

FESTIVAL HANDBOOK

*** An Introduction to the Biblical Festivals ***

“These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations,
which ye shall proclaim in their seasons” (Leviticus 23:4)

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HOME CHURCH FESTIVAL HANDBOOK

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Introduction

The Biblical festivals observed by ancient Israel and the early Christian church are almost unknown to modern Christianity. Spiritual benefits and the historical heritage of these God ordained holy days have been virtually lost by the Christian world. God's Word presents several festivals that are to be observed by Christian Israel as perpetual holy days. These festivals or feasts are;

The Weekly Sabbath
Passover and Unleavened Bread
Pentecost

Trumpets
Atonement
Tabernacles

The above holy days were not invented by Moses or any sect such as the Pharisees. The Bible teaches them as ordained by God, and that they are to be observed as perpetual commandments. Such holy days are to be a joy and blessing to Christian Israel – serving as reminders each year of the great spiritual and historical message each festival highlights. They provide for the gathering together of Christian Israel folk found in the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and kindred nations dispersed throughout the world - who are the physical descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel taken into captivity over 2500 years ago by the Assyrian and Babylonian armies.

These festivals were observed by the early Christian church following the life and death of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately many folk are uneducated on what these Godly festivals are all about, and over the last two thousand years contemporary Christianity has replaced and corrupted these holy days with pagan influenced man made holidays.

We no longer offer animal sacrifices as observed by ancient Israel - these are now represented in Jesus Christ. The sacrificial parts of God's Law have not fallen away but are continued through the life, ministry and function of our Saviour. God's festival plan laid the foundation for several functions now found in Jesus Christ, and ensured the continuation of our peoples historical journey and spiritual heritage. Many areas of the Biblical festivals are relevant and practical to modern Christians.

Those who prefer to be spiritually correct or slumber in the mainstream comfort zone found in contemporary Christianity, and our modern world order, will not yearn to observe festivals outlined in this booklet. Some who desire to remain ignorant and closed to our Biblical festival history with its spiritual heritage will find this booklet offensive. The purpose of this booklet is to educate folk on the Biblical festivals outlined in Scripture, and shed light on why we observe such holy days. It is not my intention to convert the world – it is my intention to educate those who respect why we keep such festivals, and offer knowledge and encouragement to those who choose to keep God's feast days.

Jesus Christ observed the feasts recorded in this booklet. The Apostles and early church observed these festivals. Yet most present day Christians have nearly lost all meaning and observance of these Biblical holy days. Sadly those who attempt to practice God's festivals are often labeled with smear words such as “sect”, “Pharisee”, or “over religious”. Often they are ridiculed as those who are attempting to be saved by works - or are classed as members of Judaism.

Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost, Atonement, Trumpets and Tabernacles are Christian feasts. They are found in the Bible and do not represent exclusive Jewish festivals. Judaism observes some of the festivals outlined in this booklet plus other Jewish holidays not found in Scripture. You do not have to be Jewish to observe the God ordained holy days that are described in our Bible, and that were observed by Jesus Christ. All of God's creation can find blessing in the Bible Holy days.

Which Festivals did Jesus Christ and New Testament Christians Observe?

Jesus Christ and Festival Observance

Scripture reveals that Jesus Christ observed Biblical festivals such as the Sabbath, Passover and Tabernacles on a regular basis. This is in contrast to the non-Biblical festivals celebrated in the modern Christian world.

i) Jesus Christ and the Passover Festival (including the days of Unleavened Bread);

When aged twelve the parents of Christ took him to Jerusalem, in accordance with their custom, to observe Passover. They stayed in Jerusalem not only for Passover Day itself but also for the week or “days” of Unleavened Bread; *“Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of Passover¹. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days (the seven days of Unleavened Bread), as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind...” (Luke 2:41-43).*

Years later Christ continued the practice of attending Passover and Unleavened Bread; *“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem...now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did” (John 2:13,23).*

Just before His crucifixion Jesus celebrated Passover and Unleavened Bread with his followers; *“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said; ‘Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples’. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover” (Matthew 26:17-19).*

ii) Jesus Christ and The Festival of Tabernacles;

