

Fundamentals of Belief
#13D: The Holy Days and the New Covenant

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Jon W. Brisby; 5-12-2001

As you might expect, we are going to continue in this very long series on the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal. We are up to fundamental number thirteen now. We have already had three sermons on this topic of God's annual Holy Days, and it is going to be two more sermons before I complete it; but the end is in sight.

There is so much material that I wanted to be able to give, even though some of it is review of certain aspects that we have covered in the past. It is so material to our understanding not only the value of the Holy Days, but also to reconcile the keeping of them against all of the arguments so many have proliferated. I found it necessary to spend the requisite number of sermons to make sure that we cover the bases; and still, it is only a synopsis.

Let's read again fundamental number thirteen:

We believe the seven Annual Holy Days as given to ancient Israel by God through Moses, kept by Christ, the Apostle Paul, and the New Testament Church, as evidenced by the books of Acts and Corinthians, are to be kept today. The sacrifices [which we are going to talk more about today], which were added, are not to be kept on those days nor any other day of the year. During the spring festival of seven days, leavening in any form is not to be eaten, as Paul instructed the Corinthians.

In the first sermon on this topic, we went through a panoramic sketch of the value of the Holy Days. I felt it imperative to start there, and not with the technicalities. Instead, I emphasized why the Holy Days are important and why we should want to keep the Holy Days. The Holy Days are not just a command of no value—except to prove whether or not we are willing to be obedient. Certainly, God requires our obedience, but there is so much more value in them.

The Holy Days are a blessing for those who understand their purpose, meaning, and significance to us as Christians. They are those annual observances which provide real joy, unity, and hope for the peace that is coming in the very Kingdom of God. It is the Holy Days that picture one by one, throughout every single year in God's calendar, exactly what God is working out upon this earth in the salvation of mankind. They have incredible meaning and significance. It is the Holy Days, in concert with the weekly Sabbath, that can help keep us focused. They provide the meaning for all of the trials, difficulties, and persecutions that we face in these physical lives. It is the gift of God's annual Feast days and His weekly Sabbath that is a continual reminder for us about what we are here for and what we have to be thankful for.

For all of those who are looking for ways to disprove the Holy Days, to prove by technicalities out of the Bible that they are not incumbent upon Christians today, I can only feel sorry for them. They fail to understand what a blessing and joy those days really are.

I remember growing up as a child in the Church, never having learned any other way but to keep God's Sabbath and the Holy Days. That is all I have ever known, but I can tell you that as a child I didn't understand the real value of those days whatsoever. Of course, my parents kept those Holy Days, and we were taught as children to be there in the place where God had placed His name. So we were there, occasion after occasion, every year during the years that I grew up; but to me, they were a burden. Oh, we always loved the Feast the Tabernacles; that was always very popular. It was always popular to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, but to sit through the sermons and services was drudgery for children. Back in those years, it was two sermons every day and on every other Holy Day throughout the year. Most of the other Holy Days were not what I considered a real blessing. It was an obligation, a requirement. I learned to respect the need to keep them, but I didn't have a real appreciation for their value or significance.

I understood what they meant. I attended Imperial Schools; and from the time I was in first grade, I was taught in the classroom about the Holy Days. Very few children can say that. We had lessons on God's Feasts and Holy Days; so from the time that I was very young, I even learned the technicalities about what they represented. Still, the ability to internalize those laws, to feel the real value and significance of them, to have real joy in the concept of a Holy Day coming up, its observance and opportunity for our fellowship and learning, is something that must come only through the calling that God provides. Those of us who are baptized receive the Holy Spirit which allows us the capacity to cross that barrier from the flesh into the Spirit, and to truly learn, in our obedience, to value and love those things that God created for us.

We went through that plan of salvation pictured in the Passover and the seven annual Holy Days. Then, last time, we went back and did some review of some material I gave you several sermons ago on sin and the law. This concept of doing away with the law, and the law of Moses, has always been related very strongly to the Holy Days—for those who seek to do away with them. We talked about the Old Covenant, the order in which God revealed things, and when those things were created. We found that the Holy Days began to be revealed and commanded by God long before the Old Covenant on Mt. Sinai. Even though those Holy Days, along with the weekly Sabbath, became a part of that covenant between God and Israel, the end of the Old Covenant could not do away with those laws that preceded that very covenant.

