

Fundamentals of Belief #13E: The Holy Days and the New Testament Church

Edited Sermon Transcript
Jon W. Brisby; 5-26-2001

We are going to finish the final sermon in our series on fundamental of belief number thirteen concerning God's Holy Days. This is now the fifth sermon on fundamental number thirteen and hopefully, we will be able to tie everything up into a very neat conclusion.

As you will recall, the first twenty of our twenty-six Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal are quoted directly from those that Mr. Armstrong wrote himself many decades ago in the beginning of the Radio Church of God. They are the foundational principles that we have stood upon all of these years and upon which we will continue to stand.

This being fundamental number thirteen, we have been through almost the first half of our fundamentals of belief. I know I have been on this topic more than a year and a half, but I expect it is going to take at least that in order to complete all twenty-six. Piece by piece, hopefully, we will work through these.

Let's begin by reading fundamental number thirteen as we get started this afternoon:

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 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.

We have covered most of this already in the first four sermons that I have given you over the last several weeks. We began by going through the overall fabric of the significance of the Holy Days. I didn't want to launch directly into the technicalities—demonstrating from the scriptures the commands and obligations to keep Holy Days—without first explaining why the Holy Days are important, what they are all about, why they are valuable, and why we should want to keep them. God's Holy Days are not just a burden of obligation that is placed upon us to test whether we will be faithful. Yes, they certainly can be a test of our faithfulness, if we are willing to make the sacrifices to keep God's weekly Sabbath and His annual observances. It requires faith in order to prioritize that observance above the other things that pull at our time and responsibilities in the world.

First and foremost, brethren, those Holy Days represent our hope for salvation. It is through the Holy Days that we have a chance to understand exactly what God is doing on this earth in working with man for the ultimate goal of salvation. It is the Holy Days that tell us what is coming in the future—all of those things that are yet to be fulfilled in the plan of God. The Holy Days give us hope. They are not there to be viewed by men as a burden, an obligation, a great weight upon our shoulders. The gift of those Holy Days inspires us and helps us to understand and keep our eyes focused on that which God is doing in the lives of men.

We went through and talked about all of the aspects of those Holy Days and the meaning of each one in this overall fabric which is painted in the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation—all supported, all tying together harmoniously in the meaning of those Holy Days.

The details of Leviticus 23 show us the technicalities of the requirements for keeping those days. We went through the technicalities concerning the law, showing that the Holy Days were not done away by the sacrifice of Christ, as you will hear from every Protestant group. They claim to act in the name of Jesus Christ but disavow everything about Him. Christ is the One who gave His perfect laws to ancient Israel, and those laws were not done away, as we have seen.

The Holy Days, as well as the weekly Sabbath, were given prior to the instructions concerning the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system. It was only the sacrificial system that was done away because it was the sacrifices that were fulfilled in the very death of Jesus Christ. We will see a little bit of a recap of that today.

In the last sermon, we began to analyze the scriptures in the New Testament which demonstrate that the Holy Days are still valid for Christians today, unlike everything you hear from most churches in the world. We went through and saw the very example of the Apostle Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul is the one quoted by everyone as the champion of the doing-away of the law, including the requirements for commandment-keeping, the Sabbath, and the Holy Days for Christians. Yet, the strongest evidence of the applicability of Holy Days to God's Church today, comes from the examples and statements of the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 18:20–21:

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 . . .

Paul, the supposed champion of doing away with the law, is speaking to the Church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about keeping the Feast. This was after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Not only did Paul keep the Feast himself, but he also instructed the Church to keep the Feast.

1 Corinthians 5:8:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The Apostle Paul was teaching and exhorting a Gentile church. These were not Israelites at all, but the people of Corinth; and here, the Apostle Paul is admonishing them to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Therefore let us keep the feast . . ."

For those who say there is not a New Testament command for keeping the Feasts or Holy Days, I don't know how much more plain you can get than 1 Corinthians 5:8. He wasn't speaking to Israelites. He wasn't giving an admonition for those who had grown up keeping the Feasts as physical commands. He was speaking to those who had been embroiled in all kinds of pagan beliefs for all of their lives; but now, through the calling of God, they were having their minds opened for the first time to understand the Truth.

These Gentiles, who were converted and placed within the Body by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, are admonished by the Apostle Paul to keep the Feast. Lest anyone say that Paul was only doing those things that he was in the habit of doing because he was raised as a Pharisee—an Israelite—all of his life, lest we believe that Paul's example was merely that which was from his historical background and not incumbent upon Christians today, turn with me to Philippians 4:9. What did Paul tell the Philippian Church, another Gentile church, about all that he had done by his personal example of keeping the Feast himself and instructing the Church to keep the Feast?

Philippians 4:9:

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do . . ." This is quite the opposite from what you are told about Paul's example. What Paul was doing was not giving us an example of that which was for him and physical Israelites only. After the time that he was called and given that Truth by a great miracle and began to fulfill God's will in raising up those churches in Asia Minor, everything that Paul did by his personal example and in his ministry was that which was to be kept and done by the Church. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do . . ." Brethren, the Apostle Paul kept God's Holy Days.

