

# **God's Holy Days**

**Should They Be Observed?**

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## **God's Annual Holy Days—Should They Be Observed?**

A considerable number of Sabbatarians—those who keep the seventh day Sabbath—observe the seven annual feast days commanded in the Old Testament. They take seriously the Bible instruction found in Leviticus 23:4–5, Deuteronomy 14:22–23, and Deuteronomy 16:16–17: "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord 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 Lord thy God always.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

These Sabbatarians believe the Holy Days were given for a special purpose or plan. This purpose is rehearsed year by year, as the Holy Days occur, in order to keep God's people mindful of His plan of salvation, since the Holy Days are commanded to be kept in their seasons. In addition, they believe the Holy Days were instituted prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant, as seen in Exodus 12; that they should be observed just as the weekly Sabbath, with the exception that food can be prepared (Exodus 12:16); that no servile work is to be done (Leviticus 23:8, 21, 25, 28, 35–36); that the method of financing feast attendance is by saving an annual tithe to be used in travel and expenses for that occasion.

Furthermore, they believe the feasts are to be observed where God chooses to place His name (Deuteronomy 14:23). Since the feasts were observed in various locations during the Old Testament period, the clear inference follows that the responsibility for site selection should rest with the church leadership (note Joshua 18:1, I Samuel 1:3; 4:3, II Samuel 6:17, 7, and Jeremiah 7:12). These people do not believe the Old Testament is the exclusive authority for observing the Holy Days; they believe there is ample New Testament proof to substantiate Holy Day observance for Christians.

### **Feasts: Nationalistic in Nature?**

On the other hand, the most vociferous opposition against observing the annual Holy Days comes from other Sabbatarians who believe these Holy Days have no part in "true

Christian worship." They assert that the feasts or Holy Days had their origin in "nationalistic" Israel and that not one of them was observed before "God took Israel by the hand to lead them out of Egypt." They further argue these feast days were given when the Old Covenant was written and ratified and were not part of the Abrahamic Covenant. They reflected special "happenings and experiences" of fleshly Israel and were to last only until "the seed should come." As such, they are merely nationalistic celebrations, spoken of as "Jewish" in the New Testament.

What does an examination of Scripture reveal?

Exodus, chapter twelve, shows that the Holy Days were instituted in part before the Old Covenant was ratified. This chapter describes the establishment of the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread two months before Israel came to Mount Sinai (compare Exodus 12:1–6 with Exodus 19:1). It is possible that on the Day of Pentecost, the third annual Holy Day, the Old Covenant was ratified on Mount Sinai. The argument that the Holy Days should not be kept today because they were a part of the Old Covenant leads to questions. If the Holy Days were instituted before the establishment of the Old Covenant, are they to be included in that which was "done away?" Did God intend all seven of the Holy Days to be included as a unit when He established Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread? And, what did the Abrahamic Covenant have to do with the Old Covenant God established with Israel?

Bible students generally agree that what was not initiated by the Old Covenant could not be annulled when it was abolished. The principal question, therefore, is whether or not the Holy Days were instituted and required to be observed before the establishment of the Old Covenant. There can be no doubt that the Holy Days in part were instituted before the establishment of the Old Covenant. Compare Exodus 12:14–19 with Exodus 15:26. In Exodus 15:26, God says, ". . . If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians. . . ." Some may wish to argue that only the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread should be kept, as these were the only ones commanded before the Old Covenant was ratified. But notice Exodus 12:2, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." The introduction of the Holy Days was based on a yearly consideration, not on a monthly one. Therefore, God had all the Holy Days in mind when He gave the command to keep the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. If it is true that only the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread should be observed, then why did Paul and the New Testament Christians keep all of the Holy Days, rather than just the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread? The Holy Days stand or fall as a unit. To observe one or two of them is meaningless. Either all the Holy Days must be kept or none of them. The fact that they were established before the Old Covenant indicates their New Covenant intention and application. What was not established by the Old Covenant cannot be

abrogated (done away) by its passing. Paul's observance of the Holy Days presents a major obstacle to those who wish to repudiate them. We will examine the Holy Days in the New Testament later. Suffice it to say here that if the Holy Days are done away, the New Testament Christians were wrong to keep them and certainly the Apostle Paul was in gross error.

The Abrahamic Covenant was a covenant made between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:1–8). It was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3–5; 28:10–15). The covenant, however, that God made with Israel was not the Abrahamic Covenant. It was a separate covenant made with the descendants of Abraham many hundreds of years after the Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant God made with Abraham neither specifically confirms nor denies Holy Day observance. It is important to realize that man is required to obey God's injunctions at whatever time period He makes these injunctions known. Since the Holy Days were given before the establishment of the Old Covenant, it is clear they were to be obeyed from that time on. The argument that the Holy Days are done away because they are found in Exodus 23:14–17 as part of the Old Covenant fails to take into account that they were established two months before the ratification of the Old Covenant. Likewise, the weekly Sabbath, made known to Israel shortly before the ratification of the Old Covenant, is also found as a part of the Old Covenant (see Exodus 16 and 20:8).

### **Seasons Ordained with the Holy Days in Mind**

What has been largely overlooked is the relationship of the heavenly bodies to the Holy Days. The seasons themselves were ordained with the Holy Days in mind. Leviticus 23:4 states that the holy convocations are to be proclaimed in their seasons; it is clear that their observance is a seasonal consideration. The book of Genesis corroborates the fact that the seasons were ordained with the Holy Days in mind. When God said, ". . . Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Genesis 1:14), He intended the constellations to be seasonal signs. As the earth travels around the sun in its elliptical orbit, certain constellations are visible during the various seasons. Those which can be observed in the summer cannot be seen in the winter, and vice versa. When God established the seasons, it was more than just a weather consideration.

The moon was also included in the seasonal consideration (Psalm 104:19; 89:37). This is because the moon marks the months, and the months are imperative for Holy Day observance. So important are these heavenly bodies, in relationship to the Holy Days, that it is impossible to alter their positions and orbits in the heavens (Jeremiah 31:35–36).

It is obvious that God was intending, at the reestablishment of the earth in its present state, to reveal the Holy Days at some future time.

The argument that the Holy Days were never intended to be universally observed, because the seasons in the Southern Hemisphere are not in agreement with the seasons in the Northern Hemisphere, can be disproved by the following:

1. The Holy Days were calculated from Jerusalem—which is obviously a Northern Hemispheric consideration. As such, Southern Hemispheric considerations are secondary to those of the Northern Hemisphere.
2. Since the Southern Hemisphere (Australia and New Zealand) was not inhabited by white, English-speaking peoples until after the time of Christ, those peoples inhabiting the Southern Hemisphere were not held accountable spiritually until revealed truth came. Prior to the time of Christ, God generally overlooked the ignorance of men (Acts 17:30). Since God does not hold one accountable until one receives a knowledge of the truth (Romans 4:15), peoples of the Southern Hemisphere were not held accountable until modern times, when the knowledge of the Holy Days was first made available.
3. Many of the Old Testament physical types are not to be fulfilled in every detail today. Physical types are representations only. It is not necessary or even feasible to fulfill them in exact detail. Since the observance of the Holy Days is commanded, what is important is the observance of the specific day—not what the weather is like on that day.
4. Those who use the Southern Hemisphere as an excuse to deny the necessity of keeping God's Holy Days universally must of necessity admit they are a Northern Hemispheric requirement. And if a Northern Hemispheric requirement, then they should be observed.
5. Those who make observance of the Holy Days in the Southern Hemisphere an issue need to ask themselves why such an argument should arise in the first place. Is it not because the Bible indicates the requirement of universal observance of the Holy Days and these individuals simply do not want to obey God?

### **Holy Days Depict Plan of Salvation**

Notice the statement in Revelation 13:8. Here Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is spoken of as slain from the foundation of the world—understood by Abel in presenting an acceptable sacrifice in his time. God's purpose and plan, even before man was created, included Christ as the sacrificial Lamb. But is this all there is to the plan of salvation? God is not a purposeless God. What He does, He does for a reason. Why, for example, are the Holy Days arranged in the order they are? To assign their meaning and purpose to a national

configuration bears no real significance. Even the Jews recognized the spiritual meaning of the Holy Days—although they failed to see the depth. They long recognized the significance of Satan in relationship to the Day of Atonement and the relationship of the Day of Atonement to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Is the plan of salvation, depicted by the Holy Days, a concoction of man—or can this plan be substantiated from the Bible?

The order of the Holy Days, in their entirety, is found in Leviticus, chapter twenty-three—although the book of Leviticus is only one of the books which mentions the Holy Days.

Notice the order of the Hebrew Calendar: (1) The Passover occurs on the fourteenth day of the first month. (2) The Days of Unleavened Bread begin on the fifteenth and continue through the twenty-first of the first month. (3) The Feast of Firstfruits (called Pentecost) must be counted, and occurs after a fifty-day count beginning on the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. (4) The Feast of Trumpets falls on the first day of the seventh month. (5) The Day of Atonement is on the tenth day of the seventh month. (6) The Feast of Tabernacles lasts from the fifteenth through the twenty-first of the seventh month. (7) The Last Great Day falls on the twenty-second day of the seventh month.

Is there any significance to this order—this arrangement of days? Those who ridicule the concept that the Holy Days were given to depict the plan of salvation can cite no texts to prove that the Holy Days were given for any other purpose. Where is the proof—the Bible substantiation—that the Holy Days are intended to depict something other than God's plan of salvation? Remember, God is not a purposeless God. He gave the Holy Days for a reason. If the Holy Days do not illustrate the plan of salvation, then what do they depict?

One fact is certain regarding the Holy Days: It can be demonstrated that there is great spiritual significance to them, and this significance can be substantiated from the Bible!

First, let us examine the Passover.

The central theme of the Passover was the sacrifice of the lamb (Exodus 12:3–11). The lamb was taken on the tenth day of the month and held until the beginning of the fourteenth day, when it was slain. What did the lamb depict? Remember, on that first Passover night, the Israelites were required to strike the lintel and the two side posts with hyssop dipped in the lamb's blood, and the death angel would "pass over" that house. The parallel is clear from the New Testament. Jesus Christ was the Passover Lamb (John 1:29). Those who accept the blood of Christ, in payment for their sins, are "passed over" and made free from the penalty of sin. This is why Paul said, ". . . For even Christ our passover is

sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). The Passover depicts the first requirement for salvation—the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the sacrificial Lamb.

But the Passover depicts the first step only. To accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and then to continue doing the things which required His sacrifice, would be totally meaningless (Galatians 2:18). This is why the Days of Unleavened Bread follow immediately after the Passover. Leaven represents sin (I Corinthians 5:6, Matthew 16:6, 12). The Israelites were required to put leaven out of their homes and out of their lives for a seven-day period. The lesson here is that sin must be put out of the life of the individual if he is going to continue on the path of salvation. Sin, by the Bible definition, is the transgression of the law—the Ten Commandments. Once the individual accepts Christ as his personal Savior, he must stop sinning. This is the lesson behind the Days of Unleavened Bread. For those who ridicule the idea that the Holy Days depict the plan of salvation, what is the explanation for leaven, representing sin, in association with the Days of Unleavened Bread? (I Corinthians 5:6–8). It should be obvious to all that the correlation between leaven and sin is the central theme behind the Days of Unleavened Bread. And since this feast follows the Passover, its relationship to the sacrifice of Christ is apparent.

But accepting Christ as personal Savior and repenting of sin are not enough. Man does not have the capability to live a righteous life apart from God. Man must have help. This help is provided by the Holy Spirit—which God gives to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38). It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was given and the New Testament Church began (Acts 2:1–4). This was when God really began His spiritual harvest. And this is why the Feast of Pentecost—or Firstfruits, as it was called during the Old Testament period—was associated with the spring or early harvest (Leviticus 23:10).

Man must receive God's Holy Spirit in order to overcome the evil pulls of human nature (Romans 8:1, 4, 9–11, 14). He is then begotten as a son of God (Romans 8:29) and belongs to the harvest of firstfruits (James 1:18). Since the day of Pentecost is associated with the spring harvest, and since those Christians who are now converted are called the firstfruits, it is obvious that the Feast of Pentecost represents the third requirement in God's plan of salvation—man must receive God's Holy Spirit in order to be saved!

What is also apparent, in relationship to the spiritual harvest of the firstfruits, is that God is not trying to save the world at this present time. If God is trying to save the world now, He is losing the battle. For, Satan is the present champion in this evil world. But, the Bible makes it plain that this is not the time when God is setting His hand to save the world. The time period in which we live is the harvest of the firstfruits only. The great period of salvation for this world comes later.

Those who repudiate the plan of salvation, as depicted by God's Holy Days, have no logical explanation for what is presently happening in this world. If they believe God is



trying to save the world today, they evidently think Satan is superior to God. For far more people have rejected the real truth of God today than at any other time period in the history of the world! What is plain, from the order of the Holy Days, is that the time period in which we live is the harvest of the firstfruits only—and the Holy Spirit has been given only to those who are called now!

The next Holy Day is the Feast of Trumpets, which depicts the next step in the plan of salvation. Sin will not be eradicated from this earth, and man cannot be saved, until the return of Jesus Christ—who will come as the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords to set up a world-ruling government for one thousand years. This step is depicted by the Feast of Trumpets (Revelation 11:15). It is at the final trumpet sound that Christ returns to take control of this world. And it is also at the final trump that the resurrection of the dead shall occur (I Corinthians 15:51–53, I Thessalonians 4:16).

Next, Satan, the invisible ruler of this world, must be removed from his position of influence. This entire event is depicted by what took place on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The Azazel goat—or scapegoat, as he is erroneously labeled in the Authorized Version—is none other than the representation of Satan. What befalls Satan is described in Revelation 20:1–3. He is to be removed to a place of restraint during the one-thousand-year reign of Christ. With Satan present, it would be impossible for man to achieve righteousness and salvation. God will see to it that this evil tempter, and enemy of all righteousness, will be removed and will no longer be able to exercise influence over the lives of men.

The next annual feast is the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast was held after the larger, fall harvest and took precedence over the spring festival. The reason is, the Feast of Tabernacles depicts that time period when God will set His hand to save the world. For, the Feast of Tabernacles represents the Millennium—the one-thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles follows the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, because Christ must return and Satan must be removed before the Millennium can begin. It is during the one-thousand-year period that the knowledge of God's truth will be made available to all mankind (Isaiah 11:9, Micah 4:1–4). The saints, who are resurrected at the return of Jesus Christ, will reign with Him during this one-thousand-year period of peace and freedom from sin (Revelation 20:4).

But what about the millions who lived and died in the past without the knowledge of salvation? Does God offer them salvation? Most assuredly!

Immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles is the final Holy Day, called the Last Great Day (Leviticus 23:39, John 7:37). This day represents a resurrection, either following or at the very end of the Millennium. This resurrection will include all the dead who had not been given a chance to receive salvation (Revelation 20:11–12, Ezekiel 37:10–13). Those

resurrected will be given a limited time period in which to overcome and qualify for salvation. Whether this time period is one hundred years, or otherwise, is not what is important. What is important is that God will provide the opportunity for salvation to all human beings who have ever lived. And since today is not the only day of salvation, the Bible makes it plain—as revealed by the Holy Days—that there are yet two great periods of opportunity for salvation!