What about the sacrifices? There are many who will tell you that if you are going to keep the Holy Days in the Old Testament, then you need to be able to sacrifice. You couldn't appropriately keep the Holy Days without the sacrifices that were commanded at the same time. If you go through and read Leviticus 23, you will find not only the commands for the Holy Days, but also the sacrifices that were to occur. Will that hold water? We are going to find that out today. I cannot take the time to read all that I would like to in the book of Exodus and Deuteronomy, so I will emphasize synoptically the facts in some of the chain of events that took place. When did the sacrifices come into being?

What happened first, brethren? In Exodus 19, you find God commanding the Israelites to prepare themselves because God was going to commune with them. This was very likely that which occurred on the Day of Pentecost in the year that they came out of Egypt. The Israelites came out of Egypt; they had kept by command the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread; and now, the requisite days later, they

are at the foot of the mountain of God. God commands them to prepare themselves; and in three days hence, He is going to meet with them.

This leads right up to this covenant that was made. Beginning in Exodus 20, as you know, God spoke the Ten Commandments. Then, from chapter 20 through chapter 23, you find not only the giving of the Ten Commandments, but also a number of the statutes and judgments. At the end of chapter 23 of Exodus, you find the Holy Days. All of these things were given and spoken.

God spoke the first portion—the Ten Commandments. Then, if you go to Deuteronomy 5, you know the story, the very thunderous voice of God terrified the people so that they cried out and said, "We believe that you are God. We believe everything you are telling us, but don't speak to us anymore, lest we die. Let Moses be the representative, and we will hear everything and do that which you command us through him." God honored their request.

You find in the last part of Exodus 20, from that time forward, it was God who worked through Moses to reveal the remaining of those requirements for Israel. Exodus 24 is where the promises are exchanged between God and man; the Old Covenant is established. What does this have to do with the sacrifices?

Through all of this so far, there is not a single command for a sacrifice, except for the Passover. Through all of these chapters, the Passover is the only sacrifice that has been commanded (Exodus 23:18). In chapter 23, after God has spoken with His own voice those Ten Commandments, followed by those commands that Moses spoke after he was given them by God, we find the actual covenant that is made, beginning in verse 3 of chapter 24.

Exodus 24:3–8:

And Moses came and told the people all the words of the [Eternal], and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the [Eternal] hath said will we do. [They made a promise—a vow.] And Moses wrote all the words of the [Eternal], and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the [Eternal].

Notice here, it doesn't specify that these were the sons of Aaron. After the institution of the sacrificial system, they were the only ones who were allowed to sacrifice on behalf of the nation. So obviously, this is at the very time, and very likely on the day of Pentecost, that this covenant is being formed. There are sacrifices being offered, but not by the Aaronic priesthood. The sacrificial system had not come into being at this point.

And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the [Eternal] hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant [Even by the sprinkling of blood, that covenant between God and man—His chosen people—was sealed.], which the [Eternal] hath made with you concerning all these words.

What was the basis of that covenant? "All these words" that were included in the covenant did not include anything about a sacrificial system. Notice Jeremiah 7:22. It is a scripture we have already read, but let's rehearse it again.

Jeremiah 7:22–23:

For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices . . .

This was the very time when the Holy Days were commanded, when He brought them out of Egypt, was it not? The commandment for the Passover and the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was given; and very likely, as we have just seen, this covenant was formed on the day of Pentecost.

For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them [No, it wasn't sacrifices that were commanded at first, but what was it?], saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

What were all of those ways that He commanded? Go back and read Exodus 20–23, and you will find those things that were uttered by God and by God through Moses, which became a part of the covenant. The Holy Days are included, brethren. It was a part of that covenant, but it was not a part of the sacrificial system at all. You will not find the sacrificial system until you get to Exodus 29. In chapter 24 of Exodus, you will find that Moses is called up to the mountain. After having uttered all of this law, which is the basis of the covenant, and the people having promised to obey the commands of God, Moses is called up to the mountain where God is going to codify that very law on two tables of stone. God then expanded the significance of those laws into detailed statutes and judgments, as well as the requirement now for the sacrificial system, which you find in chapter 28 concerning the Aaronic priesthood.

