

# Do we still keep God's feasts if we're "out of the land"?

## Short answer

The Torah ties some parts of the feasts to the Temple and to "the place the LORD will choose" (sacrifices, priestly rites, pilgrimage), which we cannot do without the Temple. But the Torah also commands holy convocations and memorial observance "throughout your generations...in all your dwellings," which *can* be kept anywhere.

Second-Temple Jews in the Diaspora, the Apocrypha, the rabbis, and even the New Testament all show God's people continuing to keep the feasts (with adaptations) outside the land. So the "out of the land = don't keep feasts" claim doesn't hold. The right conclusion is: **keep what God enabled anywhere (rest, assembly, memorial, teaching), and omit/await what requires the Temple (offerings, pilgrimage, priestly service).** ([Bible Hub](#), [Bible Study Tools](#))

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## Where the "out of the land" objection comes from

A few passages describe exile making pilgrim worship impossible: **Hosea 9:3–6** and **Lamentations 1:4** lament that outside the land and with the Temple destroyed, you can't bring offerings or attend the pilgrim festivals. That's descriptive of judgment and of Temple-dependent worship—not a ban on all memorial/convocation aspects everywhere. ([YouVersion](#) | [The Bible App](#) | [Bible.com](#), [Bible Hub](#))

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## What the Torah actually commands

- Temple/Place-dependent elements (**not doable now**):

- **Pilgrimage**: “Three times a year all your males shall appear...*in the place He chooses.*” **Deut 16:16**; see also **Deut 12** on centralized worship. ([Bible Gateway](#), [Bible Hub](#))
- **Festival sacrifices** (korban Pesach, etc.) offered only at that place. **Deut 16:5–7; 12** (centralization). ([Bible Hub](#))
- **Person/dwelling-dependent elements** (**doable anywhere**):
  - **Holy convocations and rest** for the appointed times (e.g., Unleavened Bread, Weeks, Yom Kippur) are called a “**statute forever...in all your dwellings.**” See **Lev 23** (e.g., vv. 14, 21, 31). ([Bible Study Tools](#))

**Implication:** In exile or the Diaspora, God’s people historically **kept the convocations, memorial meals, Scripture readings, and rest, while suspending sacrifices and pilgrimage** until restoration. That’s exactly how Jewish practice developed after 70 CE, and it matches the plain distribution of commands. ([Sefaria](#))

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## **Evidence from Second-Temple & Apocrypha (the “don’t keep” claim fails)**

- **Tobit (in Assyrian exile) keeps the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost** in Nineveh—an explicit Diaspora observance, not a prohibition. **Tobit 2:1**. ([USCCB](#))
- **2 Maccabees** reports Judeans were **forbidden** by Antiochus to keep **Sabbaths and “ancient feasts”**—that only makes sense if they were keeping them. **2 Macc 6:6**. ([Bible Hub](#))
- **2 Maccabees 1:9, 1:18** urges Jews in **Egypt** to **observe “the feast of booths”** (a Hanukkah-season commemoration framed like Sukkot)—again, explicit Diaspora festival language. ([Bible Gateway](#))

- **Elephantine Passover Letter (419 BCE, Egypt):** a Judean garrison community receives detailed **instructions to keep Passover/Unleavened Bread** in Egypt. Scholars debate fine points, but it's widely cited as **Diaspora festival observance** centuries before the NT. ([Sefaria](#))
- **Esther/Purim** (a post-Torah feast) is established “**in every province and city...in every generation**”—explicitly for Jews scattered across an empire. **Esther 9:27–28**. ([Bible Gateway](#))

**Conclusion from Second-Temple literature:** The Apocrypha and related sources **do not teach** “don't keep the feasts outside the land.” They record Jews **keeping them** under foreign rule and across the Diaspora—when not violently prevented. ([Bible Hub](#))

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**Rabbinic halakhah (post-70 CE):** keep them in the Diaspora, with adaptations

After the Temple's destruction, the rabbis **formally codified Diaspora observance**—including the well-known **second festival day** outside the land (**yom tov sheni shel galuyot**). See **Beitzah 4b** and discussions in **Rosh Hashanah 21a**. This doesn't abolish feasts; it **retools** them without a Temple. ([Sefaria](#))

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**Prophetic horizon: nations keeping God's appointments**

The prophets foresee **Gentiles** and all flesh participating in God's worship calendar:

- **Isaiah 56:3–7** says **foreigners** who keep Sabbath and cling to the covenant will be welcomed at God's house. ([Bible Gateway](#))

- Zechariah 14:16–19 pictures **all nations** going up **year by year** to keep **Sukkot** (Feast of Booths). ([Bible Gateway](#))

These texts point **forward**, not away from the feasts.