Let those who ridicule the plan of salvation, as depicted by God's Holy Days, disprove the fact that Jesus Christ represents the Passover Lamb. Let them show that leaven is not a type of sin, that God's Spirit was not given on the day of Pentecost, that there was no spring harvest, that Christ will not return at the last trump, that the saints will not be resurrected, that the Azazel goat does not represent Satan, that Satan will not be bound prior to the establishment of God's government on earth, and that there is no resurrection following the Millennium.

It may be easy to ridicule a concept, but where is the evidence that it is wrong? The burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of those who doubt. Let them bring forth the facts to disprove God's plan of salvation—that it is incorrect or nonexistent.

Clearly, it is only in the New Covenant relationship that the Holy Days can be understood. The idea that the Holy Days are foreshadows of Christ is not valid. This is disproved by Paul's statement in Colossians 2:17. The antecedents to verse seventeen are Holy Days, new moons, and Sabbaths. "Shadows of things to come" refers to Holy Days, new moons, and Sabbaths. If the Holy Days were fulfilled in Christ, then they are not shadows of things to come. They would have been fulfilled thirty years earlier, when Christ was crucified.

Paul says they are shadows of things to come. Their fulfillment has not yet occurred. They are foreshadows of the plan of salvation. Since this plan is not complete, the Holy Days are necessary in order to understand the New Covenant relationship. For, it is in the New Covenant relationship that the meaning of the Holy Days comes to light. With Christ's appearance and subsequent death, the meaning of the Passover is made plain. Putting sin out of each individual life is a New Covenant requirement. So is the receipt of God's Holy Spirit, the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. Satan's removal and the establishment of the Millennium are both a necessary part in the completion of the plan of salvation. So is the resurrection at the end of the Millennium, which will include all those who died in times past without the knowledge of salvation. It is the New Covenant relationship which makes clear the meaning of the Holy Days.

If the Passover were fulfilled in Christ, why did He institute bread and wine and instruct His disciples to continue observing it? (Luke 22:19, I Corinthians 11:24–25). The idea that we need not keep the Passover—because Jesus changed it to the Lord's Supper—is

merely a matter of terminology. The time for observance is the same, the significance and meaning is the same, and the clear New Testament command is to observe it. The Passover, or Lord's Supper, is a memorial to Christ's death. It represents Christ as the Passover Lamb (I Corinthians 5:7). It is the acceptance of Christ, as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, that is the first necessary step for salvation. This is why the Passover is to be kept today.

When Israel departed from Egypt, it was a journey out of bondage. Egypt is likened to sin (Revelation 11:8). When one is converted and accepts Christ, he come out of sin—out of bondage to the things which enslaved him in this world. Israel came out of Egypt with a new hope—and the Christian who comes out of the world comes out with a new hope also. He rejoices in his future because he remembers the past, and he appreciates the sacrifice made for him by Jesus Christ. He looks forward to the future; but he does not dwell on the past.

Christ changed the Passover symbols from the lamb to the bread and wine. They represent His broken body and shed blood. Christians must be ever mindful that it was under the New Covenant relationship that Christ's blood was shed and the way opened to salvation.

If the Holy Days were fulfilled in Christ, why did the New Testament church continue to observe them after Christ's death? The idea that Pentecost was fulfilled by the apostles has neither logic nor Scripture for support. Nor does the idea that Christ spiritually fulfilled the Day of Atonement, when He ascended into the heavens. The central theme of the Day of Atonement was the confessing of sins and laying hands on the Azazel goat, not the high priest's entering into the holy of holies. The priest's entering into the holy of holies preceded the confessing of the sins over the Azazel goat—just as Christ's ascension into the heavens, and His acceptance by His Father, precedes the removal of Satan during the Millennium.

The argument that Christ kept the Holy Days in our stead and that we are "dead" to them is a variation of the old argument that since Christ kept the Ten Commandments, Christians no longer need to. This unscriptural concept—that Christ came to live a righteous life in our stead, not to die in our stead—is not substantiated by the Bible. Christ did not come to live a perfect life in our stead, but rather to set the example and to die in our stead!

There is no doubt that the Holy Days are directly associated with the New Covenant. It is in the New Covenant relationship that their significance and meaning come to light. This is why they stand or fall together. Those who advocate the observance of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, only, reject the New Covenant. It is by understanding the plan of salvation, as revealed by all the Holy Days, that the New Covenant relationship can be fully understood!

It is a delusion to call oneself a Christian—while at the same time rejecting the plan of salvation by ignoring part or all of God's Holy Days! These days teach the completeness of God's purpose for man.

As mentioned previously, some claim the Holy Days were nationalistic in nature; that only males attended, that their meaning was limited to such things as Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the voice of God on Mount Sinai, the beginning of the years of jubilee, the atonement for Israel's sins, the completion of the harvest, and a reminder of the wilderness when Israel abode in booths. Yet, Paul tells us regarding ancient Israel, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11). As already seen, the Holy Days were given for a purpose that far transcends national Israel. Furthermore, attendance at the feasts was not limited to males. Notice the command in Deuteronomy 12:7 and 14:26. Nehemiah 8:3 states both men and women attended the feast. The fact that the feasts were referred to as "Jewish" in the New Testament demonstrates two things: One, the fact that the ten tribes of Israel, as distinct from the Jews, had been long lost from sight following their national captivity; and two, the Jews alone of the tribes of Israel were observing the Holy Days on a national scale. If the Holy Days are a part of erstwhile Judaism, as some say, why do we find the Apostle Paul and the New Testament Christians observing them? Jesus opposed much of Judaism because it represented a departure from the way of God originally revealed to the Jews, but Jesus did not oppose the Holy Days nor the dates on which they were kept. He attended the feasts, as did His disciples (Matthew 26:17–20, John 7:8, 14, 37).

Is there any legitimacy to the argument that Exodus 12:2 proves that Israel was not observing the feasts prior to leaving Egypt since this text authorizes the beginning of the sacred year which regulated the months in which the feasts were to occur? Or that Israel did not keep the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread the first year since they were traveling during the time period in which these days were to be observed? Or that the day of Pentecost was not mentioned until after God spoke with an audible voice when He gave the Ten Commandments? Or that Pentecost, which had to be counted from the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, had little meaning to the Israelites for forty years since they lived on manna in the wilderness and could not really keep the Days of Unleavened Bread? Or that Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—all harvest festivals—were not kept until Israel reaped a harvest in the Promised Land? Or that the seven annual Holy Days are not referred to as holy in the Pentateuch?

While in slavery Israel could not keep the feasts. God took them out of slavery in order to make them a "peculiar people," a people whose manner of life was to exemplify the righteousness of God (Deuteronomy 14:2; 4:6–8). This time period was a time of special revelation from God to Israel through the prophet Moses. Paul tells us God kept His revelation a mystery until the time of revealing (Romans 16:25–26). Many of God's truths had not been made known to earlier generations (I Peter 1:9–10). While Israel was not given the revelation of the Holy Days until the days of Moses, these days were included as a part of God's plan from the beginning. The seasons given at creation were ordained with the Holy Days in mind. Leviticus 23:4 states, "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy

convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." Here, the possessive form clearly reveals the seasons belong to the Holy Days. This is illustrated in Genesis 1:14, ". . . Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

The earth revolves around the sun once each year. The change of seasons is due to the position of the earth in its elliptical orbit, and the tilt of the earth in relationship to the sun. The sun divides the day and night in conjunction with the earth's rotation. The moon plays another role. Approximately every twenty-nine days the moon revolves around the earth. Each revolution of the moon around the earth represents a month. The new moon, appearing as a sliver in the west, marks the beginning of each month. It is a sign the month has begun. Precise calendar calculations accurately determine the beginning of each month. The new moon of the seventh month is the point from which all the Holy Days are calculated for each year.

The Holy Days must fall in given seasons. The spring Holy Days (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost) must fall in the spring season. The fall Holy Days (Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles, Last Great Day) must occur in the fall season. This is important, due to the agricultural harvest. The moon was given to determine the proper seasons for the Holy Days (Psalm 104:19).

As previously mentioned, specific constellations appear at certain seasons. They can be seen only during their respective seasons. Some are summer constellations, not visible in the winter; others are winter constellations, not visible in the summer. They are lights in the firmament. It is the moon, however, that is important as far as the Holy Days are concerned. The moon determines the months, and the months determine the seasons. The moon was placed in orbit at creation in order to play an important role in the determination of God's Holy Days. It is for a sign and for seasons. God says it is impossible to alter His ordinance of the moon (Psalm 89:37, Jeremiah 31:35–36). The seasons were ordained with the Holy Days in mind.

Although the Holy Days are not mentioned until Exodus, chapter twelve, this does not mean God intended them to be observed by ancient Israel only. What Israel did or did not do when departing from Egypt or during the forty years in the wilderness has no relevancy to God's instruction. In fact, the Bible tells us God was displeased with the generation that came out of Egypt, and, with few exceptions, caused them to perish in the wilderness (Acts 7:42, Hebrews 3:17–19). They could not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief (disobedience). Israel's entering the Holy Land is a type of salvation. Both the type and the antitype are progressive. The physical receipt of God's promise to Israel began when they entered the Holy Land just as the receipt of the Holy Spirit is our down payment. It was not until the days of David and Solomon that the physical promises to Israel were realized, just as it will not be until the resurrection from the dead that the promises to the Christian will

be realized. To limit the keeping of the Holy Days to national Israel flies in the face of the facts. History, as we shall see, makes it plain that New Testament Christians kept the feasts after the days of Christ for a considerable period of time. They knew God's command to keep the Holy Days was not for national Israel only.

The Bible does not say Israel did not keep the Holy Days in the wilderness. There was no need to harvest grain in order to properly count Pentecost. The manner of the count was already known, so it could be properly counted and observed in the wilderness as a matter of course, irrespective of a harvest. Just like today, we do not harvest firstfruits in order to properly count Pentecost. The idea that a Bible command alone establishes a day of worship fails when one considers the weekly Sabbath. There is no command to observe the weekly Sabbath until we read it in Exodus, chapter sixteen, yet Sabbatarians rely on Genesis, chapter two, for their authority to keep the Sabbath. As for the matter of the Holy Days' not being referred to as holy in the Pentateuch, notice Leviticus 23:2: "Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts." Not even the weekly Sabbath is referred to as holy until Exodus 16:2.

### **Colossians 2:16**

Some argue, according to Colossians 2:16, that the feasts are a "shadow law" and cannot be separated from the meat and drink offerings mentioned in this same verse. Also, according to Galatians 3:19, that the feasts were a part of the "added" sacrificial law and have already served their purpose; that Abraham and others offered sacrifices but did not keep the feast days; that the book of Leviticus, the priestly manual, is not transferable to Gentiles since the feasts had their beginning with the Old Covenant and ceased at the cross; that Moses' economy was operationally annulled at Golgotha. They argue that Christians have been made "to die to the law" through the body of Christ; that Jesus Christ has freed us from slavery, including the law of Moses; that carnal worship and ancestral memorials do not bring salvation, but rather serve to blind the mind to spiritual needs; and, finally, that it is presumptuous to place Israelitish laws and traditions into the totally polarized administration of Jesus Christ.

As noted above, Colossians 2:14–17 is a text often referred to in order to repudiate God's Holy Days. This text is interpreted to mean that Christ nailed the law to the cross—thus, God's Holy Days are done away.

The text says: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross . . . . Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come: but the body (is) of Christ."

Let us notice what *A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich, has to say about the meaning of the expression "handwriting of ordinances." On page 889, this lexicon states that "handwriting of ordinances" means "a (hand-written) document, specif. a certificate of indebtedness, bond . . . the bond that stood against us."

It was the bond or debt against us that was blotted out and nailed to the cross. But the bond or debt of what?

Colossians 2:14 states that it was the bond or debt of ordinances. "Ordinances" is from the Greek word *dogmasin*—meaning "dogmas." The same word is found in another form in verse twenty, where it is also translated "ordinances." What are these ordinances? The word "ordinance" means "decree, ordinance, decision, command." So the particular debt or bond that was against us came about as a result of decree, ordinance, decision, or command. But what decree, ordinance, decision, or command?

Note what verses eight and twenty-two tell us: "Philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, rudiments of the world, commandments and doctrines of men"! The ordinances that were against us were those ordinances and commandments of men which caused us to go contrary to God's law, and which brought upon all mankind the death penalty—the debt we owe for breaking God's commandments! This *debt* is what Christ blotted out by His death! He paid the penalty we owe—the debt we owe—for violating God's commandments!

This is why Paul continues in verse sixteen to say, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." The phrase "in respect of" means "part" in the original Greek. See under *meros* (*Greek Analytical Lexicon*, by Harper, p. 264). The translation could just as well read, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in part [Bullinger: "in taking part"] of an Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Verse seventeen states, "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (is) of Christ." The word "is," in verse seventeen, is not in the original. What Paul is stating here is that it is the Body of Christ (the church) which judges the Christian. But what does Paul mean when he says the church judges?

The word "judge" is from the Greek word *krino*. Besides meaning "judge or condemn," it means "to consider, to prefer" (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich, pp. 452–453). The obvious intention of Paul's statement, in Colossians 2:16–17, is that one must be careful not to offend his brother—relative to what he eats or drinks on those public occasions (feasts) where individual conduct is noticeable (see also I Corinthians 8:8–13; 10:31–33).

God's Holy Days are foreshadows of things to come. They depict the plan of salvation. There are major events yet to be fulfilled before this plan will be complete. The Holy Days were not "nailed to the cross" by the death of Christ—or else Paul, writing to the

Colossians thirty years after the crucifixion, would not have said they are shadows of things to come. Colossians 2:14–17 does not say the Holy Days were nailed to the cross. This text says, by Christ's death the *penalty* we deserve for breaking God's commandments was nailed to the cross.

To be judged, in the context of Colossians, chapter two, means that one has a responsibility—as a Christian—not to cast a stumbling block before his brother, in respect to eating and drinking. Therefore, in the sense that one's conduct is regulated by what one's brother might think, one is judged by him. This is why Paul said that he would not eat flesh while the world stood, if it would cause his brother to stumble.

Paul addresses the question of eating and drinking, in the context of the Holy Days, because man-made dogmas—"touch not, taste not, handle not"—were so deeply ingrained in some. And due to past teaching and experience, eating and drinking by a Christian, without taking this problem into consideration, could very well cause a brother to stumble. Paul warned the Christians (at Colossae) to be careful, lest Christian liberty become the reason to cause others to stumble. See, for example, I Corinthians 8:9.

The idea that the entire "Jewish system" was a shadow of things to come is not substantiated by Scripture. Hebrews 9:10 clearly states which laws were temporary. There is no text in the Bible, apart from Hebrews 9:10, which specifically states what was abrogated, as far as the sacrificial system is concerned.

It was meat and drink sacrifices and offerings, diverse washings, and regulations for the body which were abrogated. Since the Levitical priesthood was to be changed (Hebrews 7:12), there was no longer the necessity for the many requirements which were associated with it. The blowing of the ram's horn on the Day of Atonement is not a requirement today since it was a priestly responsibility.

Since the Israelites were required to build booths in which to "dwell" during the Feast of Tabernacles, some have wondered why this is not done today. The word "dwell" in the Hebrew is the same word translated as "sit." There is no proof, from the Bible, that the Israelites dwelled (lived and slept) in booths made of branches for the eight-day period (Leviticus 23:42). The inference from Leviticus 23:40 is that boughs of trees and branches were used in rejoicing, not in dwelling.