At the very same time that Moses is on the mountain receiving the codified tables of stone, what are the people doing? Remember, they had just made this covenant with God; but immediately, because of Moses' absence for too many days, they begin to worry that they are left without a leader. They turn to their own thinking, fail to trust God as they had just promised to do, and they coerce Aaron into making them a golden calf.

That brings us to the real reason for the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system was never intended originally as a fundamental part of the law. Those sacrifices were added because of the sins and transgressions of the people. Let's notice it in Galatians 3:19:

"Wherefore then serveth the law?" What are we talking about here? Are we talking about the Ten Commandments? Is that the law Paul is discussing here?

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

"It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come . . ." This is a temporary law we are speaking of. It was only going to be enforced until something happened, and that something was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So are we speaking about the entirety of God's laws that He uttered from the very beginning, which were codified on the mountain and which Moses gave to the nation? Is that the law we are speaking of that was temporary?

Notice, it says, "It was added because of transgressions . . ." There was a law, brethren, that was added because of transgressions. What is transgression? Transgression is the breaking of the law. Transgression does not exist unless there was a law broken first. Sin is the transgression of the law. The transgression is in relationship to an existing law. There is no infraction or breaking of a law if the law didn't exist to begin with. Yet here, we are speaking of some sort of law that was added because of a preexisting transgression. How can that be a transgression—a breaking of the law that was added because of itself? Does that make any sense? Not at all.

Obviously, right here in Galatians 3 is a certification, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that there are two different classifications within God's law. One law was broken; and because of that infraction, a new set of laws was added. That added law was temporary, to last only for a prescribed period of time. Its usefulness was going to be completed—fulfilled and no longer needed—once something else happened, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

What law are we speaking of? We are talking about the law concerning sacrifices—the sacrificial system that was added. Think about the irony. This covenant has just been made with Israel, likely on the Day of Pentecost. It was certified by the sprinkling of blood, and the people vow before God that they will obey all that God says. Within a short number of days, their faithlessness and unbelief cause them immediately to go into idolatry with a golden calf. At the very same time, Moses is on the mountain with God and is receiving the codification of this law and the statutes and judgments. Then you find that God is giving him the commands concerning the Aaronic priesthood and the sacrifices that are going to be required. God knew that they would not be able to live up to the covenant they had just made; and so, He already began to give Moses the instructions for establishing a sacrificial system, which Paul called this added law. It would be there to remind them of the covenant, the promises they had made, and their infractions and transgressions of that law. That was the purpose of the sacrificial system.

Hebrews 9:8–14:

The Holy [Spirit] this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing . . .

On the mountain, God gave Moses all the commands for the construction of that first tabernacle, along with all of the trappings and elements of the priesthood.

Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect . . .

The purpose of all those added laws—the sacrificial system—was not to take away sin; it was only a reminder of sin. It was to put the people in remembrance of the fact that they had made a promise to obey that immutable body of law, which is still in force today. Those added laws also pictured and looked forward to a time coming when sin—transgression of that perfect law—would be forgiven and wiped away. That was the purpose of the system.

Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings [We are talking about sacrifices—meat and drink offerings.], and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

These carnal ordinances are so misunderstood and taken out of context by those who want to use it to say that the Holy Days and everything else in the Old Testament that they don't like has been done away. As we have already seen, the Holy Days, the Sabbath, and those immutable laws were never a part of that which God called carnal ordinances. They were spiritual ordinances, as we will soon see; but there were things called carnal ordinances, and they related to the sacrificial system that was only temporary because it pointed to Christ.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

What were these dead works, brethren? The keeping of the Holy Days and the Sabbath? Is that what Paul is saying were dead works? No, not at all. We are talking about the works of the flesh that result in death—dead works, works done by human beings whose end result is death. What is it that human beings do that results in

death? The infraction of God's immutable, perfect, spiritual laws. The sacrificial system pointed to Christ's blood sacrifice—the ultimate sacrifice through which mankind would have the opportunity to have his guilty past removed. The sacrificial system has no value or purpose; neither had it at that time for ancient Israel, unless it related to a preexisting law that was incumbent upon not only Israel, but also all of mankind. That is the law that was not done away, brethren.