Our fundamental of belief says that Christ kept those Holy Days, and last time, we saw the examples of Jesus Christ keeping the Holy Days. Our fundamental of belief says that we believe the Apostle Paul kept them, as we have just rehearsed, and that the New Testament Church also kept the Holy Days. Is there evidence of that?

Acts 2:1–4 gives the account of the very origin and establishment of the New Testament Church. When was that Church established? It was on one of God's Holy Days, the Feast of Pentecost.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Here, for the very first time, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit was imparted to human beings. It was the initiation of the New Testament Church, which Christ promised to do and which was facilitated in every way by His death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne of His Father where He became our High Priest. Then, as He promised His disciples before He suffered, He did send that Holy Spirit, and He sent it on the Day of Pentecost for reason. It is that very Holy Day that pictures and had pictured—even from the very first time that it was given to Israel—the opportunity for and the significance of the firstfruits. Israel did not understand it; they were only strictly commanded to keep it. They did it as an obligation to avoid penalties from God.

However, those who were called into the Church have the opportunity to understand, not only the obligation and requirement to keep Pentecost, but also its significance and awesome, inspiring example in that overall plan. We understand that Pentecost does represent the calling of the firstfruits, the gift of the Holy Spirit as a down payment, the opportunity to have a legitimate relationship with God and to be called and placed within His Body. It happened on one of those sacred Holy Days. Now, tell me, brethren, how it makes sense if the intent of God and Jesus Christ was that the Holy Days were only temporary and were to be done away; they were only for physical Israelites up until the time of Christ, and from that time forward, they did not apply to the Church. Those who became a part of Jesus Christ were not required in any way to keep Holy Days. Isn't it a confusing example that the very initiation of the Church was on one of those high, sacred Holy Days, Pentecost—the very Holy Day that represented the initiation of the firstfruits?

If God's plan was to do away with the Holy Days for Christians today, it seems to me that every example in the New Testament should have been of avoiding them and establishing traditions for the Church separate and apart from those days of old. Yet, what you find is that those days continued to dominate the orientation of the minds of the people in the Church.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." It was those who were gathered together in the name of Christ to keep that Holy Day who received the Holy Spirit.

Those days were perverted by men, as men always do and will continue to do for centuries to come. Within a couple of centuries, you still had an appreciation in the minds of human beings for the beginning of the Church and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but of course, they perverted it and moved it to a Sunday. They began to call it

"Ascension Day" or "Whitsunday," which came from the origin of "White Sunday," when people traditionally would wear white and choose that day to become baptized. Those are the traditions that come out of the minds of men and were not what God ordained whatsoever. So they called it "Whitsunday." They didn't keep it as Pentecost, and they certainly didn't keep it on the right day.

Acts 12:1–3 is a reference in the New Testament Church to yet another Holy Day.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

If the Church had done away with Holy Day-keeping because now, in Christ, they were not valid, why is the Church still referencing and marking time according to God's Holy Days? You see this repeated throughout the New Testament. Some will tell you, "This was still in Jerusalem where the Israelites, because of their previous customs, were still keeping and observing those days." Or, "In order to be able to preach the gospel, the apostles were taking advantage of the fact that more of the people were together at those times of Israelite gatherings. They weren't really keeping them; they were just taking advantage of the opportunity when people were gathered together in Jerusalem." There are all kinds of explanations for those who want to avoid the commands of God, if we want to look hard enough for them.

Let's look at Acts 20:6, 15–16. This still references Paul and the Church marking time according to God's Holy Days. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread . . ." If the New Testament Church had done away with the Holy Days and instituted Easter, Christmas, and all of these other man-made holidays instead, we would see examples of those. Those holidays are given religious significance, but they don't have anything to do with Christ at all in their origin. It seems to me that, if those were the significant occasions kept by the Church, we would see references to those, but we don't. We continually see references to God's Holy Days instead.

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. (Verse 15) And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium;

and the next day we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Now, if the Church wasn't keeping Pentecost, why was the Apostle Paul hastening to be in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost? This supposedly was one of those days which was done away with at this point. Not only was Pentecost the day on which the Holy Spirit was first given, but also the very Holy Day on which the New Testament Church was raised up, and the Church continued to keep it.

Acts 27:9–10:

"Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past . . ." What fast could they be speaking of? Commentators even recognize that this is a direct comment about the very Day of Atonement. This fast is the Day of Atonement, which was commanded in Leviticus 23 along with all of God's other Holy Days.

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past [The Day of Atonement was already past.], Paul admonished them, And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

This is still a reference to a Holy Day—still a reference to the fact that the Church was marking time, not according to the world's holidays, but according to God's Holy Days. When it comes right down to it, brethren, the fact is, there is no scripture anywhere in the Bible that says God's Holy Days were ever abrogated and do not apply to the Church.

Some will try to tell you that there is no command in the New Testament for keeping the Holy Days. We already showed you, in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul's admonition for the Church to keep the Feast. For those who want to say that there is no evidence that the Holy Days were commanded to the Church, I only say that there is no command to keep anything else. There is certainly not a command to keep Easter, Christmas, or anything else that the churches of this world seem to hold in high esteem.