Nehemiah 8:16–17 does state that the Jews built booths and sat in them. These booths depicted a temporary condition, since man's sojourn on this earth is also temporary. The requirement to build booths (not places of residence but indications of man's temporary circumstances)—at the Feast of Tabernacles—was compelled by civil legislation (Nehemiah 8:15). The idea that one cannot keep the Feast of Tabernacles unless one builds a booth (as a place of residence) is not supported by Christ's example in the New Testament. Christ's



example illustrates the meaning of the Old Testament requirement. Jesus kept the Feast of Tabernacles, but He did not build a booth.

The argument that the Holy Days should not be kept today, because they must be observed in conjunction with a Levitical priesthood, does not bear up under Scriptural examination. Hebrews, chapter seven, tells us the Levitical priesthood was changed to that of Melchisedek. The priesthood now has Jesus Christ as its High Priest. The Apostle Paul said that the New Testament ministers are the ministers of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 6:4).

Did Christ and His New Testament ministers keep God's Holy Days? Absolutely!

Holy Day observance, for Christians, is not predicated upon the book of Leviticus or the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood did not function in a tabernacle configuration, with its associated sacrifices, until the second year. The Holy Days were given before the Old Covenant and at least one year before the sacrificial system began. Those who say that by keeping God's Holy Days one mixes the Levitical priesthood with that of Melchisedek obviously have not studied the New Testament. Christ, the New Testament ministry, and the New Testament church kept God's Holy Days.

The idea that the Israelites, only, should keep God's Holy Days is disproved by the fact that the Corinthians were instructed by Paul to keep the feast. Also, other New Testament references show the Holy Days were being kept in the Gentile churches (I Thessalonians 2:13–14, Galatians 2:2, 7, 10). God is not a respecter of persons, and all who are called by Him are expected to obey (Acts 10:35).

Those who say God's Holy Days are done away, because they were fulfilled in Christ—while at the same time supporting observance of the weekly Sabbath—need to ask themselves why the same principle does not apply to the weekly Sabbath. If they maintain that the Sabbath is a type of the Millennium, then what do the Holy Days represent? If the Holy Days are done away, because they were "fulfilled in Christ," then so is the weekly Sabbath.

One fact is absolutely certain: The Holy Days, as well as the weekly Sabbath, were observed by the New Testament church after everything was done away. Both Christ and Paul kept the Sabbath and Holy Days. And what was true of them was true of the rest of the apostles. Peter said that Christ is our example (I Peter 2:21). John said that those who call themselves Christian must walk as Jesus walked (I John 2:6). Paul said to follow him as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). He told the Philippians to do the things they saw him do (Philippians 4:9). Paul told the Corinthians to keep the feast (I Corinthians 5:8).

What is clear from the New Testament is that the laws and commandments of God, as well as the Sabbath and Holy Days, continued to be observed by the New Testament church.

It was the sacrificial law, with its various sacrifices and offerings, that was abrogated. This was the added law—which was to be temporary in nature. It was given as a "schoolmaster" to point to Christ. It was given as a reminder of sin, because Israel failed to live up to even the minimum physical requirements of obedience. It was because of sin that Jesus Christ had to die. If by Christ's death the laws and the commandments of God are done away—including the Sabbath and Holy Days—then Christ's death was in vain. For it was because of the violations against God's law that Christ had to die in the first place! If the Law of God is done away, then Christ destroyed the reason for His own death. He, in effect, destroyed what He instituted. And if He destroyed what He instituted, He changed. And if He changed, He is no different from man. But, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He does not change! (Malachi 3:6).

The idea that it took the apostles thirty years to unlearn what they had been taught by Christ—and that truth comes by "progressive revelation," which is totally contrary to what was received initially—defies the imagination. Jesus said that man must live by every word of God—not by the latest chronological writer of the New Testament. It is the entirety of God's word that the Christian must put to practice in his life (Matthew 4:4). The idea that "progressive revelation" alters previous revelation is utterly without Biblical substantiation. Not only does this concept make the Bible contradictory, it makes the individual superior to God—because each person is responsible only to himself regarding what portions of the Bible he will obey. And what he decides to obey will be based on his own whims and interpretations. No, man must live by every word of God—and the Holy Days are a part of that word!

Since the plan of salvation did not commence until Christ came to introduce the New Covenant relationship, it is clear the entire New Covenant is represented by the Holy Days. The Holy Days were not fulfilled in Christ. They are foreshadows of things to come—the yet unfulfilled plan of salvation, to be completed in a New Covenant relationship. How can the death of Christ nullify the Holy Days? On the contrary, the death of Christ substantiates them.

### **No Sacrifices Originally**

As stated earlier, the sacrifices were not a part of the original law of Moses. God said, through the prophet Jeremiah, "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, 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" (Jeremiah 7:22–23).

But what was Israel's response? "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:24).

It was because of Israel's rebellion within the first year that sacrifices were added. This is made plain in the book of Exodus. Israel arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai the third month after they had departed from Egypt (Exodus 19:1). An examination of Exodus, chapters nineteen through twenty-four, clearly proves sacrifices were not a part of the original covenant. Exodus, chapter twenty-five through thirty, lists the instructions for the building of the tabernacle, as well as priestly instructions. Chapter thirty-two shows the terrible sin Israel committed during Moses' absence. Here we see Israel's inability to obey God. But it was not until the second year after Israel departed from Egypt that the tabernacle was raised up and the sacrificial system commenced (Exodus 40:1, 17).

Because of Israel's transgressions, a law was "added" (Galatians 3:19). This added law was the sacrificial law intended to remind Israel of her failure to live up to the terms of the Old Covenant (Hebrews 10:1–4). It involved not only laborious sacrifices, but also various washings, rites, and ceremonies (Acts 15:10). It was intended for a limited time period (Hebrews 9:10, margin). There is no mention of sin offerings involving the people of Israel until Leviticus 4:2–12. See *Bible Dictionary*, by William Smith, article "sacrifices," where the author sets forth the patriarchal practice of presenting peace and burnt offerings—sin offerings being explicitly set forth for the first time in the book of Leviticus. Thus, in logical sequence, the book of Leviticus follows the book of Exodus.

Because Israel failed to live up to the requirements of the Old Covenant, the sacrificial law was instituted. And though obedience to God was limited to the "letter of the law," Israel as a whole was incapable of even that limited obedience (Deuteronomy 5:29, Joshua 24:14–15).

There were no spiritual promises attached to the Old Covenant. Salvation was not offered as a part of the agreement. Upon condition of Israel's obedience, the promises were physical blessings and national security only (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28). The promise of salvation is found nowhere in the entire agreement. Nor is the forgiveness of sins. Paul says, in the book of Hebrews, that the sacrificial system did not serve as a method of expiating sins; it merely served as a reminder of sin, looking forward to the time when the spiritual promises would come and individual sins could be forgiven (Hebrews 10:1–10). Remember, the feasts of God were introduced before the Old Covenant, although they became a part of it. But so did the weekly Sabbath. The added law spoken of in Galatians 3:19 was the sacrificial law, which began in the second year after Israel left Egypt. This is why the prophet Jeremiah said, "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, 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. But they hearkened not. . . ." (Jeremiah 7:22–24). And Ezekiel said, "Wherefore I gave them also [up to] statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live" (Ezekiel 20:25).

It was the sacrificial law *only* that was done away. The argument that Holy Day observance is predicated solely upon Leviticus, chapter twenty-three, has no validity. All the Holy Days enumerated in Leviticus, chapter twenty-three, are found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

While the book of Leviticus concerns itself primarily with Levitical considerations, it is not limited to such. The book of Leviticus enumerates the general requirements the Levites were obligated to fulfill. But it includes many other laws which were requirements for all the people. If the idea that the book of Leviticus is for the Levites only is valid, then only the Levites obeyed the laws found in the book of Leviticus. Thus, the rest of the people of Israel were free to do as they pleased. Yet, many commands in the book of Leviticus were given to the children of Israel. Notice, for example, Leviticus 11:2 and 12:2. Consider also Matthew 4:4.

The Bible clearly explains, in the New Testament, which laws are done away—with respect to the book of Leviticus. If the book of Leviticus is not valid for Christians today, then it is perfectly permissible to commit incest and to indulge in sexual intercourse with near relatives (Leviticus 18:1–17). Furthermore, the following are permissible: sacrificing children to Molech (Leviticus 18:21), practicing homosexuality and bestiality (Leviticus 18:22–23; 20:13–16), breaking the Sabbath (Leviticus 19:3), practicing idolatry (Leviticus 19:4), cheating your hired hand (Leviticus 19:13), slandering and gossiping (Leviticus 19:16), hating your brother (Leviticus 19:17), engaging in witchcraft (Leviticus 19:26, 31), prostituting your daughter (Leviticus 19:29), cursing your parents (Leviticus 20:9), and expecting blessings for disobedience and cursings for obedience (Leviticus 26).

The Holy Days did not originate with the Levites or with the book of Leviticus. The Levites began to function, as far as the sacrificial system is concerned, one year after Israel came out of the land of Egypt. This is because the sacrificial system did not begin until that time. To repeat, the idea that because the sacrifices are done away, God's Holy Days are also done away, is not a valid argument. We shall later see what, specifically, was abrogated by the death of Christ. Suffice it to say at this point, a sacrifice or a ritual is not a day. It is an activity which is done *on* a day—in fact, as far as the sacrificial law was concerned, on every day of the year! (Numbers 28:3). Shall we now assume that because the sacrifices are done away—so is every day of the year? The abrogation of the sacrificial system has no bearing on the validity of holy time. There is much in the book of Leviticus which applies to Christians today.

Also, let us not assume that because the temple was destroyed in AD 70, God's Sabbath and Holy Days were obliterated. What was obliterated was the sacrificial system. Nowhere in the entirety of the Bible is to be found a statement which says God's Sabbath and Holy Days are done away.

It is obvious that those duties which were given specifically to the Levites are not to be done today. It was the duty of the Levites to blow the shofar at set times. It was the duty of the Levites to perform the sacrifices. But it was the duty of the people to bring the wavesheaf for the priest to offer. Since Christ is represented by the wavesheaf, this obligation is no longer required. But this has no bearing on the observance of the day of Pentecost, because Pentecost continued to be observed by Christians long after the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:1–2; 20:16).

The idea that the Israelites did not observe the Holy Days until they entered the land of Canaan is a supposition. The inference from the Bible is that Israel attempted to obey God during the forty years in the wilderness—but only in their self-willed way (Psalm 81:10–12, Amos 5:25–26). It was God's desire that Israel obey Him; but because they rebelled, God gave them up to their own desires and destroyed the first generation in the wilderness.

It is true that the annual harvest seasons fulfilled the intent of the physical types with respect to the Holy Days, but Holy Day observance is not predicated upon producing a crop! The requirement to observe God's Holy Days long preceded crop production—as far as the nation of Israel was concerned. Neither should we assume, because Israel's land and crops were cursed in later years (due to national sins), that Holy Day observance was no longer required. The Jews knew better—and still continue to observe the Holy Days to this day.

God was determined not to allow that second generation which came out of Egypt to continue in the footsteps of their fathers. They were required to comply with all of God's laws and commands. God did not allow them to neglect obedience to Him—circumcision included (Joshua 5). That first generation had neglected to circumcise their children—even though they themselves had fulfilled the requirement (Joshua 5:2).

Hebrews 9:10 says it was the sacrifices, washings, rites, and ceremonies which were to be done away. There were elaborate ceremonies on God's Holy Days. Some, confused over the distinction between a rite and a Holy Day, believe the Holy Days are abrogated. The offering of sacrifices, the ceremonial washings, the blowing of the shofar, the heaving of the wavesheaf, and the laying of hands on the Azazel goat are not Holy Days. They are rites and ceremonies. They are done away but God's Holy Days are not. The idea that we have been made dead to the Mosaic law by Christ's death (Romans 7:4) is a complete misunderstanding of Paul's statement. Paul tells us that the death of Christ freed us from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1–2). Death, which has befallen all mankind because of sin (Romans 5:12), hangs over our heads. By Christ's sacrifice and our acceptance of it, along with repentance, we are free from the penalty of the law—death.

## Holy Days Ordained Forever

Those who oppose the Holy Days tell us that, while the Bible says we are to observe the feasts forever, the same thing is said about a number of other "ritualistic laws." All these ritualistic laws, including the feasts, have served their purpose and are not in effect today. While the Holy Days were kept "in their generations," the special work of the generations of Israel came to an end with Christ's sacrifice. "Forever in your generations" means until the death of Christ.

In answer to this argument, consider the following: A number of texts in the Old Testament clearly state the Holy Days were ordained forever (Exodus 12:14, 17, 24; 13:10, Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:21, 31, 41). What needs to be made plain is the meaning of the word "forever," as applied to Holy Days. Exodus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 15:16–17 make the Bible usage plain. Both of these texts show that "forever," in the Old Testament, means as long as the factors involved continue to exist.

In the case of the Hebrew servant, should he choose to remain with his master forever, it is obvious that the termination point was at the death of either the servant or the master. The factors involved here continue to exist as long as both parties continue to exist.

Those texts which use the term "forever," with respect to the duties of the Levites, should be evaluated in the same way. The factors involving the Levites are: (1) an authorized sacrificial system which has God's approval, and (2) men who are authorized to perform those duties required by that system. Since the New Testament clearly states that God abrogated the sacrificial system, one of the main factors involving the perpetuity of the system was abolished. Therefore, "forever" in relationship to the Levites was for a limited duration.

The factors involving the Holy Days are two: (1) day and night periods in a regular cyclical pattern so that the Holy Days can be accurately discerned, and (2) human beings on earth to observe those days. Both of these factors still exist. So, "forever"—in relationship to the Holy Days—still exists.

What was done away in relationship to the Holy Days was the sacrificial requirements on those days—not the days themselves. Some physical requirements which were not a part of the sacrificial system are still valid today to some degree. Circumcision is an example. It was to be a covenant between God and the seed of Abraham for all generations (Genesis 17:9–14). Yet, today, physical circumcision is no longer a requirement. But circumcision of the heart is; thus, the requirement for circumcision remains! (Romans 2:28–29).

The term "forever in your generations" applies as long as there are generations of Israelites alive. Are there Israelites alive today? Of course! Then there are generations

available to keep the Holy Days and indeed the recognized Israelites—the Jews—keep the Holy Days. That they did not end with the death of Christ is proven by the fact that the Holy Days were kept by the apostles and the early New Testament church and they are kept by the Jews today. Furthermore, if the term "forever in your generations" terminated at the death of Christ, then neither the Sabbath day nor any of the rest of God's laws should be kept today. But the fact that the Law of God, the Sabbath, and the Holy Days were kept by the New Testament church is sufficient to substantiate their requirement for us today.

## **The New Covenant**

Another set of arguments advanced against the Holy Days is that the Old and New Covenants are individually complete packages, totally separate and governable apart from one another. The argument goes, if the Old Testament worship had been true and acceptable, why were orders given for change? The worship of the Jews was not true worship in spite of their zeal. Those presently keeping Israel's days would need roasted lamb, bitter herbs, sacrifices, wavesheaf offerings, trumpet blowing, expiatory rites with two goats, tree boughs, temporary dwellings—all taking place at Jerusalem. The argument continues that Ezra 3:2–6, Nehemiah 10:29–34, and II Chronicles 35:10–12 all prove the feast days were written in the law of Moses. They conclude that Jesus Christ did not practice the feast days, let alone teach obedience to them.