Carnal ordinances: the false assumption by many is that there is only one set of ordinances; therefore, they can use this to cover everything in the Old Testament as being non-applicable to Christians today. Not all ordinances were temporary whatsoever. Notice 1 Corinthians 11:1–2:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

Looks to me like there was some set of ordinances that was not done away. Here is Paul who is claimed as the Apostle who did away with everything in the Old Testament under the Old Covenant; and yet, that very Apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says: ". . . I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." What was it that Paul delivered to them, except that which Jesus Christ taught him personally in the wilderness for three-and-a-half years? It is the very thing that this same Being taught to Israel through Moses—and exactly the same thing, brethren, that a servant of the last days was also taught and which he brought to us as members of that same Body.

Ephesians 2:12–16 is another one of those scriptures that is used to try and justify the doing away of God's Holy Days, the Sabbath, and all of the other laws.

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise . . .

Here, the Apostle is speaking to the Church at Ephesus—a Gentile church. He is speaking to those who are not a part of physical Israel whatsoever. ". . . being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise . . ." By the flesh, this is a group of people who did not have anything in the promises of God. They had no stake whatsoever.

. . . having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Gentiles—not of Israel, not of the physical promises, not of that first covenant that was made with ancient Israel—are made nigh to God through Jesus Christ.

. . . made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one [Which "both" are we talking about? Physical Israelites and Gentiles being made one, as a part of spiritual Israel.], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . .

So the Holy Days and the Sabbath are all done away. Is that what that means? ". . . abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . ." Was it God's immutable, perfect, righteous law that was enmity, which was represented by that wall of partition; or was it something else?

. . . for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the [stake], having slain the enmity thereby . . .

What is the topic of this whole passage, brethren? Are we talking about doing away with God's laws, the Sabbath, and the Holy Days? Or, are we talking about a reconciliation of Gentiles and physical Israelites into one body? What law is this that was enmity? It was the command of God to Israel not to have fellowship with Gentiles—to keep themselves separate. It was that which kept the Gentiles separated, unable to have access.

Now, through Jesus Christ, the building of the Church, which is spiritual Israel, is opened to all whom God calls, both physical Israelites and Gentiles. This was the time when there was no greater benefit to being a physical Israelite because that was not the means by which a relationship with God was truly established through the Spirit. There were a lot of physical Israelites out there at this time—and still out there today—who did not have a relationship with God at all. That relationship came only through Christ and only through the Spirit dwelling in those who were called. From this time forward, after His resurrection, God began to call both Gentiles and Israelites in the flesh to be members of His Church, His Body—spiritual Israel.

What was abolished, brethren, was that wall of partition that prevented the fellowship of Gentiles with Israelites, and vice versa. Within the Church, all whom God calls become a part of spiritual Israel and heirs to the promises of God. That was what was abolished—not the Sabbath or the Holy Days whatsoever.

What about this argument that if you are going to keep the Holy Days, you have to be able to do sacrifices? Have you ever had anyone ask you that? Have you had to explain something to them because of a work situation or why you can't go with them at a particular time? "We have a special church observance," or "We keep the Holy Days." Then, someone will ask you more probing questions. When they find out that you are keeping the Old Testament Holy Days listed in Leviticus 23, they will ask you, "Why do you keep those? There are sacrifices commanded with those Holy Days as well. You can't keep Holy Days without sacrifices." Is that true?

Numbers 28:9–10 tells us that there were sacrifices on the weekly Sabbath. What is really ironic, and what I find very interesting, is that this argument against Holy Days very often will come from Sabbath-keepers. Those who actually believe in the validity of the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, disavow the applicability of the Holy Days. They will even argue from the standpoint of sacrifices.