Christ attended the festival of Tabernacles even though death threats were directed toward Him. He taught in the temple and stayed for the entire festival week (until the “last great day” or last holy day of Tabernacles); *“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry (Judea), because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews feast of Tabernacles was at hand...then went he also up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret...now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught...in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink’ ” (John 7:1-13).*

¹ Remember that ‘Passover’ and the ‘Days of Unleavened Bread’ may be considered one festival (Leviticus 23:4-6). ‘Passover’, with regards to the crucifixion, denotes being delivered and saved out of bondage (as in the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage/Angel of Death), whilst ‘Unleavened Bread’ denotes the removal of sin - that which kept you in bondage (as in the removal of sin leaven instructed in I Corinthians 5:6-8). Passover and Unleavened Bread cannot be separated - as both constitute the Passover festival and are imperative to the meaning of the festival. Jesus Christ and New Testament Christians would not have kept the one and not the other.

iii) Jesus Christ and the Weekly Sabbath;

It was Jesus Christ's custom to attend Sabbath gatherings; *"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read"* (Luke 4:16).

We may conclude that Jesus Christ would of observed all Biblical festivals described in Leviticus chapter 23. He would not keep one festival whilst not observing the others – they are all equally important according to God's Word.

New Testament Christians and Festival Observance

After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ we find that Christians still celebrated the Biblical festivals. Biblical evidence questions whether Jesus Christ's Crucifixion or Resurrection brought change to the observance of the Bible feasts.

i) NT Christians and the Day of Pentecost;

Early Christians had the practice of celebrating Biblical festivals such as Pentecost. They had gathered in one place for a Pentecost service or holy convocation; *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"* (Acts 2:1-2).

Paul hastened to get to Jerusalem in time to attend the celebration of Pentecost; *"When they desired him to tarry longer with them, he consented not; But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you...for Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost"* (Acts 18:21, 20:16). It seems plans to celebrate this festival were important to Paul.

ii) NT Christians and Unleavened Bread;

Scripture indicates that the Biblical festivals were observed by Christians in Palestine after Christ's time on earth when it mentions the "Days of Unleavened Bread" (Unleavened Bread still featured on the early Christian calendar); *"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church...and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)"* (Acts 12:1,3).

On his way to Jerusalem for Pentecost Paul journeyed through Philippi. Paul departed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread because he celebrated the festival with fellow Christian believers; *"And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them in Traos in five days"* (Acts 20:6). During his rush to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost, Paul had taken the time to celebrate the week of Unleavened Bread in Philippi. If festival keeping was not important, and if he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, why did Paul not just continue his travels instead of remaining in Philippi to celebrate Unleavened Bread?

iii) NT Christians and the Sabbath;

Christian followers attended Sabbath gathering; *"But when they departed Perga, they came into Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down"* (Acts 13:14). Sabbath gathering was a regular weekly practice; *"And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them next sabbath...and*

the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God (Acts 13:42-44). We may note from the previous verse that the Gentiles also seemed to observe the Biblical Sabbath. These 'Gentiles' were those of the Kingdom of Israel who had been deported into captivity by the Assyrians centuries before, and were now scattered outside of Palestine. They were considered by many Jews² (or Judeans) in Palestine as cast away and divorced from God. If the Sabbath day had fallen away, or was not intended for these Gentiles, then why was it custom for them to attend Sabbath service - even after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ? *We read; "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day" (Acts 15:21).*

It was Paul's manner (regular practice) to preach on Sabbath day; *"And Paul as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbaths reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Acts 17:2).* Scripture has no record of Paul peaching Sunday observance as preference over the Sabbath day. See page 10 regarding the 'proof of Sabbath change'.

Should the sabbath commandment have fallen away or been altered like many churches preach today, surely those that walked with Jesus Christ and lived around His time would of known about it!

After examination of the above verses questions may be asked;

? If the aforementioned Biblical festivals were observed by New Testament Christians after Jesus Christ's death and ascension, how can one argue that they were terminated through His death or resurrection?