The answer to the above paragraph is as follows: The promise of the Messiah (Genesis 3:15) foretold the establishment of the New Covenant. Had the Old Covenant been the summation of God's intention, it would have encompassed the fullness of the spiritual blessings and promises found in the New. But Christ did not appear until approximately 1,500 years after the establishment of the Old. Although only a handful of the Covenant people continued to maintain a semblance of the Old Covenant relationship, it was their own prophets whom they neglected to hear. For, their prophets said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:31–33).

The New Covenant, like the Old, is an Israelitish covenant. Its final confirmation was established with Israel and Judah. But to this day, the people of Israel—as a whole—have not yet entered into the New Covenant relationship (Romans 11:25). It is given only to those who are called and have become "the Israel of God" (Acts 2:38–39, Galatians 6:16). It did not include Gentiles until years after its establishment (Acts 11:18; 10:45). It was given to

Israel first (Acts 10:36–37), then later made available to the Gentiles. But even then, Gentiles must become spiritual Israelites before they can be included (Romans 2:28–29; 11:13–24, Galatians 3:27–29, Ephesians 2:11–14, 18–19).

When the prophets spoke of the New Covenant, they foresaw its spiritual expansion relative to the law. Isaiah wrote, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21). Both terms and promises of the New Covenant are greatly expanded. The terms, or requirements, are summarized in the Sermon on the Mount. No longer is one held accountable for breaking the letter of the law only. One is now held accountable for violating the intent of the law (Matthew 5:21–32). The promises given to Israel under the Old Covenant were physical, but the promises under the New Covenant go far beyond that and include eternal life (Matthew 5:3–10).

Israel of old could not keep God's Law, even in the letter. But the fault was not with God or with the Covenant. The fault was with the people (Hebrews 8:8). The New Covenant was given to correct that fault. The inability of physical Israel to keep the law has been rectified by the gift of God's Holy Spirit to spiritual Israel (Galatians 5:22–24, Hebrews 8:10). Those converted have the capability of obeying not only the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law (Galatians 4:24–25, Romans 8:1–2, 4, 14). This is why the prophet wrote, ". . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33, II Corinthians 3:3).

The purpose of the New Covenant, then, was to magnify the Old. Jesus came to "fill it full." "Fulfill" in Matthew 5:17 is the Greek *pleroo*, meaning to bring to full expression (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich, p. 677).

Jesus said, ". . . except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees observed the letter of the law. They did not have the capability to keep the law spiritually. Jesus expounded how the law must be kept, spiritually, in order to exceed the "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment [the Old Covenant did not impute a penalty for anger]: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause [Greek: 'lightly'] shall be in danger of the judgment . . . (Matthew 5:21–22).

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery [the Old Covenant did not impute a penalty for lusting]: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matthew 5:27–28).



It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement [the Old Covenant did not impute a penalty for divorce]: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matthew 5:31–32).

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy [the Old Covenant did not impute a penalty for hating]. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . . (Matthew 5:43–45).

The entire Sermon on the Mount clearly shows Jesus did "magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21). He brought it up to the spiritual level which God intended from the beginning. He "filled it full." And now, with the help of the Holy Spirit, man is capable of obeying it in its spiritual intent (Hebrews 8:10, Galatians 5:24). The New Covenant indeed magnified the Old! The New Covenant is not a "separate package" from the Old. The New Covenant is the expansion of the Old Covenant.

### **Holy Days in New Testament**

There is absolutely no way to deny that the Holy Days were kept by Christ and the New Testament church. Christian disciples knew God's Holy Days should be kept because they were given to the church. After the resurrection of Christ, those called of God from the "congregation in the wilderness" became the New Testament church. Christ's example in keeping the Holy Days was followed by the apostles because it was obvious to them that those who follow Christ are Christian (I John 2:6). Christ not only kept the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, but the Feast of Tabernacles as well (Luke 2:41–42, John 7:8–10, 14, 37). His keeping of the Passover and changing the symbols to the bread and wine is ample proof that *types* may change, but the day itself does not! (Matthew 26:26–28). Christ's example in keeping God's Holy Days demonstrates that He knew the Holy Days should be kept as a unit, and that Holy Day observance was not limited to observing the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, only. This is why the Christians kept Pentecost (Acts 2:1–2).

If Christ is not our example, then what is He? The concept that His life was the manifestation of the "tail end" of Judaism and was not an example for us to follow is a blatant denial of the Scriptures! (I John 2:6, I Peter 2:21). The idea that "under the law" represents obedience to the totality of Judaism is clearly disproved by the fact that Christ offered no sacrifices. "Under the law" means that Christ was subject to the law of death; that

is, He was God in the flesh and died for the sins of mankind. But His manner of life was an example for us to follow (I John 2:6). Ridiculous arguments which state that if we follow Him, we should also observe all the first-century customs He did—such as riding an ass, being circumcised, and wearing a robe and sandals—may placate the consciences of those who have already determined to repudiate God's Holy Days, but they are not sound and do not reflect intellectual honesty. Common sense dictates that we live according to the customs of our time, as long as those customs do not violate God's Law!

Those who ask, "Where is an example of Christ's organizing a festival?"—as proof that Christians should not keep God's Holy Days—need only refer to Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Christ was the God of the Old Testament (I Corinthians 10:4). It was He who organized the Holy Days and gave them to Israel!

Those who feel that the Holy Days mentioned in the New Testament are "weak proofs" for our observing them today are relying upon a "weak argument." The fact remains that the Holy Days are found in the New Testament, and they were being observed by Christians! If man is to live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4), then it is incumbent upon Christians to follow the New Testament examples of Holy Day observance!

Those who argue that Christ "reeducated" His apostles on how to keep the Sabbath, but excluded the Holy Days in this instruction, need to realize that what applied to the Sabbath also applied to the Holy Days! The Holy Days were observed as the weekly Sabbath, with the exception that food could be prepared. But the principles Christ gave, relative to the Sabbath, applied equally to the Holy Days.

It is not adding to God's Word to observe the Holy Days. They are found in the New Testament, as well as in the Old. One does not add to God's Word by observing what is clearly shown to be His Word. It is those who refuse to obey what is clearly shown by Biblical example to be Scriptural, and who teach others to disobey this instruction, who are adding to God's Word!

The argument—advocated by those who observe the weekly Sabbath—that there is no New Testament command to keep God's Holy Days, and therefore the Holy Days should not be kept, need to realize there is no New Testament command to keep the weekly Sabbath either!

One of the most maligned areas of Bible understanding is how God's Truth should be administered under the terms of the New Covenant. God's Law during the Old Testament period was enforced by a civil government—the nation of Israel, and later the Jews. The approach was authoritarian because there was a civil government to back up the laws. But this is no longer the case. Under the terms of the New Covenant, obedience is required from the heart—not from fear of punishment by a civil government. The New Testament

approach is not that of forced obedience, but rather of willing compliance from the heart. This is the reason that there is no authoritative approach to God's Laws in the New Testament. Obedience must come from the heart, not from fear of government.

But, the tragic mistake made by thousands of professing Christians is that since there is no authoritarian approach to God's commands in the New Testament, then there is no law to be obeyed. Nothing could be further from the truth! What must be realized is that man must live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). Man must live by the laws enumerated in the Old Testament, with the exception of the sacrificial law and certain regulations for the body which have been done away. The motivation behind a Christian's obedience is not to be predicated upon an authoritarian stand, but rather upon a willingness to live by every word of God as illustrated by New Testament examples. The laws of God in the New Covenant relationship are the same as in the Old. The only difference is that the authoritarian approach and the kind of enforcement found in the Old Covenant are not to be a part of the New (John 1:17, II Corinthians 1:24). The assumption that because the New Testament omits many of the direct commands found in the Old Testament there is no requirement to keep these commands today is one of the greatest errors committed by modern Christianity! The burden of proof lies clearly upon the shoulders of those who reject the New Testament examples of Holy Day observance. Those who say Acts 20:6 is no proof that the Philippians were observing the Days of Unleavened Bread must be able to demonstrate that they were not. Those who say the texts in the New Testament which mention the Holy Days were time demarcations *only*, must be able to prove their argument. Christians today who observe God's Holy Days do not refer to pagan festivals in marking months and seasons of the year; they refer to God's Holy Days. Why should we assume that Christians during the first century were different?

The claim that part of Acts 18:21 ("I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem") is not a part of the original Greek and is a later Western interpolation can be easily disproved. This verse, in its entirety, is included in the Received Text—the inspired Greek text handed down to the Greek-speaking world by the original apostles. Ninety-five percent of all existing manuscripts contain it. The five percent of the manuscripts which omit it are those copies which originated in Egypt or the Latin world. There is absolutely no reason to doubt its authenticity as a part of the original Word of God. There is no legitimate reason to remove it from the New Testament. The only reason—illegitimate—is to justify the rejection of a New Testament passage which is embarrassing to those who do not want to obey God and observe His Holy Days!

Scholars are in much disagreement concerning Acts 18:18. The argument advanced by some is that the only reason Paul kept this feast—the Feast of Tabernacles (Acts 18:21)—was because he was under a vow. Scholars disagree concerning the antecedent in Acts 18:18. Many feel the antecedent should be Aquila—because his name immediately precedes the clause, "for he had a vow." The truth is that Acts 18:18 cannot be used to prove

that Paul kept the feast because he was under a vow. Scholars are in doubt as to who was under the vow, and there is no proof that the verse has any relationship to God's Holy Days!

As we shall see, there is ample evidence that the Gentiles in Asia Minor kept God's Holy Days and continued to observe them for some time after the first century. References to the Holy Days in the New Testament include Acts 2; 12:3; 18:21; 20:6, 16; 27:9, I Corinthians 5:7–8; 11:20–26; 16:8. As mentioned earlier, the argument that these texts are time indicators is a weak argument. The burden of proof is upon those who advocate this concept. It is neither logical nor sound to assume that "Jewish Holy Days" would serve as time indicators to those who paid no heed whatsoever to their significance.

Acts 21:24–26 is cited as "proof" that Paul offered sacrifices while keeping some of the festivals. The reasoning is that since the sacrificial system was abrogated, anything Paul did in conjunction with offering sacrifices has no bearing on Christian conduct. The inference is drawn that Christians should not keep the Holy Days. In addition, it is assumed that Paul really did not observe God's Holy Days. He merely attended.

Acts 21:24–26 does not say Paul offered sacrifices. It says Paul defrayed the expenses of four men who were under a vow (most likely a Nazaritic vow). It was considered an act of piety to defray the expenses required of Nazarites, at the completion of their vow.

Paul did not merely attend the festivals. Acts 18:21 says, referring to a statement made by Paul, ". . . I must by all means *keep* this feast that cometh in Jerusalem. . . ." "Keep" is the Greek *poiesai*, from *poieo*, meaning "to keep, celebrate" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*, by Harper, p. 332). In Acts 20:16, Paul states, ". . . he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." "To be" is the Greek *genesthai*, from *ginomai*. The *Analytical Greek Lexicon* by Harper (p. 79) says that the meaning of the word with respect to festivals is "to be kept, celebrated, solemnized as festivals." It would have been purposeless for Paul to have attended the festivals if he did not keep them. And if there were no need for Christians to keep the Holy Days, Paul certainly set an improper example—one that would have most surely led to confusion among the disciples. Those who say Paul did not keep the feasts find it difficult to explain what Paul was doing attending the feasts—for he did not both keep and not keep them.

I Corinthians 5:8 is taken by some to have a symbolic meaning only. It is reasoned that since First Corinthians, chapter eleven, gives instructions on how to observe the Lord's Supper (Passover), the instruction in First Corinthians, chapter five, could not apply to keeping a literal feast. This is because the epistle would have arrived too late to enable the Christians to prepare for the Lord's Supper—if the Days of Unleavened Bread were literally being kept. (At the time Paul wrote the epistle—see I Corinthians 5:8.) It is believed by some that the clause "let us keep the feast" (I Corinthians 5:8) should be translated "let us be keeping festival" and should be taken symbolically.

The expression "let us keep the feast" contains the Greek word *heortazomen*, ("let us keep a feast"). It is the first person plural present subjunctive and should be translated "we should celebrate" (the feast). See the *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 148, and the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by Berry. This text is not talking about *when* the feast should be kept, but rather that *it should* be kept! In addition, it would be extremely difficult—if not impossible—to pinpoint the time the epistle arrived at Corinth. So, the idea that there is a contradiction with respect to time between chapters five and eleven is, at best, an elusive contention. I Corinthians 5:8 states, "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." Note, this text does not say *not* to keep the feast. Since in the Bible leaven represents sin, the spiritual application is apparent. Just as God's Word tells us to put leaven out of our homes (Exodus 12:15), Christians are to put sin out of their lives. Thus, as verse seven states, being "unleavened" means Christians are to put sin out of their lives continually. But this text does not say, nor does any other text in the entire Bible say, that this Holy Day or any other Holy Day is abrogated!

The New Covenant is a continuation of the Old, expanded to a spiritual plane. Paul explains this in Second Corinthians, chapter three. Old Testament worship was intended to lead Israel to Christ. The sacrifices and rituals all pointed to Christ, so they were perfectly acceptable until Christ died. The problem with the worship of the Jews during the time of Christ was their refusal to accept Christ and the fact that Judaism had replaced the law of Moses. Ezra 3:2–6 simply tells us that the captives who returned from Babylon built an altar, according to the command of the law of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 12:5–6. Nehemiah 10:29–34 indicates a special fee used for offerings during the Sabbath, new moons, and set feasts. II Chronicles 35:10–12 merely points out that special burnt offerings were set aside during the Passover season. The matter of including roasted lamb or bitter herbs, sacrifices, the wave sheaf, trumpet blowing, and so forth, at Holy Day services only in Jerusalem will be addressed shortly. Suffice it to say here that Christ fulfilled the sacrificial law by His death and is not specifically the antitype of any Holy Day. He is represented by the Passover lamb; the Passover itself is not a Holy Day.

### **All Scripture Valuable**

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Old Testament is God's Word. Paul wrote Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (II Timothy 3:15). The Scriptures to which Paul referred were the Old Testament. It is in the Old Testament that the commands of God are made precise. Those who live by every word of God know that it is necessary for the Christian to live by what is recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The argument that one does not have to obey God unless there is a clear New Testament command is invalid. When Jesus said that man must live by every word of God, He included what is written in the Old Testament Scriptures. All Scripture—and that includes the Old Testament passages as well as the New—is given for a purpose. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Those who accept only New Testament commands reject God's Word. Jesus said that those who reject His Word reject Him (John 12:48)—and those who reject Him will be rejected by the Father in heaven (Matthew 10:33).

The Old Testament passages were written for our learning (Romans 15:4). The instruction contained in them should be applied by all true Christians. It was Jesus Christ who was the God of the Old Testament (I Corinthians 10:4). Therefore, the Old Testament passages are His recorded word. Jesus said that man must live by every word of God! But, the Christian need not be concerned with those portions the New Testament describes as being specifically abrogated. This includes the sacrifices and various regulations for the body. The remainder of God's Word should be obeyed. Christ was the fulfillment of the sacrifices, but He is the embodiment of the totality of God. God's Word represents His spiritual perpetuity and stands forever. Christ, therefore, represents that which was changed by His death as well as that which remains (II Corinthians 3:11).