Numbers 28:9–10:

And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: This is the burnt offering of every sabbath . . .

There were sacrifices commanded on every weekly Sabbath. From the institution of that sacrificial system, there were special sacrifices that had to be offered by ancient Israel on those Sabbath days. It would appear to me, since no one is doing sacrifices today, that if the Holy Days are done away because they require sacrifices, then the same is true also for the weekly Sabbath. What other conclusion is there? Not only that, but let's look at the remaining part of verse 10:

This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

What continual burnt offering are we speaking of? Turn back to verse 3, and we find it.

Numbers 28:3:

And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the [Eternal]; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering.

Sacrifices were not just unique to Holy Days; they weren't even unique to weekly Sabbaths. The sacrificial system required an offering every single day of the year. They performed continual burnt offerings on every day, special sacrifices on every weekly Sabbath, and then even more special, unique sacrifices on the annual Holy Days. Sacrifices were added by God for the purpose of reminding Israel of the need for forgiveness of sin, and for those special festive offerings to honor God. Remember, brethren, the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days were instituted long before the beginning of that sacrificial system. It was the sacrificial system that was added, and it was only the sacrificial system that was later abrogated by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Let's get into some of the New Testament scriptures concerning the keeping of the Holy Days. Our fundamental of belief says, "We believe the seven Annual Holy Days as given to ancient Israel by God through Moses, kept by Christ, the Apostle Paul . . ." Part of our fundamental says that we believe there is evidence in the Bible that Christ and the Apostle Paul kept the Holy Days. Let's see if that is true.

Luke 2:41–43:

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." The family of Jesus Christ kept the Passover every year throughout His boyhood.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

Here, you find that the very life of Jesus Christ was centered around the keeping of Holy Days. Many would argue that it was just because He was raised in a Jewish family. It doesn't mean that He was setting a precedent that applied to Christians. Well, we are going to see. Let's look at John 7:8 for another example of Christ keeping those Feasts. He is an adult now; He has begun His ministry and is

not under the tutelage of His parents any longer. Now He has the opportunity to bring His new gospel which is a repudiation of the old law found in the Old Testament. This concept is completely ridiculous to begin with, since He is the one who gave it.

I've gone through all of those sermons to show you the very origin of Jesus Christ as God of the second part and that He was the actual lawgiver through whom the Father worked to commune with man through His chosen servants in the Old Testament. It was that very Being who was here in His own flesh-and-blood body and who set a personal example during the time of His own ministry. That example became very important for the Church that was soon to be raised up after His death and resurrection.

So, if a part of this new gospel that He was bringing contained the repudiation of everything in the Old Testament, including those seven annual Holy Days and the Passover, then here was a classic opportunity for Him to begin to demonstrate that by His own actions, don't you think? Yet, what do we find Christ doing as a part of His ministry?

John 7:8–11, 14:

Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? (Verse 14) Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

If Christ's new doctrine and gospel message were the repudiation of the laws that became a part of the Old Covenant, then He was missing a glorious opportunity to demonstrate that; but here He is, at the very Feasts that are being kept in Jerusalem. Some might argue, "He was just taking advantage of the fact that all of the Jews were gathering at that time; and therefore, He could access the greatest number of people by coming when they were having their Feasts. It was not because He was substantiating the need for us to keep them."

Brethren, you can believe anything you want if you already have your end result in mind. If you start with the end in mind, you can back up and create an orientation that substantiates everything you want to believe; but what is the truth?

John 7:37–38:

In the last day, that great day of the feast [one of those seven annual Holy Days, that which we call the Last Great Day], Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Here, you find Him selecting the Last Great Day in order to preach a message tailored to the very significance of that day. He is not just there preaching coincidentally or taking advantage of the fact that all of the Jews were assembled so that He had a large audience. That day represents the opportunity for the salvation of all those billions who will have lived and died over six thousand years without saving knowledge. They will have their opportunity to understand the Truth and to have their minds opened to receive their calling at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ. For the first time, they will receive the down payment of the Holy Spirit through baptism and will learn and practice those laws.