The only question is, do we find any evidence that those Holy Days were ever abrogated, done away? As much as the scholars would like to tell you that the Holy Days are done away by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, under His shed blood, that is absolutely untrue, as we have already seen. We will see a couple more examples before we close today.

Those days were never done away. Again, when we recognize that the very Holy Days picture a plan for the salvation of mankind, that plan is not completed yet. How can the plan for our salvation be done away? Those who do not admit and will not honor God's Holy Days are basically sawing the limb off behind them. It is the very plan pictured in the keeping of those Holy Days in which we have our only hope for salvation—that which man seeks.

How many, today, understand that ancient Israel received the very same gospel message that Christ preached? Very few seem to understand that, brethren. They think Israel received an old set of commands, judgments, and statutes—things that were very, very different from that which Jesus Christ brought in His own ministry. Nothing could be further from the truth. What the Israelites received through Moses was exactly the same message that Jesus Christ preached in His own ministry and that which He admonished the apostles to preach. It was that same message—the gospel.

Hebrews 4:2:

For unto us [meaning the Church, this New Testament Church] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [ancient Israel]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Why did ancient Israel fail? Why could they not obey God's laws? Why did they receive every penalty for their idolatry and their Sabbath and Holy Day-breaking? They had the commands; they knew it physically, as a command, but they didn't have the love that comes only through the gift of the Holy Spirit—that which would have enabled them to understand the value of those days and their purpose in God's plan. God did not choose to reveal it to them. He gave them the law, and He said, "If you do these things, if you honor me by observing these laws, I will bless you," but He never gave them the capacity of mind to understand what those days really meant. However, in that gospel that came through Jesus Christ, which He gave to the Church, was the fullness of the understanding of those days and their meaning.

So those days are just as incumbent upon us, if we want to have a part with Christ, as they were upon ancient Israel. We have the opportunity to not make the mistakes that ancient Israel did because we have been given the capacity by a great miracle, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, to understand their real meaning and purpose for us.

. . . unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

The only question is, brethren, will it profit us? Will that gospel message that we received, the very same one that was given to ancient Israel, profit us more than it did those ancestors of old? Will we value those days and make sacrifices in order to keep them because we understand that it has everything to do with our future salvation of receiving eternal life in God's family?

Let's look at a couple of the final arguments that are often raised by those who attempt to claim that the Holy Days are not applicable to Christians today. One of the most significant ones is in Colossians 2:16. We started with this one, I believe, a number of weeks ago in the very first sermon. I used it for a different reason, but we are going to go back now and pick this up in context of the way that other people try to use it in order to do away with the Holy Days. Let's examine it and see if that is what it says at all. What you are going to find, brethren, is that Colossians 2:16 not only fails to abolish the Holy Days, but it also actually supports them in every way. Holy Days were ordained forever.

Colossians 2:13–17:

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses . . .

What are we talking about? What is the very context of this section of passages? Are we not talking about the forgiveness of sin? What is sin? Sin is the transgression of the law. We are talking about the forgiveness of a penalty for breaking laws.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us [You will be told that these ordinances are the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and all of the commands required of ancient Israel.], which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his [stake] . . .

Was it God's Sabbath and Holy Days that were contrary to us? Was it those laws that caused us such problems? What was it that caused the difficulty? What was it that separated the people of God from their Maker? Was it the laws that separated man from God, or was it the infraction of the laws of God by His chosen people that was the problem?

Remember, in verse 13, the subject is trespasses—" . . . forgiven you all trespasses." What is the blotting out of the handwriting of ordinances that was against us? What was the ordinance that was against us? Was it the law, God's Sabbath and Holy Days? No, it was our guilt. It was our guilt from breaking God's perfect and holy laws that separated us from Him. It was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who was perfect, and yet died, that gave us forgiveness. What is forgiveness? It is the blotting out of a penalty that goes with breaking a law.

So what was it that was nailed to the cross? Was it God's Holy Days, His Feasts, His commandments? No, it was our guilt. It was through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that, for the first time, human beings had an opportunity to have their sins washed away and to become clean. Christ's life, having been worth more than the sum total of all human beings that have ever lived and will ever live, was worthy—having lived perfectly and died in our stead—to bear the penalty of our guilt from law-breaking.

How does it even make sense that it was the very laws of God that Christ did away with on the stake? What was done away—for those who are called, who embrace and accept the real Jesus Christ—was our guilt, washed away through His priceless blood.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us . . ." What is the ordinance we are talking about? We are talking about a death decree—the death decree that you and I were each under by virtue of having broken God's laws. We were sentenced to death because we were guilty of violating His perfect principles. It is the same as if we were sitting on death row in a prison somewhere, waiting for our turn to be executed; and by the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ, He said, "I will take that penalty instead. Take me instead. Let me die, that this one may live."

If one man sacrifices himself in the place of someone else so that he can get off death row, does that individual, pardoned by the governor, have a right to go out and break the laws from this time forward? Not at all. He has only been pardoned from his guilt of past offenses against the law, but the law is still there. If now, with his

newfound freedom, he goes out and continues to murder, maim, and do all of those things that got him on death row the first time, he will wind up right back in the same place.