To repeat, the New Testament is clear regarding what was abrogated, or "nailed to the cross." Hebrews 9:10 states that it was "meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." The margin renders "ordinances" as "rites" or "ceremonies." *A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich (p. 197), says that "carnal ordinances" means "regulations for the body." It was—at the time of reformation—meat and drink sacrifices and offerings, various washings, and regulations for the body that were abrogated. The weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days are not sacrifices, washings, regulations for the body, rites, or ceremonies. They are days set aside as holy time. Nowhere does the Bible state that the weekly Sabbath or God's Holy Days are done away!

It is a misinterpretation of Hebrews 9:10—as well as one or two other texts—which has led many to conclude erroneously that the Law of God, including the weekly Sabbath and Holy Days, has been abrogated. The assumption is that Jesus nailed the commandments of God, including the Holy Days, to the cross. Today, no one would argue against the idea that the sacrifices have been abrogated—but what about God's Holy Days?

## Does Galatians 4:9–10 Abrogate God's Law?

Was Paul's comment in Galatians 4:9–10 a reaction to infiltrating Judaism, which included observance of the feast days? Is it true that those who keep the feast days of Israel show a lack of spiritual understanding, as revealed to the churches of Galatia?

Let us notice Galatians 4:9–11.

This text is interpreted to mean that the Galatians were keeping the law of Moses. Since the law of Moses included the Holy Days, then the Holy Days should not be kept. The text reads, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, 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. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:9–11).

What does this text really say?

Keep in mind that the epistle to the Galatians was written primarily to Gentiles. While the churches of Galatia were made up of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 13:14, 42–43; 14:1–4), it is clear, from verse eight of Galatians, chapter four, that Paul is addressing the Gentiles. Verse eight could not apply to the Jews, because it was to them God committed the oracles (Romans 3:2). It was the Gentiles who had not known God previously. They had been enslaved to the "weak and beggarly elements." The idea that the "weak and beggarly elements" refers to the law of Moses is strictly an interpretation. According to *A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich, the meaning of "weak and beggarly elements" is much disputed. Some scholars believe it refers to elements of learning, fundamental principals—applying it to elementary forms of religion, Jewish and Gentile (which have been superseded by the new revelation of Christ). Other scholars believe it means elemental spirits, which were associated with the physical elements. Still other scholars take it to mean heavenly bodies (signs of the Zodiac), since these bodies were regarded as personal beings and were given divine honors (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich, p. 776). This tells us that no one completely understands the meaning of the expression "weak and beggarly elements." Since the authoritative lexicon by Arndt and Gingrich states that the meaning is open to several interpretations, this text cannot be used to prove Paul was referring to God's Holy Days!

Notice also the word "again," found twice in Galatians 4:9. These Gentiles were turning again to "weak and beggarly elements," desiring again to be in bondage. If these "weak and beggarly elements" were something the Gentiles were turning to again, could they be a reference to God's Law? Did these Gentiles previously believe and understand the truth of God? Of course not! It was the Jews to whom the oracles of God were committed! The oracles of God were never called "weak and beggarly elements." The only aspect of God's

oracles which could be considered burdensome was the sacrifices (Acts 15:10). If "bondage" in verse nine refers to anything, it refers to sacrifices to pagan gods. It is common knowledge that the entire Gentile world offered myriad sacrifices to pagan gods.

Also, notice the word "observe" in verse ten. According to *A Greek-English Lexicon*, page 627, the Greek word *paratereo* means to "watch closely, observe carefully . . . to watch someone to see what he does." In every instance of its usage in the New Testament, except Galatians 4:10, it means to watch closely. See also *The Word Study Concordance*, page 593; *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 306; *The Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume II, page 153. The latter states that *paratereo*, apart from Galatians 4:10, means "lie in wait for" or "watch," as the English versions have it. Galatians 4:10 means these Gentiles were watching various days, months, times, and years for various signs. The word *paratereo* here does not denote a religious observance.

But what about "days, months, times, and years?" Were they God's Sabbaths and Holy Days?

*A Greek-English Lexicon*, by Arndt and Gingrich (p. 266), states the following of *eniautos*, (year) in Galatians 4:10: "The meaning of *eniautos* in the combination *kairoi kai eniautoi* Gal 4:10 is not certain. It could be an allusion to the so-called 'sabbatical years' (Lev 25), but it may also mean certain *days of the year* [emphasis theirs] . . . as the *New Year festival*." Those who say that "days, months, times, and years" refers to God's Holy Days are simply interpreting. The meaning of "days, and months, and times, and years" is wide open to speculation, and no one can dogmatically say what it means. But one fact is certain, no one can deny that heathen nations observed many special days set aside for celebrations of one type or another. Therefore, to say "days, and months, and times, and years" refers to God's Holy Days is merely guessing!

### **Holy Days in Jerusalem Only?**

Now what about the assumption that Jerusalem is the only location where the Holy Days may be legitimately kept? That observing the Holy Days in various Gentile sites was unthinkable to the Israelites? That there is no Biblical or historical precedence for such a practice? That Gentiles were disallowed from participating in the Israelite system, not permitted to enter the sanctuary?

These questions can be answered by examining the evidence regarding the historical evolution of the synagogue. From the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by McClintock and Strong, article "synagogue," we read that Jewish sources inform us that there were synagogues in the time of the pious king Hezekiah. Although we find no trace of worship meetings in synagogues in the Old Testament, it is



probable that there were celebrations apart from the temple during the new moons and Sabbaths. During the Exile the synagogue replaced the temple. The whole history of Ezra presupposes the habit of solemn, probably periodic, meetings, and it is in this period that the institution, if not the revival, of the synagogue took place. Following the Maccabean revolt, a freer development of the synagogue parochial system took place wherever the Jews were located. Practically every town or village had one or more synagogues, as is clearly seen in many New Testament passages. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, article "synagogue," relates that after the Exile the synagogue remained and even developed as a counterpoise to the absolute sacerdotalism of the temple, an absolute necessity for the Jews who were of the Dispersion. It was to these synagogues that the Jews repaired for the Sabbath and feast days.

Philo, Agrippa, and Josephus speak of the synagogue as a regular institution; the existence of the synagogue is particularly demonstrated in the book of Acts. Wherever these synagogues were located around the world there were Gentiles who attended. These sympathetic Gentiles joined in the observance of the Sabbath, the weekly fasts, the Day of Atonement, the laws relating to food, and even the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The synagogue was the bond of union and it was there on the Sabbath and feast days that the same Scriptures were read throughout the world. While Jerusalem was regarded as the place where men could truly worship, few in the Diaspora (Dispersion) could afford the journey, and those who did so found it to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Jews of the Diaspora sent the Temple tribute to Jerusalem annually. But even in Palestine, synagogues were scattered over the entire country and it is only reasonable to conclude that their number greatly increased after the destruction of the Temple (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, by Alfred Edersheim, pp. 19, 76–77, 432).

While Gentiles were restricted from some aspects of Temple worship, "the stranger within thy gate" was free to offer burnt sacrifices—the same law applied to him as to the Israelite. The synagogue, which had become the center of Jewish worship, opened its doors widely to the pagan world and many Gentiles gladly frequented the synagogues, keeping some of the Jewish laws and customs. Some Gentiles were circumcised, some were not. Those who fully embraced the Jewish religion were called "proselytes of the covenant," and were considered "perfect Israelites" in every respect. The "proselyte of the gate," on the other hand, professed his faith in the God of Israel, and bound himself to seven precepts only (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, article "proselyte").

While the temple in Jerusalem had long been established as the seat of worship for the people of Israel, the wide dispersion of the Jews had long made obsolete the ancient laws which required the appearance of all males at the sanctuary with an offering three times in a year. Some of the Diaspora, living in remote areas, may have made the journey to Jerusalem once, but most never attended at all. Those who remained at home participated in the spirit of the feasts through the festivals of the synagogue. For the vast majority of the

Jews, not only of the Diaspora, but of Palestine as well, the synagogue had become, long before the destruction of the temple, the real seat of religious worship. Those who were unable to attend the feasts at Jerusalem abstained from work and assembled in the synagogues of their own towns. Even when the Temple was destroyed and sacrifices could no longer be offered, there was no real crisis. The synagogue had come to satisfy the religious needs of the nation. The synagogue had become, in thought and feeling, the place where God was worshiped, and it was natural that those features of temple worship which could be detached from the temple service—such as the blowing of the shofar, the palm branches and willows at Tabernacles, with necessary adaptations—should be transferred to the synagogue. Thus, in the character of the services there was no essential change (*Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, by George Foot Moore, Vol. II, pp. 11–14).

To summarize, the notion that the Holy Days must be observed only in Jerusalem has neither Bible authority nor precedence. In fact, if anything, the Bible shows the opposite to be the case.

Israel existed for almost five hundred years before the feast was observed in Jerusalem. After Israel entered the Holy Land, the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1, Jeremiah 7:12). The center of worship remained in Shiloh for many years (Judges 18:31). It was here, for some period of time, that the Israelites came to worship year by year (I Samuel 1:3). After the ark was captured by the Philistines and returned to Israel, the tabernacle was moved to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:17). When the Temple was built by Solomon, Jerusalem became the permanent site for central worship within the nation of Israel. But prior to the time of David, Mizpeh, Gilgal, and Shiloh were all central locations of worship. Because Jerusalem was later selected as the site for central worship, are we to assume one is to worship in no location except Jerusalem, today? We will see shortly what God says about Jerusalem.

One fact is certain: Paul kept the Holy Days (Acts 18:21; 20:16). But did he keep them at Jerusalem only? Paul said to follow him as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). Christ kept the Holy Days. Paul told the Philippians, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do" (Philippians 4:9). Paul did not both keep and not keep the Holy Days. It is obvious from the book of Acts that Paul was away from Jerusalem for years at a time. If the Holy Days are to be observed in Jerusalem only, and Paul observed them there only, then he set a bad example—because, for years at a time, he was derelict in fulfilling his Holy Day obligations. If, on the other hand, the Holy Days should not be kept—and Paul went to Jerusalem to observe them—then he set an equally bad example. But, Paul's example in the book of Acts clearly reveals that Paul kept the Holy Days, and he kept them in locations other than Jerusalem (Acts 20:6; 27:9, I Corinthians 16:8). Later in this article, we shall see that the Gentile churches in Asia Minor, after the first century, did indeed observe God's Holy Days. And they did not go up to Jerusalem to observe them.

The argument that no one except God, personally, has the right to determine feast sites does not bear up under close scrutiny. The Old Testament record is sufficient to disprove this. It was by the hand of Joshua, God's servant, that both Gilgal and Shiloh were chosen as sites for the tabernacle. Yet, there is no record that God told Joshua to choose those sites. The same is true with respect to David's selecting Jerusalem. David obviously knew Jerusalem was God's choice, yet there is no record that God told him to select Jerusalem. And neither is there such record regarding the previous tabernacle sites—for, prior to the selection of Jerusalem, the tabernacle was located at Gilgal, Bethel, and Mizpeh. What is obvious, from the Old Testament record, is that God's servants were responsible for the selection of religious sites. If God has a church today, and if the Holy Days are to be kept, then the same principle is true.

With respect to Jerusalem, Jesus said, "the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). Jesus knew that God would soon remove His presence and His name from Jerusalem. Jerusalem would cease to be where God's people would come to worship Him! Today, Jerusalem is (spiritually) called Sodom and Egypt (Revelation 11:8).

But the time is coming when Jerusalem will yet again be chosen as God's city (Zechariah 1:17; 2:12; 14:16). Until that time, it is the responsibility of all God's true children to keep His Holy Days in those locations which are the most convenient, under the present circumstances—those locations selected by His true servants today.

### **A Transition Time Required?**

Some would have us to believe that a transition time was required in order to bring about the necessary changes from Judaism to Christianity. That during Jesus' ministry Israel was still obeying Moses' festival law. That while Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles and did not find fault with the time element, He directed those in attendance into true worship which He was inaugurating. That examples of the early church's observation of the feasts and Holy Days involved limited numbers only, the same being true regarding sacrifices and circumcision. That while Paul was often present at some of the Jewish feasts, his teaching in Galatians and Colossians "condemns them as a requirement from heaven." That from Acts to Revelation there is no command, teaching, or example that would in any way obligate Christians to keep Israel's festivals or Holy Days.

If the above be true, then much confusion reigned in the early New Testament church. The festivals observed for a considerable time by the Apostolic church were the same as those of the Jews, especially by Christians of Jewish birth. From the Hebrew point of view, Christians were regarded as a Jewish sect or synagogue (*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by W. J. Conybeare, pp. 346, 55). In fact, the synagogue cannot be separated from the most

intimate connection with Christ's life and ministry. Synagogue worship was the order with which the first Christian believers were most familiar and which would most likely be, with respect to the outlines, details, and government, applied to the church (McClintock and Strong, p. 71). Such an event—the interrelationship of the synagogue and the church—could never have been foreseen in the dispersion of the people of Israel. Yet, without the dispersion it would have been impossible for the conversion of the Gentiles to have taken place at such a rapid pace. For the synagogue became the cradle of the church (Edersheim, p. 431). It was the pioneer institution of spiritual worship (*The Story of Judaism*, by Bernard J. Bamberger, p. 46).

We have already seen that Jesus came as our example. He did not come to confuse us with some kind of a "transition period."

### **Holy Days after First Century**

The fact that Christ and Paul observed the Holy Days is ample proof they were not abrogated by the New Covenant; they are an essential part of the New Covenant. Both Christ and Paul set an example for us to follow (I Peter 2:21, I John 2:6, I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 4:9). Those who follow Christ will keep the Holy Days.

If, as some say, the Holy Days are no longer valid, we need only ask why Paul kept them after they were supposedly done away. It is Paul's observance of the Holy Days that presents the major obstacle to those who wish to repudiate them. The explanations offered by those who reject the Christian requirement to keep the Holy Days, as demonstrated in the New Testament, are woefully inadequate. In fact, the arguments used today to repudiate God's feasts are the same arguments which go back to the second and third centuries.

For example, Philip Schaff says in his publication, *History of the Apostolic Church*, page 546, that it is with tolerable certainty that the Jewish Christians (particularly those at Jerusalem) observed the ceremonial law with its weekly and yearly festivals—and did not formally renounce the Old Testament theocracy until the destruction of Jerusalem, AD 70. Schaff, like most church historians, could not distinguish between ceremonial and spiritual laws. In the following paragraphs of the same chapter, he is quite at a loss to explain why the Apostle Paul criticizes the Galatians for observing Jewish festivals (Schaff's interpretation of Galatians 4:10), while at the same time observing them himself! Schaff acknowledges that James kept the Holy Days, because of the respect shown to him by the Jewish community. But concerning Paul, Schaff could not understand why the apostle allowed the Romans to observe the Holy Days (Schaff's interpretation of Romans 14:5–6), but forbade the Galatians. Schaff goes on to say, on page 559, that Paul kept the feasts and he kept them as a Christian!

In a volume entitled *Primitive Christianity: or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel* (published in London in 1673), author William Cave states that the primitive Christians placed great importance upon the Day of Pentecost. It was not only because the Holy Spirit was given on that day, but because Paul made much haste to be at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, which they understood was due to his great desire to keep it there as a Christian feast. Then the author goes on to say why he thinks Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem. His conclusion was that Paul really did not go to keep the feast, but rather to see the brethren and to preach the gospel to the Jews (Cave, p. 192).