On that very Holy Day, here is Jesus Christ preaching a message about that opportunity for the gift of those living waters. ". . . Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." ". . . If any man thirst . . ." That means everyone. He is talking about a time that is distinct from the calling given to only a select few that were a part of the firstfruits, or a part of those who lived into or were born in the thousand-year Millennium. Now, we are talking about the opportunity for all human beings in the second resurrection, in that Great White Throne Judgment period.

. . . If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

That "living water" is a direct correlation to the Holy Spirit flowing through billions of human beings during that period of time after the thousand-year reign of Christ—the White Throne Judgment period pictured by the Last Great Day.

Is this not a very substantiation that Jesus Christ not only was keeping the Holy Days, but also that He was substantiating the very significance of them in the things that He taught? He was giving meat in due season. That is exactly what He was doing here. Yes, Christ kept the Holy Days, and we are to follow His example. But,

some will say, "Yes, Christ kept them, but He was a Jew; and it was incumbent upon Him as a Jew. Those laws applied to Him; but we are Gentiles, so they don't apply to us. Even though Christ kept them as a Jew until His death, they are not incumbent upon us after that."

1 John 2:3–7:

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." Why is the Apostle John, this many years down the road—decades after the very death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—still talking about keeping commandments?

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him [Notice carefully.] ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Anyone who wants to claim a relationship with Jesus Christ is admonished right here by the Apostle John not just to pay lip service to being a Christian, but to prove it by walking even as Christ walked. It means doing the things that Christ did, behaving as Christ behaved, and keeping the Holy Days as Christ kept them. All the things that Christ did were examples for us, brethren. They were not just things that He did physically because He was a Jew. Everything that He did showed an example for the behavior of those who would embrace Him and become a part of His very Body.

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you . . ." No, he is not writing a commandment about the doing-away of the law. He is not writing a commandment about the fact that Jesus Christ lived it for us in our stead.

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

What was it that was the commandment from the beginning, except those immutable and viable laws of God—the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the statutes and judgments that were a part of the first covenant? Well, brethren, they were a part of the New Covenant as well. All of those laws became a part of both covenants. The

only difference between the new and the old was that with the New Covenant was the capacity to actually succeed. Those physical Israelites and Gentiles, who were called and placed within the very Body of Christ as spiritual Israel, had the opportunity for the first time—through the power of the Holy Spirit living in them and motivating them—to fulfill all that was in the law. It was that which ancient Israel could not have begun to fulfill. They had the law, the instruction, and even the desire; but they did not have the capacity because they did not have the Holy Spirit. However, the law—the foundation—was a part of both covenants. The only difference was the ability given—through the Holy Spirit and Christ's sacrifice—to actually fulfill the second covenant.

1 Peter 2:21:

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps . . .

What Christ did, brethren, was leave us an example. ". . . leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps . . ." Yes, the context of the scriptures in this section is talking about sacrificing one for another, enduring persecution and trial as Christ did, but the principle is much broader than that. It covers everything that Christ did. Everything that He did was an example for us, including His keeping of the Holy Days.

What about the Apostle Paul? Our fundamental of belief says that we believe there is evidence in the Bible that the Apostle Paul kept the Holy Days. Is that true? Let's begin in Acts 18:19–21:

And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

Here is the apostle to the Gentiles who, again, is supposed to be the one who champions the doing-away of the law, including the Holy Days; and yet, he is urgent about moving his responsibilities around in order to be sure that he can keep a Feast in Jerusalem. How confusing is that? This apostle was responsible for raising up churches in Gentile areas of the world and bringing them to Christ, but he was setting a personal example of keeping the Feast, when all of those things supposedly were done away.

This scripture is so compelling. It is actually one of those that has been attacked, from centuries ago, by those who have sought to eradicate it from the Bible. "But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem . . ." Because it is so compelling as an example that the Apostle Paul did keep the Feast, they literally wanted it expunged from the Bible. There is no answer for those who want to argue for the doing-away of the Holy Days.

