from Scripture, Yahweh winks at our ignorance (Acts 17:30), but when we openly defy His clear instructions, that is rebellion, and we should all know how Yahweh regards rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23).

So let’s consider how “rebellious” we are when we attempt to set aside Yahweh’s feasts, even though we are not living in the Promised Land, even though there is no temple and even though we are not priests. Are we in danger of invoking the “Uzzah Factor” if we abstain from working on a day that Yahweh has declared “holy”? Are we provoking Yahweh to anger when we avoid leavened products during the time known as “The Feast of Unleavened Bread”? Are we exhibiting rebellion when we commemorate Yahweh’s holy days somewhere other than the land of Israel?

New Testament Believers Commemorated the Feasts ... *Away from Israel*

In his video, Hector correctly emphasizes that in our day and age there is no temple, no priesthood and no sacrifices. That is true, but this contingency didn’t stop the Apostle Paul from encouraging the Corinthian believers (who were most certainly not living in the land) to “keep the feast,” a specific reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread (1 Cor. 5:8). *I don’t think Paul was speaking metaphorically!* In fact, if they weren’t supposed to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Greece, I would expect some sort of “apostolic mandate” cautioning them *not* to do so. Moreover, I would expect a specific instruction in at least *one* of the Apostle Paul’s letters admonishing believers that if they desire to keep the feast, including abstaining from work on the holy days, then they must go to Jerusalem. I find no such instruction.

If I should ever discontinue keeping the feasts, I would always wonder how the Apostles Luke and Paul *knew* when “the Fast” occurred (Acts 27:9). Are we to believe the Apostle Paul had already observed it in Jerusalem (as a prisoner) before they set sail for Italy? If you follow the travel itinerary as laid out in Acts 25:13 - Acts 27:9, it should be abundantly clear that these apostles could *not* have been “in the land” on the Day of Atonement, i.e., “the Fast.” My guess is they were somewhere around the island of Crete, as per Acts 27:8. This would have put them around 600 miles west of the land of Israel. Now *how* and *why* would they just happen to know when “the Fast” occurred if they didn’t *fast* on that day? Are we to believe they ate and drank that day while wistfully thinking about their fasting brethren who were in the land?

But there's more! How did Luke and Paul know when the Days of Unleavened Bread fell while they were in Macedonia (Acts 20:3-6)? I mean, they were definitely *not* “in the land” and in fact had been away from the land of Israel for at least six months. So why did they even bother keeping track of when the Days of Unleavened Bread were? *Might it be because they observed the holy days of that feast and that moreover, they actually abstained from leavened products for seven days?* Yes, if I should ever discontinue observing the feasts, I would always wonder how they knew and whether or not they abstained from leavened products. Hector's solution does not satisfy me at all. He would have them saying, “Oh, if only I were in the land of Israel during this time, **then** I would be eating *unleavened* bread instead of all this leavened bread!”

Contrary to the above, Hector teaches that the Apostle Paul never kept the feasts anywhere but in Jerusalem. The following commentary begins at the 47:53 mark:

Even **Paul** kept the feasts in Jerusalem, and this is long after the Messiah was already ascended. He also did not keep the feasts anywhere else but in Jerusalem, as commanded by the original command given in Exodus, where it says, “You shall do this when you enter the land.” **READ YOUR BIBLE**; it's extremely important that you read your Bible and that you study everything with a careful eye.

I agree that we should read the Bible with a careful eye, but when I read the New Testament, I glean that there are *approved Scriptural examples* of believers keeping the feasts, even though they were not in the land of Israel.

Just to be clear: The general populace, i.e., the non-priests living in Jerusalem, would have essentially done the same thing *we* do, i.e., abstain from servile work on the holy days AND abstain from leavening during the Feast of Unleavened Bread—I mean, it's not complicated! That's what my family and I do (but it's in the USA)! The only thing that non-priests living in the land did that we cannot do is bring offerings to the priests, and even that rite became no longer possible to perform after the temple was destroyed in 70 CE.

So if I should decide to do my best to honor the Father by abstaining from work on **His** holy days of a feast, and if I should dare to abstain from leavened products during the days of Unleavened Bread, according to Hector's paradigm this should be considered a waste of time and energy because I'm not keeping Yahweh's feast *perfectly*. In Hector's view, I'm actually keeping “**MY** (meaningless) **feast**” and *not* Yahweh's because (a) I'm not in the land and (b) I'm unable to carry out or participate in any of the priestly functions. That's essentially what I get from Hector's message. If you attempt to commemorate the feasts out of your love for Yahweh, you're actually **dishonoring Him** more than you would if you went your “merry way” on those days, at least according to Hector's world view.