Like modern theologians, historians generally misunderstand Paul's statements in Romans, Galatians, and Colossians—regarding feast days, fasts, etc. So, as far as Asia Minor is concerned, historians believe that the Apostle John must have been the one responsible for Holy Day observance, because it was from these very churches—the churches John pastored after Paul's death—that the controversy arose respecting the proper date for the Passover!

Dr. Augustus Neander, in his outstanding treatise, admits that the Jewish Christians maintained the Jewish festivals with the whole ceremonial law—but then goes on to say that the Gentile churches probably did not keep the festivals, as inferred from Paul's epistles (*History of the Christian Religion and Church*, by Augustus Neander, trans. by Joseph Torrey, Vol. I, p. 297). The only explanation he could give as to why the churches of Asia Minor adhered to the Holy Days was that it must have been the Apostle John who introduced them to these Gentiles (Neander, Vol. I, p. 297).

Neander, like most church historians, sees a conflict between those who held to the apostles at Palestine and those who championed the Apostle Paul. His assessment is similar to the interpretation of those who describe the book of Galatians as a conflict between those who are in bondage to Jewish law and those who glory in their Christian freedom and higher knowledge (Neander, Vol. I, p. 340).

Neander's viewpoint was that the Judaizing Christians followed Christ, who had faithfully observed the Mosaic Law, because they believed this was the necessary requirement for salvation; but it was the Apostle Paul who introduced a self-subsisting Christian church among the Gentiles, which was totally independent of Judaism. The churches in Palestine decidedly leaned to the Old Testament—and the conflict which arose between the Jewish and Gentile churches, as depicted in Acts, chapter fifteen, was settled in favor of the Gentiles (Neander, Vol. I, pp. 340–342). Neander adds, though, that the problem was not really resolved—because in the second century, the same opposing viewpoints persisted, due to what Neander regards as a radical element among the Jewish Christians. This radical element is identified in the dialogue of Justin Martyr with the Jew, Trypho. In this dialogue, Martyr shows two classes of Judaizing Christians: (1) those who united the faith of Christ with the Mosaic law, but who did not force its requirements upon

Gentile Christians, and (2) those who adhered to the Mosaic law, but forced the Gentiles to practice it—regarding as unclean those who did not (Neander, Vol. I, p. 343).

In a volume entitled *History of the Christian Church*, author Philip Schaff states that during the second century the violent arguments which arose over the proper date for Easter (Passover) were due to the opposing viewpoints of the Asians and the Latins. The Asians held to the Johannean practice represented by objective historical precedent, while the Roman church held to the principle of freedom and discretionary change. This controversy, which involved three stages, began when Polycarp (the Bishop of Smyrna and disciple of the Apostle John) discussed the proper date for the Passover with Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, AD 160. The second stage, AD 170, involved some Asiatics who insisted on eating a literal lamb at the Passover. The third stage occurred in AD 196 when Victor (Bishop of Rome) branded Polycrates (Bishop of Ephesus), and all Asians who refused to change the Passover date and accept the authority of Rome, as heretics (Schaff, p. 373).

What was taking place in God's Church?

Jesus said the church He would build would never perish (Matthew 16:18). But Jesus did not say that His church would be popular and accepted by the world; in fact, He said just the opposite. He said that His church would be small and persecuted (Luke 12:32, John 15:20). Therefore, what was taking place during the middle of the second century, with respect to God's Holy Days, is exactly what we would expect to find in the historical records—if Jesus' words, concerning His church, are true.

According to Jesus, His church would be a commandment-keeping church (Revelation 12:17). The signs given to identify God's chosen people are the Sabbath and the Holy Days (Exodus 31:13–17; 13:9). Because the true church would keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, it would not be accepted by the world (I John 3:1). But there would be a false church—a visible church—which would be accepted. The reason it would be accepted is that it would absorb the many pagan concepts necessary to make it a worldly religion.

Now, let us see what took place, with respect to the Sabbath and Holy Days, within the visible church—the church that historians view as the church Jesus built.

There is no doubt that the early Christians did not regard the Sabbath as abolished. See *From Sabbath to Sunday*, by Paul Cotten. Cotten says that the influence of conservative Christianity was discernible upon the Eastern or Asian churches for several centuries; that even after Sunday worship was largely accepted, the Sabbath continued to be observed—especially in the East. Even as late as 425, the people of Constantinople and several other cities assembled on the Sabbath (Cotten, pp. 63–65). His conclusion is that the church was by no means united with respect to Sunday worship, nor did it make a radical departure from Sabbath observance. The process, Cotten says, was a gradual, natural

one—depending upon the progress of Christian convictions (Ibid., pp.65–66). Its abolishment represented the abolishment of Jewish law, and as the old order passed away, so did the Sabbath (Ibid., p. 68).

It was Gentile influence, Cotten says, which brought about Sunday observance; and while Christianity began in Judaism, it absorbed many points of paganism and became a worldly religion (Cotten, p. 159).

In the compilation of articles entitled *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America* (Vol. I), Abram H. Lewis points out that with the shift in Christianity from East to West, the influence of the Grecian and Roman pagan philosophers became dominant. The pagan dislike for Judaism, because of its refusal to recognize heathen deities, reflected itself in antagonism toward the Sabbath. Justin Martyr—about the middle of the second century—began this disparagement against the Sabbath, so that eventually the entire philosophical approach became antagonistic toward anything "Jewish." In due time, as a result of this pagan philosophy and its consequential political influence, pagan festivals replaced all "Jewish" observances (*Seventh Day Baptists*, Vol. I, pp. 13–14).

Schaff agrees, stating that the Jewish Christians continued to observe the Sabbath; but, after the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent loss of Jewish influence, the Sabbath was superseded by the first day of the week. By the beginning of the second century, Sunday was being observed universally (*History of the Apostolic Church*, by Schaff, p. 552).

Neander says that it was opposition to Judaism which led to the establishment of Sunday, rather than the Sabbath, as the day of worship—and while the Christians in the East tolerated Sunday worship in the churches, they continued to retain the Sabbath for some time.

In the West, however, the opposition to Judaism was so strong that Saturday was selected as a fast day in order to make it less appealing to those who should choose to observe the Sabbath. According to Neander, the contrast between the two groups of Christians—those who observed Saturday and those who observed Sunday—was quite noticeable, and that same antagonism was apparent in the matter of yearly festivals (Neander, Vol. I, pp. 295–297).

Even with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians continued to observe the law of Moses—and after the First Jewish War, they returned to Jerusalem where they continued in their original teachings until the time of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, who ruled from 117–138. After the revolt of Bar Kokba, all Jews were expelled from Jerusalem and its adjacent areas—and from that time on, the Jewish Christians were removed as a source of influence (Neander, Vol. I, pp. 343–344).

Once the Jewish Christians were no longer a viable influence in the Christian world, the thrust toward repudiating anything which represented Judaism hastened. The fact that at the beginning of the second century, Sunday observance was already accepted universally (though not observed universally), indicates the rapidity of the departure from original Christian teachings. After the beginning of the second century, Sabbath observance among Jewish Christians gradually ceased—and the setting aside of Saturday as a fast day in the West (an opposition of the Latin church against Judaism) began at the end of the second century (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 372–373).

Thus, within the first two hundred years of the establishment of the true church, we see—with respect to the Sabbath—a gradual departure from what was taught and practiced by Christ and the original apostles. What transpired with respect to the weekly Sabbath also transpired with respect to the Holy Days. Those who rejected the Sabbath, during the first and second centuries, recognized that what applied to the Sabbath must also apply to the annual Holy Days. The Sabbath and the Holy Days stand or fall together.

The Jewish Christians kept the Passover and all the annual festivals appointed by God through Moses and understood their Christian meaning. In a footnote, Schaff says: "It is very remarkable that St. John makes the Jewish festivals, especially the Passover, so prominent in the public life and ministry of Christ. He evidently considered them significant types of the leading facts of the Gospel history" (*History of the Apostolic Church*, p. 558, fn.). On page 559, he further states that the second-century Paschal controversies proved that the early church kept the Jewish festivals and that they derived their authority from the apostles.

What was said about the decline of Jewish influence regarding the Sabbath applies to the Holy Days. B. J. Kidd, in *A History of the Church to AD 461* (p. 37), relates that as long as Jewish influence prevailed the Jewish Christian and the Gentile Christian forms of religious service continued side by side. It was not until the second overthrow of Jerusalem, during the rebellion of Bar Kokba (about AD 135) that the disintegration of Jewish national life was total and with it the acceleration of the decline of Jewish Christianity. From that time on, the Jewish Christians, severed from the community, were a declining remnant—though as late as the middle of the second century there existed an orthodox minority along with a heretical majority (Kidd, pp. 88–91).

It was after the decline of Jewish influence that pagan Christian concepts of worship began to prevail. Paramount was the idea that divine worship was not confined to any particular time or place. Jerome (who translated the Vulgate) said, in the fourth century, that from the Christian point of view all days are alike (Neander, Vol. II, p. 332). Chrysostom (one of the Greek church fathers of the fourth century) delivered a discourse on the day of Pentecost at Antioch—where he said that those who never attended church, except on the principal festivals, had adopted the Jewish viewpoint, and that Christian festivals were not



restricted to certain times. He said that Christians continually celebrate Epiphany, that they continually celebrate the Passover, and that they continually celebrate Pentecost (Ibid.). Neander adds, in the same paragraph, that the church historian Socrates Scholasticus remarks that neither Christ nor the apostles gave commandment or law respecting feasts, but left everything to the free expression of feelings.

In spite of this developing expression of freedom, the Sabbath continued to be kept—especially by the Eastern churches—until the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century, which decreed that Christians should not celebrate after the Jewish manner (Neander, Vol. II, p. 334). It was this spirit of expression and antagonism against anything Jewish which led to declaring Saturday a fast day, when the obvious Bible teaching is that the Sabbath is a feast day (Leviticus 23:4). Ambrose (a Latin church father of the fourth century) admitted that he fasted in Rome on Saturday, but not in Milan! Augustine wrote that it was Paul's instruction to the Romans concerning fasting that accounted for this diversity of practice. The Latin church, in general, justified fasting on the Sabbath because Peter was supposed to have done so in preparing for his dispute with Simon Magus. And, in addition, the disciples hid themselves in fear of the Jews on that day, according to the crucifixion account (Ibid., pp. 334–335).

The twenty-ninth canon of the Council of Laodicea said that Christians should abstain from worldly business on Sunday, if they were able. By 386, civil transactions of any kind were forbidden; and by 425, public shows and exhibitions were forbidden on Sunday and on principal Christian feasts (Neander, Vol. II, p. 336).

From about the middle of the second century, pagan Christians had shown a desire to observe the Good Friday and Easter Sunday traditions. The visit of Polycarp to Rome (about 160) was the first confrontation of what was called the Quartodeciman controversy. Neander says, in a footnote, that more importance has been attributed to this visit than is historically justified. At the time Polycarp went to Rome, the question of when to observe the Passover had not yet come up. It was when Polycarp was in Rome that it became apparent there was a divergence of practice—between the Eastern and Western churches—regarding observance of the Passover (Neander, Vol. I, p. 299). But, it was not until 190 that Victor took strong measures to suppress the observance of the Passover, as observed by Jewish tradition (Ibid., pp. 299–300).

It was in 325 that the Council of Nicea established Easter, according to the Latin tradition, as a law for the entire church. Easter was selected to be celebrated on the Sunday which fell after the first new moon following the vernal equinox. The council did not feel it was proper for Christians to follow the custom of the hostile, unbelieving Jews—those who had never accepted Christianity (*A History of the Christian Church*, by Philip Schaff, p. 376).

What became apparent, relative to the "Christian festivals," was that with the pagan Christians originated the idea of imitating the crucified and risen Christ. Thus, the yearly festivals became the way to illustrate His death and resurrection (Neander, Vol. I, p. 295). The weekly cycle observances took the form of the passion followed by the joyful resurrection. Thus, Friday and Wednesday became the days to commemorate the passion by fasting and prayer, and Sunday became the day to commemorate the joyful resurrection. The yearly cycle was essentially the same. The Good Friday and Easter Sunday traditions depicted the crucifixion and the resurrection, while Pentecost commemorated the joyous receipt of the Holy Spirit (Ibid., pp. 294–295). As Schaff acknowledges, Easter and Pentecost were transformed by Christianity into the feasts of the resurrection of the Lord and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*History of the Apostolic Church*, p. 558). Schaff adds that by the second century, these festivals were found unopposed universally—and on page 560 of the same section, states that the church festivals of Easter and Pentecost only, can be traced back to the apostolic age. According to Schaff, Pentecost was first observed by Jewish precedent, but as early as the second century became accepted universally in commemoration of the appearance and heavenly exaltation of the risen Lord (*History of the Christian Church*, p. 376).

Neander states that the crucified, resurrected, and glorified Christ was the central point of the weekly and yearly festivals and fast days, and that Friday was consecrated to the memory of Christ's passion (Neander, Vol. II, pp. 332–333). Pentecost was observed in remembrance of Christ risen and glorified. Eventually, Easter and Pentecost only were selected to be promulgated, for two reasons: (1) they were the only ones which represented the sufferings, resurrection, and glory of Christ, and (2) there was too much opposition to Jewish observances (Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 300–301).

The idea of celebrating Christ's birthday was unknown during this period. It was not until the end of the fourth century that both Christmas and Epiphany began to be observed. Epiphany, which commemorates Christ's baptism, was an Eastern innovation; while Christmas was decidedly a Western inclusion. According to Neander, there was strong opposition to the acceptance of these festivals. The Eastern church opposed the observance of Christmas, and the Western church opposed Epiphany. Gradually, both were accepted—Epiphany was looked upon as a stage of Judaism in Christianity, while Christmas was viewed as representing Christian freedom (Neander, Vol. I, pp. 301–302 and Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 373, 376–377).

In the year 400, Augustine commented that the only feasts recognized were those of Christ's passion, His ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By the year 325, when the custom of the Passover was abandoned, the Passover had lost its significance—except in the East where the change was opposed. It was this opposition which eventually led to the expulsion of the Eastern churches, whose rebuttal to the West was that the Nicene council altered the Passover date because it yielded to the flattery of Constantine (Neander, Vol. II, pp. 337–338).

What was taking place in the visible church during this period of time was not what was taking place with the Jewish Christians. The Jewish Christians separated themselves from the general Christian community as a result of the Second Jewish War, and repaired to the east side of the Jordan River—where they remained obedient to the law and maintained themselves as a group down to the fifth century. The pagan Christians who remained in Aelia Capitolina, the rebuilt Jerusalem, gradually molded the Christian community into an entirely new shape (Neander, Vol. I, p. 344).

The name "Nazarenes"—an appellation which dates back to about the middle of the first century—came to be applied to these Jewish Christians (Acts 24:5). Epiphanius says the Nazarenes were Jewish Christians who observed the Jewish manner of life, and they combined a belief in Christ with observance of the law (Kidd, Vol. I, p. 93). On the same page, Kidd gives a general description of Nazarene beliefs and relates that Jerome felt the Nazarenes were neither Jewish nor Christian—and what hindered them from being Christian was their adherence to Jewish customs.

