

# 119

M I N I S T R I E S

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## **YHWH Hates His Appointed Times? (Isaiah 1:14, Amos 5:21 & Hosea 2:11)**

How many of us have heard it said that YHWH no longer desires his people to keep his Sabbaths and feasts—that they are a burden to him? Sadly, this is not an uncommon teaching. Many will cite a couple of passages from the prophets to make this point, which are then used as evidence that parts of God’s Law no longer apply to us. Let’s look at the passages:

### **Isaiah 1:14**

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

### **Amos 5:21**

"I hate, I despise your feasts,  
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

And finally, let’s look at Hosea 2:11.

### **Hosea 2:11**

And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts.

In other words, God hated his feasts so much that he simply got rid of them. At least, that is what some have argued.

What might happen if we take these verses and place them back into the context in which they were written and intended? Let’s do that and find out, starting with Isaiah 1:14. We will do this by identifying the groups involved, the topic of discussion, and what was happening in the culture according to Scripture.

### **Who is Involved?**

The vision and message of Isaiah begins by telling us who the speaker is and to whom it is written.

### **Isaiah 1:1**

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

So we have the author (Isaiah) telling us of a vision and message he received over the span of several kings of Judah. The topic is the people of Judah and Jerusalem in those days; they are also the audience. Isaiah even gives us the cultural context, or what was going on with Judah at the time:

### **Isaiah 1:2-4**

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD [YHWH] has spoken: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD [YHWH], they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

They have rebelled against YHWH and are doing their own thing, no longer fearing and loving him. Look at the language being used! Israel is called a *child who has rebelled, a people who do not understand, laden with iniquity, the offspring of evildoers who have forsaken YHWH and despised him!* They are estranged from YHWH! Does this sound like God's people are doing what he wants them to do? Do they appear to be living righteously before God?

No. In fact, they are so far from that, that he calls them estranged.

A little later on they are compared to Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities destroyed for their wickedness. Is the sin of Judah the fact that they are observing the appointed times of YHWH? Hardly.

Judah has become sick and faint of heart. They are no longer walking in the ways of YHWH; they are no longer living as a people set apart, a light to the nations. They had already been punished for their sins previously, their cities laid waste, they had been slaves. Yet YHWH had saved for himself a remnant.

Even still, this remnant was not living as they were supposed to. They, too, had become wicked and evil. It is that generation being equated to Sodom and Gomorrah in terms of being wicked and rebellious (not necessarily the same specific sins, but rebellious nonetheless). It is to these people that Isaiah speaks.

### **Isaiah 1:10**

Hear the word of the LORD [YHWH], you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

But how does this relate to what we see in verse 14 regarding the new moons and the Sabbaths that YHWH's soul hates? Let's read on to find out.

### **Isaiah 1:11-13**

“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD [YHWH]; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling

of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

Keeping in mind the full context from the first 10 verses, we now see YHWH saying that he is tired of their burnt offerings; he doesn't delight in them.

But, wait a minute, if YHWH is the one who commanded them, then why would he be stating he suddenly doesn't want them? Is he getting rid of his Torah, and this is even before the coming of Messiah?

No, he's not.

### **1 Samuel 15:22 (ESV)**

**And Samuel said, “Has the LORD [YHWH] as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD [YHWH]? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.**

Did you catch it? YHWH desires our obedience more than burnt offerings and sacrifices! He said this in Samuel's day, it was still true in Isaiah's time, and it's still true today because he never changes.

It isn't that YHWH wants to get rid of his Torah; he wants his people to obey him. From what we have read so far in Isaiah, his people were not obeying him. They were not doing what they were supposed to. They were doing the opposite. They were rebelling and rejecting him. This is why he no longer desired their burnt offerings.

In no way was he removing his holy days or offerings; he was pointing out to them that there was no value in them because of how they were living their lives. Let's go back to Isaiah and see if we find this anywhere else.

Verse 12 calls what they are doing a trampling of his courts.

### **Isaiah 1:12**

**When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?**

They are stomping all over his holy ways because of the way they were living their lives. In essence, they were defiling his ways, making them as if they were nothing.

So what does he do? He calls their offerings vain, worthless; they had no value. The word in verse 13 for "vain" (H7723) is *shav*. It's equated to emptiness, nothingness; it's only vanity. They were doing what was prescribed by the Law of God in terms of sacrifices, but they were only going through the motions; they were living as hypocrites. Therefore, their sacrifices were empty and worthless.

Look at the end of verse 13:

### **Isaiah 1:13**

**...New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.**

YHWH cannot endure the mixing of iniquity with his holy and appointed times. They were set apart for him and his people, yet they were observing the letter of the law without the spirit; without the desire.

For more on how “spirit” equates to “desire,” please see our short teaching titled [The Hebrew Root of Spirit](#).

This brings us to the verse we started with, verse 14:

### **Isaiah 1:14**

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

Take note of the language used here, especially the words denoting possession. YHWH says “**YOUR new moons and YOUR appointed feasts.**”

These are in direct opposition to the appointed times listed out in Leviticus 23. We are told in Leviticus 23 whose feasts and appointed times are being described.

### **Leviticus 23:2**

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

Do you see now why his soul hated the new moons and appointed feasts? Judah was no longer serving their God the way he desired to be served. They were doing things their own ways, they had removed themselves from him; they were estranged.