It is easy for us to understand it when we think about it in the context of man's laws in this world. Why is it so hard for human beings to see that exactly the same rules apply legally when we are dealing with God's laws? It was Christ's personal sacrifice that took away our guilt which put us on death row; but those holy, immutable laws, including God's Sabbath and His Holy Days, are in force just as much as they ever were in the past and will be in the future.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Those who are looking for a way to say that the Holy Days are done away will say, "See, don't let anyone judge you in respect to not keeping a Holy Day." Is that what this is saying? If you are not keeping a Holy Day or Sabbath, don't let anyone judge you for that; you are not wrong in the eyes of God. That is how they would have you interpret that.

Again, what are we talking about here? What is the context? Paul is speaking, once again, to a Gentile church—the Church of Colosse. To the Colossians he wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come . . ."

Were these people who had been keeping Holy Days all of their lives and now were being freed by the sacrifice of Christ so that they didn't have to keep them any longer? No, the people of Colosse were Gentiles. They had been raised as pagans with every human, man-made custom you can think of. All of their lives, they had been separated from God, His perfect law, and His will. They were only just now being called, converted, and placed within the Church.

When you understand that context, now read what Paul was telling the Colossians, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday . . ." He is saying, "Now that you have been converted and called into God's

Church, and you are beginning to keep God's law for the first time, including the Sabbath and the Holy Days, your former friends are looking at you and they think you are strange. They think you are doing all kinds of unusual things that they don't approve of."

The very fact that the Colossians were beginning to keep God's Holy Days and Sabbaths was why Paul was admonishing them not to allow that to become a stumbling block. He is saying, "Don't worry about these other people in the world. Don't worry about your former friends and associates who don't understand the changes that have happened in your lives because now you have been called and placed within the Body of Christ."

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink . . ." The Colossians, called out of paganism, were also beginning to keep God's health laws, including not eating meats that God didn't approve of. (That is going to be fundamental number fourteen. We will get to that next time.) For the first time, these people have changed their diets. They have begun to keep Sabbaths and Holy Days, and Paul is saying not to let anyone deter them from that. Do not let anyone judge you or say that you are wrong in doing those things.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come . . .

Remember, this is the verse we used five sermons ago to show that the Holy Days picture something yet to be fulfilled in the future. They have not been fulfilled whatsoever.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Does that last phrase make sense? ". . . the body is of Christ." What does that have to do with what we are talking about? The problem is the word "is" there. I think it will be in your Bible, as it is in mine, in italics. That means that it is not in the original. It was included by the translators of the King James Version, and also by translators of other versions of the Bible, because they didn't understand what they were translating or what was really being said here. They added the word "is." ". . . but the body is of Christ."

What is the context of verses 16 and 17? Take out the word "is," and the phrase reads, "but the body of Christ." By itself, what does that mean? Standing alone, it doesn't seem to have any relevance to the topic, does it? It relates back to the concept at the beginning of verse 16. Take out the interim phrase and this is what you have, beginning in verse 16 and ending with the last part of verse 17: "Let no man therefore judge you . . . but the body of Christ."

That is exactly what is being inspired through the Holy Spirit. It is saying not to worry about these who were not called, who are separated—outside of the Body. You have been called and placed within the Church. They are going to judge you because you are doing strange things in their eyes—keeping Sabbaths and Holy Days, not eating pork. You look like an oddball to most of the people in the world. Paul is saying not to let these things deter you. "Let no man therefore judge you . . . but the body of Christ." He is saying, "Don't worry about what those outside the Church think." Be concerned with fulfilling your obligations as a member of God's Church, the very Church that Jesus Christ raised up through His ministry and continued through His holy apostles.

"Let no man therefore judge you . . . in respect of an holyday . . .but the body of Christ." We should be worried and concerned about what God requires of us. Having been placed by God within His Church, we should be much more concerned with the obligations that God has taught us through His chosen ministers in the Church, than we are about the opinions of the uncalled masses of this world. That is exactly what is being relayed here. How different is that from what we are admonished to believe by the deceived scholars of this world? They use this very section to try and justify the doing-away of the Holy Days, when in fact, it does exactly the opposite and substantiates God's laws.

Next, you will hear people say, "Christ represented the Holy Day—He represented Passover; and therefore, by His sacrifice, Passover was done away." They will keep what they call a Lord's Supper. They won't call it Passover, because they disavow the need to keep God's Holy Days. They can't get away from the fact that Christ commanded His disciples to perform the foot-washing service and to partake of the wine and bread, but they call it the Lord's Supper because they want to get away from anything having to do with the commanded Feasts of God in Leviticus 23. They say their "Supper" isn't one of those old Holy Days, but a new commanded observance that Christ gave. It has no relevance to the Passover at all. They will say that Christ represented the Passover; and therefore, when He died, the Passover and all of those other Holy Days in Leviticus 23 were done away.

Did Christ personify any Holy Day? Within His body that was hung on that stake, did Christ personify a Holy Day? No, Christ personified a lamb. Christ was pictured symbolically by a lamb, not a Holy Day at all. So, what was done away by His death? The physical sacrifices—the added law, those ordinances which were not a part of the original commands of God in the Old Testament for keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days. As we have already seen in past sermons, it was that which was added later because of their transgressions against the law.