Hector establishes his premise that if we even *attempt* to keep the feasts here in the USA, then we are guilty of “changing the recipe,” which, of course, constitutes sin. The following commentary begins at the 29:25 mark of his video:

Now what about, for example, in Deuteronomy 4:2? It says, 'Do not add what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands

of Yahweh that I give you.' *We are not to add or subtract! We are not to add or subtract!* If He gives us a recipe, we are not allowed to add to the recipe! We're also not allowed to *subtract* from the recipe. However, if He doesn't make the elements *available* for the recipe, then it's not—we are not at fault for not doing it! *As a matter of fact, we're at fault for doing it wrongly!* We're at fault for changing the recipe, even utilizing our own reasoning and our own excuses.

In response to the above, I'm trying to get a firm handle on how we offend Yahweh by abstaining from servile work on a day that He declares is a *holy* day. Hector does not explain this. I'm trying to determine how the wrath of Yahweh is kindled against us for choosing to abstain from leavened products during a seven-day period during which the Israelites were commanded to do the same. The *ONLY* thing the Israelite *general populace* could do that my family and I cannot is live in the land of Israel. We're not priests, which means we're not qualified to offer animal sacrifices, so as faithful Israelites we simply would have abstained from servile work on the holy days and leavening during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Hector does not explain how it should be considered wrong to meet with others during those days to fellowship, worship Yahweh and study Torah. We cannot help it we're not in the land and Hector does not explain how it offends Yahweh if we cease from our labors *wherever we find ourselves* on days that He (Yahweh) has designated as "holy."

On a personal level, I would like to tell those of Hector's persuasion that if I second-guessed every little thing I do in trying to please the Father, I would go bonkers. If I fretted the wrath of Yahweh with every move I make and each thought I take, I would be a "basket case." *Balance is the key.* No one's perfect, but I rejoice knowing that Yahweh's mercy is infinite and indescribable. That's what keeps me going. Do I keep the Sabbath perfectly? No, I'm sure I don't, but over the years I have learned to "fine-tune" and tweak some things because I want to grow closer to the Father and be more like Him and His Son. I'm not perfect, but I strive for perfection. In fact, that's what we are commanded to do (Deut 18:13, Matthew 5:48). So if I don't commemorate the feasts the way *Hector* thinks I should, I'm not going to worry about pleasing Hector. My focus is on pleasing *Yahweh*. I am persuaded that Hector means well with his message, but his arguments are weak, without sound reasoning and lacking an approved Scriptural example.

We Can't!!! Or Can We?

Hector affirms his conclusion that we simply *cannot* keep Yahweh's feasts (i.e., so don't bother trying) at the 30:12 mark of his presentation:

The fact is that He is the one that has identified His feasts; He tells us what recipes it needs, and He also is in charge of the ingredients, and so He has taken away the elements, the ingredients for us to be able to keep the feasts as He prescribed them. *We can't do it! We can't do it!*

Hector's admonition reminds me of the expression "Success comes in 'cans.' Failure comes in 'can'ts.'" This fatalistic, defeatist approach is essentially the *opposite* of how we should regard service to the Almighty. My response to Hector is, "I disagree with you. We *can* do it, assuming

we acknowledge that we're not priests and that we are *not* bent on performing rites and other duties that have been relegated to those who *are*. I'm not a priest, at least not yet."

Another expression that comes to mind is, "Those who say it can't be done shouldn't interrupt those who are doing it."

Hector continues by asserting the contradictory admonition that instead of attempting to keep the feasts, we should walk as the Messiah did, imitating Him. The following excerpt is taken from the 38:30 - 39:06 mark of Hector's message:

So during this time, in *our* time, when -- now that the temple is destroyed in our time -- and um -- what do **WE** do? What is our focus? We can't keep the feasts of Yahweh as prescribed -- and as given as a recipe (because He took away the elements) -- *so what do you do?* We are to focus on our Messiah! **He** is our attention, **He** needs to be our attention, **He** needs to be our focus, we need to walk like Him, be like Him and obey Him -- obey His commandments and seek Him!