The new moons and appointed feasts of the Creator, were no longer being kept as he designed, they were no longer YHWH’s appointed times as described in Leviticus 23.

They were now new moons and appointed feasts according to how the people observed them. YHWH continues speaking:

### **Isaiah 1:15-20**

When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD [YHWH]: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD [YHWH] has spoken.”

YHWH is calling his people back into his ways; he is clear in verse 19 when he states that **if they are willing and obedient, then they shall receive blessings.**

The words of Isaiah 1:14 were never intended to state that the appointed times of the Creator were something he hates. The fault did not lie in the appointed times, the fault lay with his people who had strayed from his ways. Again, it wasn’t the Law of God (the sacrifices, offerings, and appointed times) with which YHWH had an issue; it was with the behaviors of the people.

Does that sound a little familiar? Where else have we heard such a statement before? We hear the same thing in Hebrews 8.

### **Hebrews 8:8-9**

**For he finds fault with them** when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. **For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.**

We see the same pattern in Hebrews as what was brought forth and delivered through Isaiah. There truly is nothing new under the sun. What has been, will be again just as he told us in Ecclesiastes 1:9.

### **Ecclesiastes 1:9 (ESV)**

**What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.**

For more on Hebrews 8, please see our teaching [What is New About the New Covenant?](#)

Now that we have established proper understanding of Isaiah 1:14, let's examine Hosea 2:11.

### **Hosea 2:11**

**And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts.**

Case closed right? YHWH said through his prophet Hosea that he was going to abolish the appointed holy days found in Leviticus 23. But wait, who's appointed days are mentioned in Hosea 2:11? The Father specifically says he will end “**all her appointed feasts.**”

Remember, in Leviticus 23, we read that YHWH declares the Sabbath, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Sukkot and other appointed times as “**his feasts.**”

### **Leviticus 23:1**

**The Lord [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the Lord [YHWH] that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.**

YHWH said through Hosea that he was going to put an end to “**her appointed feasts**” not “**his appointed feasts.**”

This is one of those instances where context REALLY matters, just like in Isaiah 1:14.

Look a few verses earlier, in verse 8, where we read that Israel was intimately involved with worshipping Baal:

### **Hosea 2:8**

**And she [Israel] did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.**

...and then, a couple verses after verse 11 we find not only more evidence of Baal worship, but the mentioning of Israel partaking in the feast days of Baal.

### **Hosea 2:13**

**And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals** when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord [YHWH].

So, before and after Hosea 2:11 we discover that Israel was worshipping Baal and celebrating the feast days of Baal. Now let's read Hosea 2:11 once more.

### **Hosea 2:11**

**And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts.**

Now that we know that the context of Hosea 2 is in regards to Israel worshipping Baal and celebrating the feast days of Baal, which appointed feast days do you think YHWH declares he is going to end? Is YHWH going to end his appointed feasts? ...or is YHWH going to end Baal's appointed feasts?

We hope that the answer is now obvious. YHWH is going to end the appointed feasts of Baal. As the scholar, David A. Hubbard, writes:

All these God-given occasions were co-opted by Israel for *her* (note the repetition of the pronouns) pagan purposes. The agricultural character of the pilgrimage feasts made them readily adaptable to the fertility cult whose purpose was to assure regularity of harvest and abundance of produce. The new moon and sabbath, which had counterparts in other Middle Eastern religions, may well have become corrupted by the astrological practices of Israel's neighbours as well as by the sexual rites against which Hosea inveighs.

-David A. Hubbard, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Hosea* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic)

Lastly, let's examine Amos 5:21.

### **Amos 5:21**

**"I hate, I despise your feasts,  
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.**

Once again, some here accuse YHWH of hating his feasts.

Israel was making offerings to the Lord, but he was not accepting them.

### **Amos 5:22**

**Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
I will not accept them;  
and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,  
I will not look upon them.**

Why would YHWH not accept the offerings? ...because Israel mixed in the worship of false gods and images.

### **Amos 5:25-27**

**“Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyyun your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves, and I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord [YHWH], whose name is the God of hosts.**

Again, YHWH does not hate his feasts. He hates the worship of false gods. What appears to even be worse is when the worship of false gods is mixed into the worship of YHWH. YHWH does not hate his appointed feasts, he hates it when man does what is not good, and does their own thing

Israel was engaged in religious hypocrisy. They were worshipping YHWH with one hand, and then worshipping false gods with the other hand.

Even if we were to observe YHWH’s feasts or make offerings to him, if we are worshipping false gods and images, going our own way instead of his way, YHWH wants nothing to do with that. Instead of being YHWH’s feasts, they are no longer about him, or worshipping him.

It’s time we stop making excuses and trying to find reasons to not follow YHWH and his ways. Time and time again throughout history, as documented in Scripture, God’s people stray from his ways, are punished, and then he calls them back into obedience; obedience to his Word, his instruction, his Torah.

We are in the midst of yet another time of him calling his people into repentance and turning back to live in obedience in accordance with his Word. Time is growing short; each day brings us closer to the return of Messiah. How will you find yourself on that day? In obedience to God or living your life in the way you see fit, devoid of his Torah?

We hope that this teaching has blessed you.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

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