The sacrifices for sin offerings were required to remind the Israelites of God's law. When they broke it, the sacrifices were to remind them that they had violated God's law, that they should be sorry for it and make an atonement through animal sacrifices. Jesus Christ represented that lamb; and therefore, when He died, He fulfilled—as the perfect sacrifice—everything that was included in the temporary law concerning the sacrificial system. That was what was done away.

Hebrews 9:8–15—we've read this a couple of times, but let's read it once again:

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: 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 . . .

Why could those sacrifices not make the Israelites perfect? Those physical sacrifices did not take away their guilt. It was only the blood of Jesus Christ that could take away sin, that could pay the penalty. So, as the Israelites offered animal sacrifices in this ritual, they were only practicing and looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ who would, for the first time, provide the means for the guilt of mankind to be erased.

Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

We are not talking about the Holy Days and the Sabbath; we are talking about the sacrificial system. That is what is meant by the carnal ordinances.

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 . . .

What are we talking about? We are not speaking of a Holy Day; we are speaking about the sacrificial system.

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.

What redemption? He got us off of death row. Through His sacrifice, we were spared from the penalty of sin, which is death. But then, in so many places he said, "Go, and sin no more." That means, "Don't continue to break my laws."

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? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions . . .

Did he say the redemption of the Holy Days—the doing-away of the Sabbath and the Holy Days? No. What is the context?

. . . for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

". . . the redemption of the transgressions . . ." The topic, brethren, is the transgressions, the infraction of the law, not the law itself. It wasn't the redemption of the law. It wasn't the doing-away of the law; it was the doing-away of the penalty for breaking the law.

. . . the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Let's look at another scripture that is used by those who try to say that Paul condemned the keeping of the Holy Days. Can that be, with all of the scriptures we have already read about Paul's example? He was adamant about keeping the Holy Days.

Galatians 4:8–11:

"Howbeit then, when ye knew not God . . ." What is the topic here? Who is being spoken to? The Church in Galatia, another Gentile church. Remember, you are dealing with people who were called out of the world, who were beginning to keep God's commandments for the first time. They were coming out of all the paganism of their own worship and of the society they were brought up in and were learning a different way. This is to whom Paul is speaking.

"Howbeit then, when ye knew not God . . ." He is talking about before you were called, before God opened your mind to understand the Truth and placed you in the Body.

"Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods." They had set up gods in their own minds, which is what human beings always do. They create and fashion their gods out of the concepts of their own minds and thinking. Men worship that which they create themselves. Some of them stay as concepts of mind; others of them take fashion in the form of physical idols. Whatever we worship, whatever we attach ourselves to, whatever we use to guide and direct our steps and to make our decisions in life, that is our god, brethren. As human beings, we all make up our own gods, but there is only one.

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. [Before they were called, these people of Galatia were worshipping all manner of gods that came out of the minds of human beings.] But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God . . .

Here, he is making the point that you didn't choose to find God; God called you—something else that human beings have a hard time coming to understand.

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God [Paul, putting into proper perspective how we are called], how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

The best scholars, who try to interpret the Bible, tell us that this is referring to the Sabbath and Holy Days. This refers to all of those things in the Old Testament in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, where the Israelites were put under this heavy

burden of God's law—all of these statutes, judgments, the weekly Sabbath day, and all of these festivals that they were expected to keep throughout the year. The scholars of the world call that the "weak and beggarly elements."

. . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Because Holy Days are associated with seasons and specific times, you will be told that this is referring to the Holy Days. This is one of the strongest scriptures used to support the fact that Paul did away with Holy Day-keeping.

. . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? [Bondage is defined in these men's minds as God's laws in the Old Testament.] Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

You would be led to believe that Paul was the one who preached the glorious liberty of Christ, the need not to be encumbered at all by Holy Days, Feast-keeping, and Sabbaths. However, now that the Galatians were beginning to get legalistic and trying to adopt Israelitish customs of Sabbath and Holy Day-keeping, Paul was admonishing them to give up their legalism. Not at all, brethren. Remember the context of to whom he is speaking. It would be a more credible argument if he were addressing an Israelite church. Then, by referencing their past, he would be speaking about the keeping of Sabbaths and Holy Days; but again, we are dealing with a church that never kept God's Holy Days. They never kept the Sabbath or the Holy Days. That was not the way they were raised at all.

For the first time, they were called and placed within God's Church, and Paul, as well as all the other apostles, taught the keeping of the Sabbath and Holy Days; but now, something was happening within this church. The newness had worn off and according to their natural minds and hearts, which we each have, was a desire to go back and grab some of those things from their past. What was their past? Paganism—every infraction of God's law.

Was Paul admonishing them to give up their legalistic approach to want to go back and keep Holy Days? How can that be? These people never kept Holy Days before. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by

nature are no gods." That is what these people were doing before. They were doing service to everything but the true God.

". . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements . . ." What were those weak and beggarly elements? They were things associated with their former behavior before they were called into the Church, when they were serving those things that were not God.

. . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements [meaning, the natural orientation of flesh], whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

How did God define bondage? Were His Holy Days bondage—His priceless days that give us hope for our future salvation? Or, does God define bondage as giving into the lusts of the flesh, which are inherent within each one of us by nature—those things which automatically bring suffering, penalties, and every evil thing? That is what real bondage is, brethren. It is breaking God's laws, not keeping them.

". . . how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" You desire again to be back in the world, pursuing every pagan custom which is valued by human beings, as opposed to holding fast to the Truth which was revealed and given through God's faithful ministers. That is what Paul is saying.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Is that referring to the Holy Days? No, were God's Holy Days and Sabbaths the only observances of days and times and years in the world? Is not this world filled with holidays? You cannot go a single thirty-day period without another man-made holiday. These were the things Paul was referring to. Those who had been called out of the world and given God's priceless Truth, His priceless Feast days, were wanting to go back into their past lives and revere again the things that they used to do—the man-made holidays of this world. Paul was saying to those who wanted to go back into the world, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

The same way, today, God's ministers cannot help but have the same feelings for those whom we love so much, called out of this world like we were, and given this priceless opportunity to receive Truth, to live by it, and to receive the blessings which come from obedience; but now, they want to justify walking as close to the line of this world as they possibly can. They justify keeping man-made holidays and elevating them to the same level as God's Feasts.

What else can I say when someone is actually willing to leave and depart from our fellowship based upon the concept of a man-made holiday? People will say, "Oh, I never put it on the same level." What other conclusion can I make about anyone who uses a man-made holiday as a justification to leave the Church, except that they are elevating a man-made holiday to the same level as God's commands? God helping me, I will never make a decision or try to justify something like that on the basis of keeping or not keeping something which is not of God to begin with. It just doesn't make sense, brethren.

What about other Sabbath-keeping groups who actually pay lip service to keeping the weekly Sabbath day but say that the Holy Days are not incumbent upon Christians? That one really stumps me. That one bothers me a lot, because it makes the least sense of all.

Let's turn to Leviticus 23:1. I never understood how a supposed Sabbath-keeper could avoid the annual Holy Days.

Leviticus 23:1:

And the [Eternal] spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the [Eternal] [In the very first sentence is a command of God, through Moses, concerning all of His Feasts.], which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. [What is the very first Feast on the list of God's Feasts?] Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation . . .

God didn't command one Feast. He didn't command that we keep the seventh-day Sabbath, and that is God's single Feast. He said, ". . . these are my feasts." Then, the first on that list of Feasts is the weekly Sabbath.

Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the [Eternal] in all your dwellings. [Then, verse 4.] These are the feasts of the [Eternal], even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

This is the continuation of the list of God's Feasts, not man's, not Moses'—God's Feasts. The only distinction between the weekly Sabbath day and the

annual Holy Days is the fact that the weekly Sabbath comes every seven days throughout every year. The annual days are just that—they are observed each one time per year. That is why, in verse 4, that clarification is made. "These are the feasts of the [Eternal], even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons"—not every week like the weekly Sabbath, but in their appropriate seasons, which come around once a year.

Verse 5 is the first of those annual days, Passover. Throughout the remainder of that chapter, as we have already gone through in detail, you find all of those Feast days enumerated. The beginning of Leviticus 23 shows you that the weekly Sabbath is the first of God's Feasts added to the seven annual Holy Days and the Passover. They all stand or fall together. You cannot honor God, brethren, if you lay claim to the weekly Sabbath but reject His annual Holy Days. In the end, they all picture the very same thing in the plan of God.

The weekly Sabbath pictures the very fulfillment of God's Kingdom when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His government on this earth—His Millennial reign. It is the very same thing pictured in the completion of the seven annual Holy Days, the Feast of Tabernacles. They picture the same thing, brethren. They stand or fall together.

Not only that, but the Holy Days will be observed in the Millennium. Notice Zechariah 14:16. This is the other thing that has never made sense to me, even though I grew up in the Church and I was taught to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days all of my life. From the time I became a young adult, I had to make decisions on my own, whether the religion my parents taught me made sense or not—whether it was something I was willing to continue to observe when I was making decisions on my own. These are some of the things that jumped out at me immediately, because they all made sense.

People want to say that Israel was given God's Sabbath and Holy Days and they were expected to keep them, but Christ came and did away with all of that, so now the Church is not required to keep the Holy Days. Yet, this prophecy in Zechariah 14 says that when Christ returns and establishes His government on this earth, guess what is going to be going on? The keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. Notice it.

Zechariah 14:16–19:

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem . . ." This is talking about that great battle of Armageddon, pictured in the book of Revelation. After the war is over and Christ has taken possession of His throne and Satan has been bound, now that great reformation begins on this earth under the total domination of God's laws.

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the [Eternal] of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the [Eternal] of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

Under Christ's domination of this earth, there is going to be a physical penalty for those who will not keep the Feast days. If you don't come to the commanded Feasts, the holy convocations that Christ commanded, you won't have rain for your crops. You will pay a penalty.

"And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague . . ." Some are going to be so hardened, even without rain—they are going to pay with the blight, with drought—and still they are going to set their teeth and say, "I will not obey."