I fully agree that our focus should be on the Messiah (but He's *Yahweh's* Messiah, not ours). Do we *really* need to "walk like Him"? *Then let's follow His example of obedience!* I am reminded of the Church of God (7th Day) pastor who visited our home back in 1986. At that time, June and I were observing the weekly Sabbath (though probably not *perfectly*, so there you go). Anyway, at that time we weren't certain as to whether or not we should also commemorate the feasts and that was the focus of our discussion. Due to the pastor's persuasive arguments against keeping the feasts, I was actually leaning *against* their observance. As our discussion was winding down, I suddenly blurted out, "Well, I think the important thing is for us to follow Jesus' example" (my exact words). The pastor agreed. I then asked, "Did Jesus keep the feasts?"

He begrudgingly, but honestly, answered, "Yes." That was it. He then quickly changed the subject. I guess that's *one* example the pastor didn't want to follow. So if the Messiah kept the feasts, and if we're supposed to follow His example, then should we, in our day and time, shake our heads in sadness as we acknowledge that we cannot in any way follow His example of obedience because we're not in the land and because there's no temple?

Ten months after our meeting with the Church of God (7th Day) pastor, our family kept our first feast and we haven't looked back.

By the way, we have often been chastised by others when we explain that we are only trying to follow the Messiah's example. I have been asked, "So are you *also* going to go and get baptized in the Jordan River?"

Passing Thoughts from My E-mail Exchange

Although I was saddened by the video whose link my friend Mike sent me, at the same time it gave us occasion for a meaningful e-mail exchange. As Mike and I shared our reaction to Hector's message, I conveyed my difficulty in determining what motivated him to produce such a

contorted message. What follows are some excerpts from our exchange, some of which are modified for the benefit of this study:

I wrote:

So if I'm not living in Jerusalem, the days Yahweh declared as being "holy" aren't "holy" for me? I'm having a tough time wrapping my head around Hector's reasoning process. All I can come up with is an impression that he's seeking pretexts to not observe/commemorate the feasts.

As you (Mike) pointed out, there is no record of the apostles mentioning the feasts having been "suspended" or admonishments for believers in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, etc., to be careful to not observe/commemorate the feasts since they aren't living in the land. Nor is there some warning that if the temple is ever destroyed, then this would ruin any future plans for keeping the feasts. This teaching is untenable on its most elementary level.

Mike wrote: "But my main concern is those who are affected, the weaker in the flock, by Hector's revelation. Being an Elder he should have not broadcasted it."

I replied: "I agree. Maybe Hector hasn't completely fallen from Torah (as Mike had previously suggested), but something is certainly 'off' and I cannot help but wonder what's next. He's a leader and from experience I have found there are always trusting sheep willing to be led the wrong way. Where is Hector headed?"

"By the way, in 2009 I composed a related study about why we keep the feasts titled 'Have the Feast Days of Leviticus 23 Been Fulfilled?' It's available at the following link if you're interested: www.ponderscripture.org/feasts.html."

In a separate e-mail, Mike mentioned that we live for Yahweh's sabbaths and feast days and that they are a joy of heart for us. Mike made an excellent point, which may partly explain why both he and I find Hector's message to be so revolting. The thing about the Sabbaths and feast days that Torah-lovers appreciate is that we don't look at them as something we HAVE to do (even though, yes, they are commanded), but rather we regard them as something we GET to do. We eagerly *anticipate* them, we look forward to them and yes, we LIVE for them.

We Live for Yahweh's Feasts!

Some of you who read this may recognize the individuals being described below: A fellow Sabbathkeeping friend once told me of his rude introduction to the feasts. It was at a booth of some religious conference. He approached the booth, picked up some of the literature the man offered and immediately noticed that the man was advocating feast day observance. My friend shrugged his shoulders and said something along the line of, "I'm not sure how anyone would even be able to keep those feasts in this day and age."

The man nearly went off on him and passionately exclaimed, “I base my **LIFE** on Yahweh’s feasts!!!” My friend never forgot that reaction. Unlike many who would have simply walked away, dismissing the man at the booth as a fanatical nut, my friend examined the man’s teaching a little more carefully and soon he, too, was keeping the feasts. He later became a missionary in India, where he oversaw the construction of a school for children of all ages, where they are not only taught to memorize the ten commandments and practice Torah observance, but also keep the feasts of Yahweh. The man at the booth would later become his biggest supporter and advocate. It’s a very moving and even emotional testimony for me as I reflect on it.