Another term which came to be applied to the Jewish Christians was that of "Ebionites." However, this appellation came to be applied without regard to the differences existing among them. According to Neander the general party itself gradually embraced so many shades of Jewish-Christian principles that it was impossible to distinguish them from ordinary Jews (Neander, Vol. I, pp. 345–346). The same could be said about the Nazarenes. Both appellations—Nazarenes and Ebionites—were general terms which were applied to Jewish Christians. Origen stated that there was little to distinguish the Ebionites from common Jews. Jerome distinguished two classes among them: (1) those who thought the law should be observed, and (2) those who adhered to the Jewish law but did not require it of pagan Christians, because of the belief that only those of Jewish and Israelitish birth should observe it (Kidd, Vol. I, p. 92). In the middle of the second century, a handful of Ebionites were involved in the Quartodeciman controversy; and they kept the Passover on the fourteenth (Ibid., p. 377).

The Nazarenes appeared to be a totally different group from the Ebionites, although some among the Ebionites may have had common beliefs with the Nazarenes. What can be safely said about both groups is that among them were to be found those true Christians who remained faithful to the original teachings of Christ and the apostles, and who comprised the remnant of the small flock. As late as the close of the fourth century, there was a group of Nazarenes dwelling in Beroea in Syria (Neander, Vol. I, p. 349).

From time to time, other groups appeared on the scene. About 375, the Novatians of Phrygia, contrary to their ancient beliefs, began to celebrate the Passover on the same date as the Jews. Not only did they keep the Passover, they observed the Days of Unleavened Bread (*The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen*, trans. by A. C. Zenos, p. 361).

In a volume published in London in 1683, author Alexander Ross described what he considered to be various heretical groups, which existed during the first six hundred years after Christ. He commented on the Sabbatarians as follows: ". . . so called because they reject the observation of the Lord's day, as not being commanded in the Scripture, and keep holy the Sabbath day only, because God himself rested on that day, and commanded it to be kept . . ." (*A View of All Religions of the World*, by Alexander Ross, p. 232).

It is unlikely that more prominent groups, such as the Paulicians, Bogomiles, Cathari, Waldenses, etc., as a whole, could be considered remnants of the true church. There is no historical evidence that these groups, as a whole, adhered to the Ten Commandments—including the Sabbath—or kept the Holy Days. Some of them were hostile to the Old Testament, and the philosophy of others bordered on Gnosticism. This is not to say that some segments among them may not have been remnants of the true church.

Concerning the Waldenses, Gamble and Greene, in their article in *Seventh-Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Volume I, quote a number of historical sources which indicate Waldensian Sabbath observance. Among these sources, they mention *Purchase's Pilgrimage* (published in London in 1625), which states that the Waldenses kept Saturday holy, rejected Saturday fasts, kept Easter on Saturday—during which they feasted like the Jews (quoted in *History of Sabbath and Sunday*, by Lewis, pp. 216–217). On page 33, Gamble and Greene remark that the Waldenses did not have perfect agreement in sentiment. As stated earlier, some among the Waldenses may have been God's true people, as the divergence of opinion indicates—but it is unlikely the entire group, with differing opinions, were all true Christians.

Gamble and Greene comment on a work entitled *Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Piedmont Church* (by Dr. Allix), in which the author states that a Catholic writer—in the twelfth century—mentions the Cathari, Passagii, and Arnoldistae as stating that they believed the law of Moses and the Sabbath should be kept. There is no doubt that this is true of the Passagii. Of the other groups, the writer may have been referring to segments of them, only. For, there is no evidence that these groups, as a whole, kept the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

The historical records show that the Nazarenes, the Cerinthians, the Ebionites, and the Hypsistarii were condemned for Sabbath observance—and this was also true, later, of the Petrobrussians (*Seventh Day Baptists*, pp. 34–35). In fact, Walter Lollard was accused of being of the same sentiment as Peter deBruys, who was a Sabbath-keeper (*Ibid.*, p. 34). The Lollards in England—according to Gardner and Spedding in a volume entitled *Studies in English History*—could not overlook the injunction contained in the fourth commandment (quoted by Gamble and Greene in *Seventh Day Baptists*, p. 35).

Augustus Neander, who is considered the modern "father of church history," makes no mention of any of these groups' observing the Sabbath or Holy Days. This is

understandable because Neander recognized that all Judaizing Christians (those who adhered to Jewish tradition) kept the "Law of Moses," which included the Sabbath and Holy Days. From all appearances, the above-named sects, as a whole, were what could be called pre-Protestants. Many of their doctrines and beliefs were a reaction to the abuses and immorality of the Catholic priests. But, we should not assume any of these groups, in their entirety, to be remnants of the true church unless there is evidence to support such a conclusion.

Regarding the general state of Christians during the Middle Ages, Neander says scandalous conduct and lack of spiritual zeal were so apparent among the population that those few who tried to live a life of greater purity were criticized in the very same way as those criticized by pagans when Christianity was getting its start (Neander, Vol. II, p. 260).

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there arose the sect called the Passagii—which represents the most obvious, tangible form of Judaizing Christianity of the time. At the present, little is known of their predecessors. History generally concerns itself with the obvious—so until every available historical source is examined, information concerning the details of earlier groups will most likely be limited.

Louis Israel Newman, in a work entitled *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*, says that the Passagii were an anti-sacerdotal and anti-Catholic Judaizing party who were not associated with the Catharist movement. Their fundamental doctrine was that the Mosaic law should be literally observed, and they sought to preserve the literalism of Old Testament exegesis. They observed "Jewish ceremonialism"—including the Holy Days and solemn festivals, as well as the dietary laws; the sacrifices alone being excepted from the legalistic obligation. They accepted the New Testament and sought to harmonize the old and new dispensations. They kept the Sabbath strictly, along with other Sabbatarian groups in Hungary and in other lands. The reason for their acceptance of the Mosaic law—with all its demands for Sabbath observance, circumcision, observance of dietary laws, and festival observance—was to bring Christianity back to its original sources untainted by foreign elements. According to Bonacursus, the Passagii believed the law of Moses ought to be observed to the letter, including the Sabbath and circumcision. But in a footnote on page 265, Newman quotes Benedict in his *History of the Baptists* concerning the Passagii: "The account of their practicing circumcision is undoubtedly a slanderous story, forged by their enemies, and probably arose in this way: Because they observed the seventh day, they were called by way of derision, Jews, as the Sabbatarians are frequently at this day; and if they were Jews, they either did, or ought to, circumcise their followers. This was probably the reasoning of their enemies. But that they actually practiced the bloody rite is altogether improbable." Newman places their location in Southern France, and says that of the numerous sects which were a constant source of irritation to the ecclesiastical authorities, it was the Passagii who demonstrated the strong Jewish elements in their beliefs (*Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*, pp. 255–284).

Another volume, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, by Wakefield and Evans (pp. 173–181, 698), discusses the *Passagii* or *Passagians*. It says the Passagii were a minor sect in the late twelfth century which kept all the legal precepts of the Old Testament, including circumcision. But on page 698 of this volume, a footnote states, ". . . that the Circumcisers were probably a separate party, who did not reject Christian sacraments but did require in addition to them the strict observance of Mosaic Law and especially circumcision." Wakefield and Evans state that the Passagii observed the Old Testament and Mosaic Law, the Sabbath, and prohibition of certain foods; they also refused to recognize the institutions and practices of the Roman church. The Passagii were a short-lived "Christian heresy" associated with Jewish religious movements in Italy, who were motivated by aspirations of purity and sanctity of life. Furthermore, they believed the Old Testament was to be observed in the matter of feasts and almost all other respects, including the Sabbath, which was to be kept to the letter.

The reasons the Passagii gave for observing the law and much of the Old Testament are to be found in their Scriptural explanations. The texts used by them to prove it is a requirement for Christians to keep the law are the same scriptures quoted by Sabbatarians today!

Of the Italian groups associated with the Jewish-Christian movement, Greenslade wrote, in *Schism in the Early Church* (p. 103), that in 1054 a letter of Leo of Ochrida to John of Tani, which amounted to a manifesto from Michael to Leo IX, charged the Latins with Judaizing by their use of unleavened bread and by their observance of the Sabbath.

Neander mentions a group in the eleventh century called the "Athinganians." They were located in upper Phrygia and united baptism with all the rites of Judaism, circumcision excepted. Neander conjectured the possibility of their belonging to one of the older Judaizing sects (Neander, Vol. III, p. 592).

Regarding the Passagii, Neander comments on the meaning of their name. While some scholars feel it is derived from the Hebrew word for Passover, indicating their observance of the feast, Neander associated it with the word *passagium*, meaning passage or crusade. His conclusion was that the name pointed back to their origin, that they came from the East—Palestine—and that they could well be one of the ancient parties of Judaizing Christians (Neander, Vol. IV, pp. 590–591).

There is ample evidence that the original truth taught by Christ and the apostles was brought to England at an early date. As you will note in the following sources, not all who adhered to portions of the truth observed both the Sabbath and the Holy Days. Without quoting the original sources given in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, let us summarize what history says. The reader need merely refer to Volume I, pages 21–35, to substantiate what is covered in the following paragraphs.

According to Gamble and Greene, the earliest historical writings relating to the Britons attest to the founding of the Christian church in the British Isles as early as the first century—either by Paul or by some of his converts to Christianity (made while he was a prisoner in Rome). There is no doubt whatsoever that Christianity was planted in England before the appearance of the Catholic Augustine in 596.

In his biography, we are told that Augustine found the people of Britain in the most grievous and intolerable heresies, being given to Judaizing and ignorant of the sacraments and festivals of the church.

The British Christians were Judaistic in their observance of Easter Day, because, as Gamble and Greene point out, they obviously observed it on Saturday—"The day which the Scriptures point out as the one on which the Saviour rose from the grave" (*The Ancient British Church*, by John Price, quoted by Gamble and Greene in *Seventh Day Baptists*, p. 26).

It was not until 664 that Oswald, king of Northumberland, became convinced of the idea of apostolic succession from Peter to the then-present pope and was persuaded to accept Easter Sunday. As a result, Sunday from that time on was hallowed in Northumberland.

As far as Ireland was concerned, Irish historians state that during the reign of Dermond in 528 Christianity was flourishing in Ireland—and that they had received it from the Asiatics. Scottish historians state that it was customary in Ireland, as well as in Scotland, for the early churches to keep Saturday—the Jewish Sabbath.

Queen Margaret, in attempting to harmonize the Scottish church with the rest of Europe, stated that the majority of the Scottish church did not reverence "the Lord's day" but held Saturday to be the Sabbath. It seems unquestionably established that the Sabbath was observed in Scotland as late as 1093. And in Wales, the Sabbath prevailed until 1115.

The Anabaptists first made their appearance in England about the year 1565, and they maintained themselves as an organization for a little over a century, until they merged with other evangelical churches. Many of the Anabaptists observed the seventh-day Sabbath—according to Dr. Francis White, who wrote, "They who maintain the Saturday Sabbath to be in force, comply with the Anabaptists." Labeling them as heretics, an author writing about them in 1703 said, "Under this head I could conclude some of them under those of Anabaptists, who have been inclined to this personal reign of Christ, and have embraced the seventh-day Sabbath." It is obvious, say Gamble and Greene, that the Anabaptists took up the torch where the Lollards and Waldenses left off, and continued to observe the Sabbath for about a century.

In *History of the Baptists*, Benedict noted that the Waldenses' and Lollards' hopes for a complete reformation, and return to the truth by the reformers, were disillusioned. Due to the oppression they had so long endured, they were desirous of gaining friends and protectors. Eventually, the various groups joined with the Reformed or Protestant party.

From time to time, Sabbath observance continued to manifest itself. *Chambers' Cyclopaedia* states that "many conscientious and independent thinkers in the reign of Elizabeth (1558–1603) advocated the seventh-day." Gamble and Greene mention a work by Samuel Kohn in which he states there were Sabbath-keepers among the Quakers, as well as among the Puritans. Regarding the Lollards, Benedict said in *History of the Baptists* that separate and distinct societies of Sabbath-keeping Lollards existed as early as 1389. (For the above paragraphs, see *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Vol. I, pp. 21–39.)

In spite of persecution and unpopularity, Sabbath-keeping continued in England. Sometimes prominent Sabbath preachers were imprisoned. Among those who advocated the seventh-day Sabbath was William Whiston, who translated *The Works of Josephus* into English (*Seventh Day Baptists*, pp. 108, 112).

Sabbath observance began in America about 1664, when Stephen Mumford came to Rhode Island. Gamble and Greene give a summary of what took place as Sabbath observance spread in America (pp. 122–133). Some of the strongest tenets of the early Seventh-Day Baptist beliefs were those of Sabbath observance and adherence to the Ten Commandments.

In spite of the fact that history records little about those faithful remnants of the true church which held fast to the teachings of Christ and the apostles, we do see from time to time groups which did appear on the scene. Most important of all, however, we have Jesus' promise that He would build His church and that it would never die. As has been demonstrated, the true church was not the visible church which was accepted by the world. The visible church was accepted because it represented a synchronism of Christianity and paganism. As early as the latter half of the second century, the antagonism toward Jewish Christianity began to manifest itself until, eventually, nominal Christianity rejected the "Jewish" teachings of Christ and the apostles—and accepted the Western pagan-Christian viewpoint of freedom of self-expression. For all practical purposes, the church Jesus built appeared to vanish from the world scene.

If the church Jesus built is in existence today, it will be practicing the same doctrine and beliefs as recorded in the Gospels and the book of Acts. For it is in these books that we find the incontrovertible evidence that the early church kept the Sabbath and God's Holy Days! Spiritual truth does not change. The visible church had no Biblical authority for changing the Sabbath and the Holy Days. Those who are members of the body of Christ, today—the church Jesus built—will be adhering to the truth originally revealed, and will be found observing the Sabbath and the Holy Days at the time Jesus Christ returns to this earth!



## Reasons Galatians and Colossians Do Not Abrogate God's Law

Now regarding Paul's statements in Galatians and Colossians, there are several reasons these do not teach the abrogation of God's Law.

First, these books are epistles of Paul. Peter said, of Paul's epistles, ". . . Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15–16). If Peter—a contemporary with Paul—said Paul's epistles are difficult to understand, how much more would they be misunderstood 2,000 years later?

Second, Galatians and Colossians are not the places to begin study in order to determine doctrine. If Paul's epistles are difficult and were wrested (perverted) in Peter's day, how much more is the likelihood in these times of "higher criticism?" The wresting of Paul's epistles becomes a distinct reality when scholars believe there is no continuity between the messages of the Old and New Testaments. Or when the prevailing belief is one of the following: (1) Each book of the Bible applies only to the time period in which it was written; (2) the writings of Paul should be considered near the end of an evolutionary change in doctrine; (3) the Bible is not actually inspired.

The third reason why Galatians and Colossians do not abrogate God's Law is that such a teaching contradicts the rest of the Bible. Jesus' statement, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), means nothing to modern critics. But if we believe Jesus' statement that man should live by every word of God, we must also believe His statement, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). This means the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) do not contradict themselves. No single passage of Scripture can contradict another. If we say Paul teaches the abrogation of God's Law, we are not only saying Paul contradicts the other inspired writers (Psalm 111:7–8; 119:160, Matthew 5:17, Revelation 22:14)—we are even saying he contradicts himself! (Romans 6:1–2, 12, 15). This cannot be true!

The fourth reason is: If we say Paul taught the abrogation of God's Law, Sabbath, and Holy Days, then Paul preached one thing and practiced another! Paul kept the Sabbath and the Holy Days (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 21; 20:16). He told the Gentiles, "Be ye followers [imitators] of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). He said, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do" (Philippinians 4:9, I Thessalonians 2:13–14). Paul did not teach one thing and practice another. If he had done so, the Gentiles would have been utterly confused. God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). Paul believed, practiced, and taught the same thing. Otherwise, the Gentile churches would have been hopelessly perplexed!