## New-Testament/Messianic lens (since you noted the feasts “are about Christ”)

- Paul calls Messiah “**our Passover**” and says, “Therefore **let us keep the feast...with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**” **1 Cor 5:7–8**. ([Bible Gateway](#))
- Paul schedules ministry around Unleavened Bread and Pentecost (Acts 20:6; 1 Cor 16:8). ([Sefaria](#), [Wikipedia](#))
- Jesus attends **Sukkot (John 7)** and **Hanukkah (John 10:22)**, a non-Torah feast, indicating freedom to honor God at such commemorations. ([calledoutbelievers.org](#), [Bible Hub](#))
- **Colossians 2:16–17** frames the calendar as “**a shadow of the things to come**” with **Messiah as the substance—not a ban, but a Christ-centered understanding**. ([Bible Hub](#))

## So what does faithful observance look like “out of the land” today?

Appointed time (Lev 23)	<b>Temple-dependent</b> (await restoration)	<b>Can be kept anywhere</b> (today)	<b>Key texts</b>
<b>Passover/Unleavened Bread</b>	Korban Pesach at the Temple; pilgrimage to Jerusalem	Memorial meal, removing leaven, holy convocations, teaching redemption	Lev 23; Deut 16; 1 Cor 5:7–8; Elephantine letter; Tobit 2:1 ( <a href="#">Bible Study Tools</a> , <a href="#">Bible Gateway</a> , <a href="#">Sefaria</a> , <a href="#">USCCB</a> )

Appointed time (Lev 23)	Temple-dependent (await restoration)	Can be kept anywhere (today)	Key texts
Firstfruits / Weeks (Shavuot)	Omer/bikkurim offerings at the Temple	Assembly, reading/teaching, thanksgiving	Lev 23:14, 21; Acts 20:16; Philo, <i>Special Laws</i> (festivals) ( <a href="#">Bible Study Tools</a> , <a href="#">Wikipedia</a> , <a href="#">Early Christian Writings</a> )
Trumpets (Yom Teruah)	Temple sacrifices	Day of rest/assembly, trumpet/blowing tradition, repentance focus	Lev 23; later practice in diaspora codified rabbinically ( <a href="#">Bible Study Tools</a> , <a href="#">Sefaria</a> )
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	High-priest rites in Temple	Fast, rest, assembly, confession	Lev 16; Lev 23:27, 31–32 ( <a href="#">Bible Study Tools</a> )
Booths (Sukkot)	Pilgrimage & sacrifices	Build booths, rejoice, assemble; prophetic for nations	Lev 23:34–43; Zech 14:16–19; 2 Macc 1:9, 18 ( <a href="#">Bible Study Tools</a> , <a href="#">Bible Gateway</a> )
Purim / Hanukkah (post-Torah)	—	Kept across the Diaspora (Purim mandated “in every province and city”; Jesus at Hanukkah)	Est 9:27–28; John 10:22 ( <a href="#">Bible Gateway</a> , <a href="#">Bible Hub</a> )

## Verdict

- The **Torah** itself provides for **worship “in all your dwellings”** alongside **Temple-bound** elements. **Exile blocks sacrifices and pilgrimage, not the feasts altogether.** ([Bible Study Tools](#), [Bible Gateway](#))

- **Apocrypha/Second-Temple practice** shows Jews **continuing** to keep festivals under foreign rule and in the Diaspora. ([USCCB](#), [Bible Hub](#), [Bible Gateway](#), [Sefaria](#))
- **Rabbinic law** explicitly **codifies Diaspora observance** (e.g., second day of festivals). ([Sefaria](#))
- The **prophets** and **NT** point to **ongoing, Christ-centered meaning** of these appointments, with a future in view. ([Bible Gateway](#), [Bible Hub](#))

**Therefore:** If your question is, “*Should we still keep God’s feasts?*” — **Yes:** keep the memorials, convocations, teaching, rejoicing, and rest in Christ **now**, and **omit** what the Torah ties to the Temple **until** God restores it. That honors both the letter and the trajectory of Scripture.

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### Key primary texts (quick links)

- **Leviticus 23** (appointments; “in all your dwellings”) ([Bible Study Tools](#))
- **Deuteronomy 12; 16:16** (central place; pilgrimage) ([Bible Hub](#), [Bible Gateway](#))
- **Hosea 9:3–6; Lamentations 1:4** (exile hinders Temple/pilgrimage) ([YouVersion](#) | [The Bible App](#) | [Bible.com](#), [Bible Hub](#))
- **Tobit 2:1; 2 Macc 6:6; 2 Macc 1:9, 18** (Diaspora keeping/attempts) ([USCCB](#), [Bible Hub](#), [Bible Gateway](#))
- **Elephantine Passover Letter** (Diaspora Passover, 5th c. BCE) ([Sefaria](#))
- **Beitzah 4b; Rosh Hashanah 21a** (second-day festivals) ([Sefaria](#))
- **Esther 9:27–28; John 10:22; 1 Cor 5:7–8; Col 2:16–17** (Purim spread; Jesus at Hanukkah; Christ and the feasts) ([Bible Gateway](#), [Bible Hub](#))