So yes, I think those of us who examine the feasts from the perspective that we **GET** to observe/commemorate them the best we can—we would agree that we **BASE OUR LIVES** on them (and ultimately we base our lives on the Giver who *gave* them to us, of course). So yeah, it hurts to hear someone nonchalantly tell us we’re wasting our time, we’re keeping “our” feasts and not Yahweh’s feasts, etc. I do not consider feast observance/commemoration to be a waste of time and it sure beats the alternative (e.g., working at your job alongside those who don’t give a flip about the Almighty).

And by the way, one of Hector’s major talking points was about all the disputing, arguing, fighting, etc., that goes on at the feasts. He asked, “Do you know why all that fighting happens at the feasts? It’s because they’re not Yahweh’s feasts.”

I thought, “Hector, speak for yourself! Nearly all the feasts I’ve attended have been full of *shalom*.” The **ONLY** exception I can think of was when I truly *did* attend a Feast of Unleavened Bread that I shouldn’t have, wherein the leader killed a Passover goat. But even then, he and I later made up and “let bygones be bygones,” so to speak.

Apparently it is true that many believers use “feast time” as a time to hone in on controversial topics, which in turn leads to disagreements that further degenerate into arguments. It’s as though the adversary is working overtime to get us to go at each other’s spiritual throats! ***We must resist.*** Hector is a **pastor**, so I cannot help but wonder what manner of effort he put into quelling the arguments/divisions he witnessed at the feasts he hosted, encouraging his constituents to focus on the things that bring us ***together*** instead of the things that drive us apart? Instead of regarding the bickering as a sign that they were observing “their feast” and not Yahweh’s feast, shouldn’t he have stepped in as a peacemaker? *Isn’t that what a leader does?* He gives up too easily, in my opinion.

Instead of regarding the infighting and arguing as a sign that we’re not keeping the feasts “Yahweh’s way” (and therefore a sign that they shouldn’t even be kept at all), how about looking at those unpleasant scenarios as challenges that Yahweh gives us to help make us ***stronger***—opportunities to work on working ***together***, focusing on the things that ***unite*** us instead of the things that divide us?

Discussions With the Father

Something else that I haven't previously addressed, yet I find concerning: Hector's "discussions" with the Father as referenced throughout his message.² Ever since my days with nominal Christianity when various ones would tell me, "The Lord told me this, the Lord told me that," and I knew they were wrong with whatever message they were trying to convey, my spiritual antennae/red flags go up whenever I hear such words, and now that I associate with folks within the Sacred Name Movement, it's much the same. Telling me that Yahweh told you something without any Scriptural backup does *nothing* for me, aside from "turn me off." So yes, Hector's "discussions with the Father" were a turnoff, *not* a signal that he's on to something not hitherto understood by believers. The "discussions I had with Yahweh" approach is simply not persuasive. It is true that saying, "Yahweh told me" has a profound effect on *some* people, but the fact is, using this approach can be construed as a stratagem used to influence others when you don't have the Scriptural support that you otherwise need to prove and establish your case.

Anyway, in closing I would say, "Hector, while I respect you as a person, and I think you have a kind heart, I disagree with your understanding of 'feast suspension.' I pray you give this topic more serious consideration."

Hector's teaching simply presents a new twist that I had never heard of before (at least not from someone already accustomed to keeping the feasts), and so far as I can tell, Jews all over the world for untold generations continue Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread observance *wherever* they find themselves. I'm not aware of anyone having ever cautioned them that they're committing the "sin of Uzzah" in so doing. When I come to think of it, Jewish believers are also known for building sukkahs during the Feast of Sukkot—wherever they find themselves. They are unaware of a teaching that since there is no priesthood, no temple, no animal sacrifices, they are sinning by their commemorations of these very special memorials. *If we don't commemorate them in some way, they are soon forgotten by our progeny.* That would be the sad, even tragic, end result of Hector's proposal. Let's do what we can to *preserve* the memory of these feasts, but not only to keep their memory alive by actively *participating*, but also because Yahweh tells us which days are holy and it's not up to us to ignore them.

² Cf., at the 2:46 mark: "And I was discussing with the Father the idea of how I wanted to be a better person, including more attentive to His feasts, more—to put them in my life—more than I was already doing. Overall, I just wanted to, just really be connected to the Father. And as I was praying—earnestly—the Father put in my spirit that the feasts that I had been keeping for the past 24-25 years were not *His*!" Again, at the 14:54 mark of his message, Hector adds, "Now you remember, in my—in my testimony, I said that there was a time when I was in prayer, and the Father basically put in my heart that the feasts I had been keeping were not *His*, and so that was my first reaction was, 'Well, what do You mean, they weren't *Your* feasts? What do Your feasts look like versus the feasts that *I'm* keeping?' And He describes His feasts here because I realized as I went to read this verse that my feasts looked *nothing* like His feasts. And so when He told me that those were not His feasts, I understood."