The fifth reason is: The Bible specifically states what was invalidated. What was invalidated does not include God's Law! Hebrews 9:10 clearly says, ". . . meats and drinks [offerings], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances [margin: 'rites, ceremonies'], imposed on them until the time of reformation." Nowhere does the Bible state the Ten Commandments, Sabbath, or Holy Days were done away! Much of the abrogated ceremony involved those rites which the priests performed and had no bearing on the observance of the Sabbath or Holy Days.

The sixth reason is: If Paul kept the Holy Days when he went to Jerusalem only, then he disobeyed God's Law! But Paul said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Paul kept the Holy Days (Acts 18:21; 20:16). If he kept them only when he went to Jerusalem, then for many years he did not observe them. He could not both observe them and not observe them. He lived in good conscience before God. He could not have done so had he been guilty of not keeping God's Holy Days for years at a time. Those who say it is an assumption that Paul kept God's Holy Days every year might as well be honest and admit it is a greater assumption that he did not! One thing is certain: If he kept them only when he went to Jerusalem, then he lived a double standard—part Gentile and part Jewish! But he told Peter, at Antioch, this should not be done! (Galatians 2:11–14).

From these proofs, the books of Galatians and Colossians do not teach God's Law is done away! Did Christ, Paul, and the New Testament church labor in a state of confusion, setting the wrong example for us today? Or did they set the right example? You be the judge. Read I Peter 2:21, I John 2:6, and Philipians 4:9.

## **Paul and the New Testament Church**

Note the following example of Paul's preaching to the Gentiles: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23). Paul did not exclude Old Testament law when it came to preaching Jesus. He knew the foundation for the New Covenant rested on the Old. And, at that time, the only inspired Scripture from which Paul could preach was the Old Testament.

Relative to what he practiced, Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Paul imitated Christ. Christ said man was to live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). Paul taught Sabbath observance (Hebrews 4:9, margin: "rest" means "keeping of a sabbath"). Paul, like Christ, observed the Holy Days (Luke 2:42–43, Matthew 26:18, John 7:10, 37, Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 18:21; 20:16, I Corinthians 16:8). Paul knew the basis for Christian conduct, under the terms of the New Covenant, was the same

law recorded under the Old Covenant (Hebrews 4:20). He understood the spiritual expansion of that law. Christians are to live according to the "desire of the heart," not by legal legislation (Romans 6:17). New Testament passages presuppose a concept easily understood by first-century Christians—that they were to live by every Word of God. Unknown to them were the third and fourth-century concepts abrogating large sections of the Bible and perverting grace into license by obeying only what one "dissected" from God's Word.

We have commented briefly on Acts 18:21, but perhaps something more should be added. In it Paul states that it was his intention to "keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." As noted, of the approximately 4,500 Greek texts extant, about ninety-five percent belong to the Byzantine family. The two other families are the Western and Alexandrian texts. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, when rationalism and skepticism began penetrating intellectual thought, including Bible scholarship, two ancient manuscripts were discovered. They were designated as  $\aleph$  and B. Both these manuscripts belong to the Alexandrian family and date from the fourth century. They are the oldest known manuscripts of the Greek text extant today. The assumption was immediately drawn that since they are the oldest manuscripts they must be the best, and hence the most accurate. Both these manuscripts omit Acts 18:21; it is found in the Received Text—the Byzantine text. The Byzantine text was the text used by the Greek Orthodox Church and became the Reformation or Protestant text. The  $\aleph$  and B texts omit many of the passages found in the Authorized Version, which was based on the Byzantine or Received Text.

Edward F. Hills, author of *The King James Version Defended*, explains the probable origin of the Vatican (Western) and Alexandrian families of manuscripts. In Rome, about the middle of the second century, a predecessor to the Gnostic heretic Marcion secured a copy of the Byzantine manuscript. He promptly proceeded to delete or alter any verse that gave an exalted status to Christ. Gnostics regarded Jesus as the Demiurge, a secondary god who was alien to the Father. As a result of this work, the Western or Vatican text was abbreviated by comparison to the Byzantine text. For some strange reason this text was accepted by the Western church. A copy of this Vatican text fell into the hands of the scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. They also tried to improve the text by adding to it where there had been deletions and removing portions they thought did not belong. This was the origin of the Alexandrian text. The end result was two corrupt families of manuscripts circulating, challenging the Byzantine text. As a result of the work of Westcott and Hort in the late nineteenth century, these corrupt texts became the basis for most of the modern translations. Modern scholars failed to see the significance of the Byzantine text, especially the fact that it was in Asia Minor that the inspired autographs of the New Testament writers were preserved. Following the destruction of Judea in the second century, the church was centered in Asia Minor for many years and would be the place to look for the accurate and inspired text, not in Rome or Alexandria.

What about the assertion that the oldest manuscripts are the best? Monks who hand-copied the New Testament text followed the same practice as the ancient Jewish scribes. Whenever copies of the text became worn and unsightly from long use, the old copies were destroyed, after having been replaced by new copies. Thus, there were no old copies preserved. The very reason  $\aleph$  and B were found in good condition was that they were defective (discarded) copies that had not been used. Had they been acceptable copies they would have become worn out, and eventually destroyed. The fact they were preserved is proof they were corrupt copies. The argument that Acts 18:21 is not found in the original text refers to the "original" corrupted texts found in the Vatican and Alexandrian families. Acts 18:21 is found in the Byzantine text and was inspired. Those who refuse to accept Acts 18:21 as inspired in the original autograph of Luke must of necessity rely on a corrupt text which has had texts deleted or had texts of doubtful value added. The modern translations which omit Acts 18:21 are based on either the corrupt  $\aleph$  and B manuscripts, or on the rationalistic thought of mid-nineteenth century scholarship.

### **Holy Days in Millennium**

Is there any logic to the idea that even though the Bible states the Holy Days will be kept in the Millennium, there is no necessity for us to keep them today? A look at the Old Testament tells us, without doubt, the Holy Days will be observed during the Millennium (Zechariah 14:16–19, Ezekiel 45:21, 25). Their observance during this time period demonstrates that they have not been abrogated. The same is true of the weekly Sabbath, for it, too, will be observed during the Millennium (Ezekiel 46:3).

However, the authority for observing the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days now is not because they will be observed during the Millennium. Their observance during the Millennium simply demonstrates that they have not been abrogated.

The question which needs to be answered, with respect to the Holy Days during the Millennium, is why the sacrifices are included.

The answer is given in Ezekiel, chapter 44. Here, we read that the Levites will be forced to bear their iniquity, because they departed from God and went after idols (v. 10). They will be forced to perform menial tasks and will not be allowed to exercise the duty of officiating at the altar. That responsibility will be reserved for the sons of Zadok only (v. 15).

It will be the responsibility of all the Levites to teach God's people the difference between the holy and the profane, and to cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean (v. 23). Israel will keep God's Laws and statutes (v. 24).

The Bible does not state how long the sacrificial system will be in effect. Some commentators believe it will be for a limited time period only, in order to make Israel understand the significance of Christ's sacrifice. The sacrifices point to Christ; and when this lesson has been accomplished and the people come to see the significance of Christ's shed blood, there will be no further need for sacrifices.

But, the sacrifices have no bearing on the observance of God's weekly Sabbath or Holy Days. This is proven by the fact that the Sabbath and Holy Days were kept by the New Testament church long after Christ was "nailed to the cross."

God has a specific purpose for the institution of the sacrifices during the Millennium. When that purpose is accomplished, the need for them will disappear. The sacrifices were not a part of the original Old Covenant. They were an added law which God placed upon the nation of Israel, because of their disobedience. As such, they are an addition which will be placed upon Israel during a part of the Millennium, at least—because of Israel's transgressions.

Some say Acts 2 (which shows the early New Testament church keeping the day of Pentecost) depicts the spring harvest, that is, the beginning of the great spiritual harvest which is to last throughout this entire age. Since the Feast of Tabernacles depicts the fall harvest, it would not be kept until the end of this age when the Millennium begins. By that line of "reasoning," why did Israel keep the Passover for nearly 1,500 years before Christ died on the cross? The answer is that these days are kept as shadows of things to come, just as Paul stated in Colossians 2:17. The Holy Days depict the plan of salvation and this plan cannot be understood until one recognizes the necessity of keeping the days portrayed by this plan.

### **Sabbath and Holy Days Stand or Fall Together**

Is it true that the Sabbath was not done away, as were the feasts, because the Sabbath is the center of the Ten Commandments? That Jesus obeyed the Ten Commandments but rejected the law of Moses as binding? That the apostles taught the Ten Commandments but rejected the ceremonial law? That the Sabbath was from the beginning, but the feasts stem from the law of Moses?

Most of the questions listed above have been answered in this article already. Jesus did not reject the law of Moses (Matthew 5:17–18; 23:2–3, John 5:45–47). Rather, He came to expand it, to fill it full (Isaiah 42:21). What He did reject was Judaism—a corruption of the law of Moses (Mark 7:6–13). The apostles did not reject the Holy Days; they kept them. But they did recognize there was no longer any value in the sacrificial system after Christ died. Paul did use the law of Moses as the basis for his New Testament teaching (Acts

28:23). It has already been called to the reader's attention that there is no command to observe the Sabbath until we read it in Exodus, chapter sixteen. It is in Exodus, chapter twenty, that we first find the Ten Commandments enumerated; the command to keep the Holy Days precedes the command to keep the Sabbath. The truth of the matter is that those who advocate the abrogation of God's Holy Days, while maintaining that the weekly Sabbath should be observed, need to examine the incongruity of their arguments. The main premise for their argument is that the Sabbath was given at creation, but the Holy Days were given to Israel at Mount Sinai.

The truth is, the Holy Days were not given to Israel at Mount Sinai. They were given to Israel two months before the law was given at Sinai. Since they were to be observed "in their seasons," and the sacrificial system did not commence until the second year after Israel left Egypt, Israel's first observance of the Holy Days was prior to the institution of sacrifices. The sacrifices were added to the Holy Days—one year after these days were ordained. Therefore one should not assume that just because Christ discontinued the sacrifices the Holy Days are likewise abrogated. If the Holy Days are abrogated, then the weekly Sabbath is also, because sacrifices were required on the weekly Sabbath as well (Numbers 28:9–10). Those who repudiate the Holy Days, because of the sacrifices enumerated in Leviticus, must of necessity also repudiate the weekly Sabbath. For, the weekly Sabbath is the first "feast" mentioned in Leviticus, chapter twenty-three.

As has been previously stated, the Holy Days were given to the church (Acts 7:38). Are we to assume that because the Holy Days were given to the church, no one but true Christians should keep them? Conversely, if the Sabbath were given to man, are we to assume that true Christians should be excluded from observing it? Those who say the institution of the Sabbath preceded the Old Covenant must admit the same thing about the Holy Days.

Those who say that the Sabbath was given for a sign to identify God's people (Exodus 31:13–17), must admit the same thing about God's Holy Days (Exodus 13:9).

Those who say that the Sabbath is the only sacred day to be observed by the New Testament church had better take another look. There is ample evidence that the New Testament church (both Jewish and Gentile)—as well as the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles—observed the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days.

Colossians 2:16 places the same amount of emphasis on both the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days.

In light of the overwhelming Bible evidence available, it is incongruous to maintain the observance of the weekly Sabbath while at the same time repudiating God's Holy Days! The weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days stand or fall together!

The assertion that it is not necessary to keep the Holy Days because there is no New Testament command applies to the weekly Sabbath as well. The New Testament proves conclusively that the church kept both the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days. The reason is that the New Testament church was the continuation of the Old. The Jewish system, with its sacrifices and civil government, went into oblivion with the destruction of the temple and the overthrow of the Jewish nation by the Romans, AD 70.

The New Testament church recognized that it was not the Law of God that changed, but how the law was to be administered. The Old Testament church was a mixture of church and state. The Law of God was enforced by a civil government. This was the "ministration of death" referred to by the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 3. Its glory was to fade away and to be superseded by the ministration of the Spirit (II Corinthians 3:7–8). Today, those who are led by the Spirit of God are under the ministration of the Spirit. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God (Romans 8:14). They have the mind of Christ. Jesus Christ dwells in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. They think and do the same things Jesus did when He was here on this earth two thousand years ago.

Christians know that Jesus Christ is the word of God personified. They know He was the God of the Old Testament (I Corinthians 10:4). As such, they know the Old Testament Scriptures are His words. They know Christians must live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). What was stated in the Old Testament, in the form of commands, is not necessary to repeat in the New. As far as the New Testament is concerned, what is shown by example and by instruction is sufficient authority for those who have an attitude of willing compliance. For they know that civil legislation by law cannot bring about a change of the mind and heart.

The entire approach in the New Testament is for the Christian to obey God by a desire of the mind and not by forced legislation. To institute the same kind of authoritative approach and legislative enforcement found in the Old Testament would utterly defeat the development of character by free moral agency. The experience of ancient Israel and their inability to live up to God's requirements—requirements enforced by civil authority—is evidence of man's inability to live up to what is required by an administrative system which forces obedience through fear of civil jurisdiction. The New Testament ministration is the present way God has chosen to demonstrate, to the world, that those called and chosen of Him can live up to the spiritual requirement of His Law without an authoritative approach and fear of punishment. The New Testament ministration is the development of character by free moral agency, apart from coercion and fear of civil authority. It is the demonstration, in the life of every true Christian, of willing compliance to live by every word of God. It is God's Law in the heart and mind!

Do the Holy Days stand or fall as a unit? First, the argument should be called to our attention that since the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread appear to be the only two

Holy Days commanded prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant, they are the only two which should be kept. This argument may sound logical—except for two things:

1. Why is it that after the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostles and the New Testament church kept the day of Pentecost? In fact, they were commanded to remain in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4). If, as some assume, the disciples were not waiting for Pentecost, but rather for the receipt of the Holy Spirit, then what were they doing at the temple on the Day of Pentecost?
2. Why did Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, strive to keep Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles? (Acts 18:21; 20:16). These texts clearly show that the Christians not only knew they should keep the Holy Days, but they knew they should be kept in their entirety.

If the giving of the Holy Days prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant was to include their observance as a unit, then it is plain to see they were observed as a unit during the first year before the addition of the sacrificial system. Those who repudiate the observance of God's Holy Days on the basis that only those which were commanded prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant should be kept—while at the same time adhering to the Sabbath—had better read Exodus 20:8. The Sabbath is included in the Old Covenant. If the basis of adhering to the Sabbath is its precedence to the "Law of Moses," then the same must be said about the Holy Days. For the Holy Days preceded the establishment of the Old Covenant as well. This is demonstrated by the fact that Holy Days, other than the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, were kept by the apostles!

### **Who Is the Faithful Servant?**

Jesus spoke of the faithful servant—the one, who at His return, would be giving His household meat in due season (Matthew 24:45). The significance of this statement can be understood in the light of God's Holy Days. It is the Holy Days which are to be proclaimed in their seasons. The inference from Jesus' statement is that, near or at His return, His faithful servants would be giving spiritual meat in due season—on God's annual Holy Days! This text, in itself, offers sufficient proof—to those with "eyes to see and ears to hear"—that God's Holy Days are not done away, and that true Christians will be observing them at the time Jesus Christ returns to this earth!