Certain modern translations of the Bible omit this very text based upon the corrupt manuscripts dated from the fourth century that came from the Vatican in Rome and Alexandria, Egypt. Those manuscripts that originated from Rome and Alexandria in the fourth century—some three hundred years after the time of Christ—omitted this particular passage. Why did they omit it? Because it showed clear evidence of something that they did not want to accept—the continuation of the validity of Holy Days and Feasts for Christians today.

The *Authorized Version* of the Bible is based upon the Byzantine or the Received Text, from which derives the King James Bible, which is why Acts 18:21 happens to be in the Bible that you are probably looking at. It is also in 95 percent of the 4500 Greek texts that are extant today. So, even this corrupted version is only in about 5 percent of those texts, because they came out of this Roman or Alexandrian text. The gnostic heretics added and deleted from the inspired text to suit their own concepts, and no wonder—how compelling is Acts 18:21?

Let's notice some more. 1 Corinthians 11:23 is a scripture that we cover extensively during the Passover season. Paul is writing to the Corinthian Church.

1 Corinthians 11:23–28:

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . ." This is again a certification that the things he was teaching came from God. Remember, he is speaking to a Gentile congregation, and these are things that Gentiles, as a part of the Church, are required to do.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,
That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:
And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is
my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After
the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This
cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in

remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

This is a commandment for the perpetuation of the very Passover service with the new emblems of the bread and wine. It was to be carried forward even until the very second coming of Jesus Christ.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

This is the substantiation for one of those Old Testament commands—the keeping of the Passover. You have many so-called Christian churches today that keep a variation of the Passover. They call it the Lord's Supper or something else. The reason they call it the Lord's Supper is because they do not want to denote the fact that it is the Passover. The Passover is one of those things commanded in Leviticus 23, and they don't want to touch Leviticus 23 with a ten-foot pole. All of those things, they say, are done away, but they have to honor what Paul gave here. How much clearer could you be that this is a requirement incumbent upon Christians? This was given to the Gentile Corinthians—to partake of emblems that were associated with the Passover. So, they don't call it the Passover; they call it the Lord's Supper.

They keep the trappings of something like the Passover, but what about 1 Corinthians 5:7?

1 Corinthians 5:7–8:

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore . . .

Because Christ was the very fulfillment—that Passover Lamb—therefore, something else is transpiring as a direct result of it and is incumbent upon Christians. What is it?

"Therefore let us keep the feast . . ." How much more plain could it be, brethren? What are we speaking of? We are speaking of the Feast of Unleavened

Bread. It is the Feast of Unleavened Bread that had everything to do with leavening—the distinction between old leaven and unleavened bread.

Therefore let us keep the feast [Paul says to a Gentile congregation who was not a part of physical Israel whatsoever], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

This happens to be the very passage that substantiates that which is also a part of the fundamental of belief statement: "During the spring festival of seven days, leavening in any form is not to be eaten, as Paul instructed the Corinthians." This is where he instructed them. We base our conviction and faith upon this certification that Christians today—those who are truly going to worship and serve Christ—are not only to keep the Passover, but also the Days of Unleavened Bread. In keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, it is to do exactly what is commanded here—to put out old leaven and to eat unleavened bread for seven days, even as it is commanded in Leviticus 23.

Let's notice also 1 Corinthians 16:7–8:

For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

The Apostle Paul—who again is claimed to have been the apostle to the Gentiles who did away with the law in his teachings—is still making every reference to a Gentile church about an Israelite Feast. How much sense does that make?

How do we make references? We make references one to another in our communications about times and dates, according to things that we mutually understand and appreciate. So those of us in the Church refer to significant times that we all value according to the Holy Days. We talk about Pentecost, which is coming up, or what we are going to do around the Feast of Tabernacles. "I'm going to make this trip," or "I'm going to do this after the Feast, before the Feast, before Passover, or after the Days of Unleavened Bread."

Now, because the holidays of this world are also so prolific in the thinking of everyone else, we obviously are aware of them. We might make references to Christmas because we all know when it is. We all like to see that time of year come and go and get over with as quickly as possible; but we might make a reference to

Christmas-time in some of our conversations because it is something that we all understand, and we know when it is. It pinpoints in people's minds a time within the year.