Do “Our” Feasts Look Like “His” Feasts?

As I bring this study to a close, I realize I haven't addressed every single argument that Hector raises in his video, nor should I really *need* to because I'm persuaded the answers I've supplied here in this brief rebuttal are sufficient in and of themselves to refute his premise. But early in his presentation (the 17:31 mark), after quoting the pertinent Torah verses detailing Yahweh's instructions for keeping His feasts³, Hector asks the question that is central to his argument. He refers to it as a serious question, a question serious enough that he removes his glasses as he poses it:



I want to ask you—I want to ask you a serious question: “Do *your* feasts look like this [as outlined by Yahweh]? The feasts that *you* keep, do they look like *His*?” All right? Because I realized that the feasts that *I've* been keeping for 23 years⁴ do not look *anything* like this—as what **He** describes it. But the recipe is *His*, it's not mine. So if those ... my ... the feasts that *I'm* keeping look nothing like *His*, and I'm not following His prescribed recipe, then that means I'm not keeping *His* feasts, and I understood that.

I heard a similar version of the above back in the early 1990's from a man who publicly boasted that he would keep the feasts if someone could show him *how* to do it. I was game, so I told him, “Well, on the holy days we either have a holy convocation, which includes a Bible study or if we attend a larger group we listen to a sermon, we fellowship and visit with like-minded believers. On the other days, we may also have daily Bible studies or we may do regular work. As far as possible, we meet with other like-minded believers.” As I proceeded with my explanation, the man smiled and shook his head, but he politely let me finish.

Once I was finished, he replied, “No, according to Scripture there's *more*. You have to *also* offer sacrifices and oblations, and during Tabernacles you have to sacrifice a different number of bullocks with each passing day” He added additional commentary, and he seemed to have an excellent understanding of the priestly responsibilities. I was impressed.

I let him finish, then I told him, “Well, I have been told by some Sundaykeepers that if I'm going to keep the ‘Old Covenant Sabbath,’ then I *also* need to perform the sacrifices associated with the weekly Sabbath. So if that's your line of reasoning, then why are you keeping the Sabbath? Shouldn't you be offering Sabbath sacrifices and offerings as specified in Torah?”

³ The specific verses Hector cites are Exodus 12:25 (a command given to Israel for when they enter the Promised Land, i.e., *not* the United States) and Leviticus 23:2; 4 (“These are MY appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies”).

⁴ Elsewhere in the video, Hector states that he had been keeping the feasts for 24-25 years.

I don't remember his answer; neither does my wife, who was present. If he gave an answer, it must have been so weak that it left no impression. Either way, his mind was not changed. The bottom line is, my family and I practice feast observance in much the same way that we practice Sabbath observance. I'm sure we don't keep either perfectly, yet in the same way that Judaism continued commemorating Passover and Sukkot after the destruction of the temple as a means of immersively teaching their progeny the significance of these special days, so we likewise practice their observance, not from the perspective that we *have to*, but because we *get to*. Unlike Hector, we do not associate "the Uzzah factor" with our earnest attempts to commemorate Yahweh's feasts. We look forward to the time when we can keep both Shabbat and feast days perfectly in the Kingdom.

As a parting note, I *do* agree with one important comment that Hector shares at the beginning (and closing) portion of his message. The following commentary begins at the 0:19 mark of his message:

Today, however, I'd like for you to study the material that I'm about to give you—that I'm going to share with you, and I would also encourage you to pray, and that you follow along with your Bible, and that you research this topic on your own because I believe that it is extremely important that everybody understand what the Bible really teaches regarding the feasts.

I did my best to consider Hector's position, comparing it with the teachings as presented within the scope of Scripture, including approved examples as found in the New Testament. With all due respect, I disagree with Hector's understanding of Yahweh's expectations for His servants and His children, but I do agree that we should follow along with our Bibles and that we should diligently research this topic on our own. Until someone can demonstratively exhibit otherwise, my family and I eagerly look forward to setting aside time to observe Yahweh's feasts.

May Yahweh bless our understanding of His Word.