And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the [Eternal] will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Sounds to me like the Feast of Tabernacles is important to God, doesn't it to you? He seems to value it. This is an unfulfilled prophecy for the future, brethren, at the time when Christ returns and establishes His world-ruling government here on this earth. During that time, He is not going to be proclaiming that God's Holy Days are only for ancient Israel, that we are all free with liberty under this utopian society sponsored by Jesus Christ on the earth, and now we can all believe what we want as long as we accept the name of Christ. It says that all nations will be required to come up from year to year to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. If He commanded it of ancient Israel, who incurred severe penalties when they did not keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and if, when Christ returns, there will be severe penalties for those who will not keep

the Feast of Tabernacles, is it just possible, maybe, that we are all supposed to be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles right now? It is very compelling to me, brethren. I hope it is to you, too.

A couple of final concepts to finish up this series. One of the other factors is that the ministry is instructed to give meat in due season. Did you ever notice that? Let's notice it in Matthew 24:44. The ministry is commanded to give meat in due season—speaking about the appropriate topics from the Bible in certain seasons. Now what could that relate to?

Matthew 24:44–46:

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Here, Christ is teaching and admonishing His disciples, those who would become the apostles and be given that responsibility to take that gospel message—the continuation of Christ's very own ministry—and raise up those churches in His name through the power of His Spirit.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household . . .

Whom has He made ruler over His household, the Church? We are speaking of the ministry. We are talking about an office of responsibility—not to be arrogated for personal benefit or selfish reasons whatsoever. We are talking about an office that God ordained through Jesus Christ to serve His household, the Church.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

What is this meat in due season? It means that the ministry is to speak on the appropriate topics in each season. Seasons belong to the Holy Days, as we already saw in Leviticus 23. It is the Holy Days that define the very seasons throughout the year. God ordained those seasons to correspond to His days that are to be kept as Feasts. The ministry, in order to fulfill their responsibility in Christ's service, are accountable to teach about the plan of salvation on each of those Holy Days in those times of year.

So, at the time of the Passover, we talk about the Passover and the meaning of Christ's sacrifice. During the seven days of Unleavened Bread, you hear sermons about the need to put sin out of our lives as we put leavening out of our houses—the significance, symbolically, of our requirements as Christians to overcome and to put on the very nature of Christ, pictured by deleavening.

On Pentecost, you hear about the significance of the Holy Spirit, the raising up of the Church, and being added into the Body as a member of the firstfruits, that smaller harvest. It is not the great harvest of the salvation of all mankind; it is only those few who are called at a particular time according to God's will—not ours, as He called the weak and the base things. He didn't call us because we were great, mighty, significant, because we were worth more, or had earned it. He called the weak and the base things. That day of Pentecost pictures a very small, early, firstfruits harvest.

Then, for meat in due season on the Feast of Trumpets in the Fall, you hear from the ministry about the significance of Christ's return, pictured by the blowing of trumpets. It is the time when He will come back as a mighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords to take possession of His throne on this earth.

On the Day of Atonement, you hear about the significance of reconciliation between man and God. Mr. Armstrong used to say, "At-one-ment." The sins of the entire world will be placed back upon the head of Satan the Devil, as he is bound and put away so that he can deceive the nations no more. Man will truly be reconciled to God for the first time and have an opportunity to have a close personal relationship with Him.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the ministry talks about the significance of the Millennial reign of Christ—that glorious time when Christ's government will rule in a perfect theocracy. Civil government, as well as religious hierarchy, will be established upon this earth. There will be no such thing as separation of church and state. It will be a perfect, glorious government with Jesus Christ Himself sitting on that throne. Every spiritual and physical law on this earth will emanate from those Ten Commandments and that perfect law. Those Holy Days will be kept, and there will be meat in due season spoken by the chosen priests and ministers at that time as well.

On the Last Great Day, you hear meat in due season concerning the ultimate resurrection of all those in past ages who have lived and died, never having received their call or a chance to know the real Christ. They are not going to be lost. In God's

perfect plan, as we began to understand it through the preaching of Mr. Armstrong and no one else, all of those are not lost at all. In the second resurrection, they will have their chance to understand the Truth for the first time. They will have their chance for salvation.

During that glorious White Throne Judgment period, they will be tried and tested for their chance to prove worthy of eternal life. The final part of that plan is when Jesus Christ hands that throne and authority back to the Father from whom it emanates. The only thing that will be left is that which is spiritual. All of those who have been considered worthy will be changed into great, spirit bodies, sharing eternity with God—not as angels or servants, but as sons of God, heirs with Christ to the promise.

Those are the things that you hear every year in their proper seasons—meat in due season from a faithful ministry. It is that which Christ commanded the disciples to give to the Church after He was gone—meat in due season. Brethren, if the Holy Days are done away, what meat is the ministry to teach in due season—what season? It is another confirmation of the Holy Days for the New Testament Church.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Verse 46 is another one of those passages which confirms even that which you have heard repeatedly from Mr. Cole concerning Matthew 28:19–20. It is a confirmation that Christ promised He would be with someone until the consummation of the age. He would be working through His delegated authority to faithful servants who would not abandon the truth.