So why is the Apostle Paul, in speaking to a totally Gentile congregation, making references to Pentecost? It would have no connection whatsoever to most of these Gentiles in this church, unless they were also very aware of that Holy Day and unless that Holy Day was significant to them as a body.

"But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." So says Paul. Not only that, brethren, Paul told the Corinthians to keep the Feast. We already saw that. Also, he admonishes them to follow his example, as opposed to what you will hear. The same things that were said about Christ were said also about Paul. "Paul was a Jew, a Pharisee, so he was still continuing with the physical practices and customs that he grew up with. Even though he was a Christian now, he continued to keep certain of these observances on his own accord, out of habit, even though they weren't really required of him." That is one of the things you will hear. As we have seen with the case of Jesus Christ, the things that Christ did were an example; and the same is true of Paul.

Let's notice Philippians 4:9. Paul is speaking again to another Gentile congregation. We have already seen the examples that he went to keep the Feast in Jerusalem, that he makes references to Pentecost, that he tells the Corinthians to keep the Feast with unleavened bread and to keep the Passover; and now, notice what he says in Philippians 4:9:

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

It does not sound to me like the very example that Paul set in his own personal life—the priorities that he made and the activities that he became a part of—was anything but that which was an example for the Church—spiritual Israel, the very Body of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile. So his keeping of the Feast was an example for the Church, just as the very keeping of the Feast by Jesus Christ was an example for the Church.

In closing this afternoon, brethren, turn with me to Acts 7:37–39:

This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

Who was that prophet? It was Jesus Christ. It was a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ who would fulfill all that was exemplified in the sacrificial system and those times of antiquity. That sacrificial system pointed to the very sacrifice of Christ.

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina [as we have already seen], and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us . . .

Why did Israel receive the Ten Commandments, the statutes and judgments, those things that included the Sabbath and all of the annual Holy Days? Why did Israel receive them? They couldn't keep them. They couldn't honor or respect them any more than I did as a child growing up in the Church. They were keeping them by obligation only—with fear of God, yes, but not with a true love and respect for those days and what they pictured.

No, human minds, according to carnal knowledge only, cannot understand the value of the Holy Days. So why did God give them to Israel? Wasn't it kind of a cruel hoax to put them through so much when they couldn't appreciate them, let alone live up to them? They wrote examples for you and me, brethren. The laws of God were given to that people to prove that human beings, of their own accord, cannot live up to them. They cannot love them, value them, and they certainly cannot fulfill them. They were given as examples.

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt . . .

They wrote the lessons for you and me, brethren—we who are now, even today, in these last days before the return of Jesus Christ, members of the Body of Christ. We are those who have been given that opportunity, by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, to be a part of the Church. Those lively oracles, all that was a part of that perfect law, were given, carried down through time—through all of those generations—and protected miraculously by God, so that they would be here for you and for me.

It was you and me, brethren, and all of those in the last-day Church, to whom that real understanding would be given, and the opportunity to love and value those things that were given centuries ago, but not understood or valued at all. Those were the lively oracles, brethren, and those oracles were not done away. They are still in force today because, as we have said from the very beginning, those Holy Days picture things that have not yet been completed, things that have not yet occurred.

The Holy Days picture the reconciliation of God and man, the process to get through that step, the return of Jesus Christ, the reconciliation and the Millennial reign, and the final opportunity in that great second resurrection for vast billions of people to be called and to have that opportunity for eternal life. Those are all things that are a part of those lively oracles which were passed down miraculously through generations so that you could have them. Now how much more valuable in your mind does it make those very truths that are recorded and found in the Old Testament?

They are not dusty, old laws whatsoever, brethren. They are the lively oracles which give us the foundation for understanding everything that God is working out on this earth now. How much more valuable can that make our own observance of the Holy Days year by year?

Next time, we will look at additional scriptures concerning the keeping of the Holy Days by the New Testament Church, and then conclude this topic on fundamental number thirteen.