There are so many out there who have been victims of abusive authority, the poor administrative decisions within our parent body. They have scattered to the four winds in one of 230 some-odd splinter groups from our parent body. Most of those people have a real problem with believing that there is any ministry that is still truly being faithful. Where did the 100,000-plus members of the Church go? Most of them are not members of any of those splinter groups; they just disappeared into the woodwork.

Christ promised that there would be a faithful ministry, even unto His second coming. The only question is, where is it? Where are those servants who have not

abandoned the Truth, who are yet being led by the power of the Holy Spirit? Where are those men who are not speaking according to the things that come to their minds from their own personal scholarship or ability to interpret the scripture, but are holding on dutifully to the things that they were given—those things that came through the very servant that God used in the last days? Where is that faithful ministry?

It is easy to say who it is not, but who is it? Christ promised that it would be somewhere. He was not going to leave His flock without a shepherd. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." It tells you, brethren, that there is going to be, at the very revealing of Christ, a blessing upon a ministry somewhere who has been fulfilling everything that God expected of them. Where is it? That is what we all have to decide for ourselves, because we each are going to bear the burden of our decisions. We are each going to be judged. I made my decision a long time ago.

The final principle for this afternoon, brethren, is something that goes hand-in-hand with the Holy Days. Do you know what it is? I have said that the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days stand or fall together. You can't separate them. They are commanded together as a part of a package—the Feasts of the Eternal. Do you know what else stands or falls together as a part of that package? Tithing.

Deuteronomy 14:22 shows the commands concerning second tithe that God gave to Israel for the proper keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. Yet, there are some today who will try and tell you that tithing is done away. They believe in the Sabbath and the Holy Days, but they will tell you that tithing was actually done away by Christ's sacrifice—that, now, we are just to give free-will offerings. There is no incumbency upon Christians to actually tithe ten percent or to set aside second tithe for the Feast of Tabernacles—let alone third tithe. Everything is just free-will offerings now.

Deuteronomy 14:22–26:

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the [Eternal] thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the [Eternal] thy God always.

Is this talking about the first tithe, the ten percent? No, because what were the Israelites instructed to do with the first ten percent of their income, their increase? They were to give it to the priests. They didn't have the authority to use that money according to their own dictates.

So, here, when God is commanding a tithe, He says they are to eat. ". . . thou shalt eat before the [Eternal] thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn . . ." Obviously, this must be a separate tithe that is unique from that which was to be given to the ministry.

And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the [Eternal] thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the [Eternal] thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the [Eternal] thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul [desires], for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the [Eternal] thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household . . .

This is a tithe that relates specifically to the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. So let me ask you this, brethren: If someone believes that the Sabbath and Holy Days are to be kept, how can they not believe that the laws of tithing are still applicable for Christians? How can you keep the Feast of Tabernacles if you don't set aside the second tithe, as is commanded right here in Deuteronomy 14? Don't they go hand-in-hand?

That was the means that God used for each member of the Church to fund their trip to the Feast. It was for them to use in any way that they pleased, within God's laws and commands. They were to enjoy the Feast of Tabernacles because it pictures the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His perfect Kingdom. So, every year at the Feast, God wants us to have the fullness of that feeling—hoping and waiting for Christ's return. The way that God commanded for us to be able to keep the Feast of Tabernacles is through the second tithe. How can the laws of tithing be done away for someone who still believes that the Holy Days are incumbent upon Christians? As with so many other things that are a part of God's laws, they stand or fall together. You cannot pull that block out of the wall without the whole thing crashing down.

In conclusion, brethren, what we have already found, and will continue to find, is that God's Church is not the popular trend. If you are of God and you are obeying His laws and commands, if you truly fear Him, then you are going to be the exception to the rule in this world. Most human beings at this time, according to God's perfect will, are absolutely deceived. He has not chosen to call them. It is not because they are any worse than we are; we are probably worse by nature than many. Only if God has opened your mind to understand the Truth, do you hold a priceless miracle with an opportunity to act upon it.

God's Church has never been the popular trend and will never be that which dominates until Christ returns. It was prophesied always to be a small and persecuted group, and even now today, a remnant of the Body that it once was.

Wherever that Church is, brethren, those faithful of God are going to be keeping God's commandments, and that includes the Sabbath and the Holy Days. They are not going to be looking for excuses to value the holidays of this world instead. They are going to be reverencing God by keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days. They are going to value them, not just keep them as burdensome obligations in order not to receive the wrath of God. They are going to keep Holy Days because they love what the Holy Days picture. They love the meaning that is found within those days, which is the hope that God has promised in His awesome mercy and love and the way He is working in the lives of men on this earth to save mankind.

What will that true remnant be doing? What is the sign of those who love and respect God?

Revelation 12:17:

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

They don't find ways to wrangle the New Testament scriptures and the statements of Paul in order to say that God's laws and commandments have been done away. The faithful Church keeps God's commandments and has the testimony of Jesus Christ. Those will be the ones whom God will honor in that day. Do you value His Holy Days? If you do, you are blessed of all human beings who live on the face of the earth today.