? The New Testament clearly shows that Paul found importance in keeping the Biblical festivals. How can folk use verses of Paul's to claim that he instructs little relevance to observe such feasts? (See 'argument 1' under "Arguments Used to do Away with Biblical Festival Observance").

? If Jesus Christ and New Testament Christians celebrated these Biblical festivals. How can folk ridicule those who celebrate these same festivals rather than observing man-made pagan influenced festivals such as Christmas or Easter?

NOTES:

2 'Jew' was a term used around the time of the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C). This word denotes those of the Kingdom of Judah that went captive to Babylon, and returned to Palestine after the collapse of the Babylonian Empire. Jew is not used as a synonym for the 12 tribes of Israel – this goes against Bible history. Abraham and other patriarchs were never 'Jews' - as the term only arose much later and referred exclusively to the citizens of the southern Kingdom of Judah. The 'Gentiles' in this verse refer to those Israelite tribes of the Northern Kingdom, who were taken captive and scattered by the earlier Assyrian conquest of Palestine (721 B.C). The word 'gentiles' means 'nations'. Which 'nations' being referred to depends on the context of the verse in which the words 'gentile' or 'gentiles' is used. (So you can have 'Israelite gentiles' or 'non-Israelite gentiles').

The Weekly Sabbath

The Biblical Sabbath is a weekly festival that falls on the Saturday of each week. The fourth commandment, or Sabbath instruction, is a perpetual commandment; *“Wherefor the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant” (Exodus 31:16).*

Scripture instructs that a holy convocation or church assembly is to take place on the Sabbath day, and that no labor or trade is allowed on the Sabbath; *“And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath...” (Nehemiah 10:31).* *“In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus and bring all thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day” (Nehemiah 13:15-19).* *“...Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 23:1-3).*

The Sabbath serves as a day of rest and church service. God's commandment of no hard labor and trade are parameters preventing it from becoming a regular week day. It serves as a day for rest with focus on God's Word, principles and laws. What better than to have a week day on which one is not obligated to labor or conduct business - whilst having time relax and focus upon God! For this reason He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and was not to serve as a religious burden; *“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27).*

The Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into a burden rather than a blessing. The Apostle Paul was clearly against this. A multitude of regulations had been introduced by the Pharisees to protect the Sabbath - with over 1500 of these regulations in practice by the Christian era. Many of these were man made. The Sabbath had turned from a loving day of rest and service into a day of ritual religion. It would be error to view the Sabbath according to this legalistic development - but such man made laws in no way may be used as justification to abolish, or change, the fourth commandment. Jesus Christ observed the Sabbath and was determined to restore it to its original blessing by His example.

The Sabbath and festivals are for the benefit of God's people through the themes and purpose they highlight. Activities that protect health and property are lawful on a Sabbath (see: Mark 2:24-27, Matthew 12:10-13, Luke 13:12-17, John 7:23-24)

Origin and Identification of the Sabbath

The Sabbath is a festival of God; *“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of Yahweh which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 23:1-3).*

The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week and the same day on which God rested after the creation; *“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day...” (Genesis 2:2).* *“...the seventh day is a sabbath of rest, an holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:3).*

Throughout Scripture and history this seventh day has remained unchanged; *“It is to be noted that in the Christian period, the order of the days of the week has never been interrupted” (Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume Three).*

The Sabbath day or seventh day is Saturday; *“And he (Joseph of Arimathea) took it (Christ’s body) down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre...and that day was the preparation (i.e. Friday), and the sabbath (i.e. Saturday) drew on...and they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday), very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre...and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre...and found not the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 23: 53-56, 24: 1-3).* In the previous verse we found family and followers of Jesus Christ observing the Sabbath after His crucifixion. Should the sacrifice upon the cross have done away with, or altered the Sabbath, will not these followers have known about any forthcoming change? The Church father Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-150) admits that; *“Sunday, indeed is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and matter, created the world (Day 1); and our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day (Sunday)” (Justin, I Apology 67, 5-7).* Although Justin Martyr had transferred the Sabbath observance to Sunday, for reasons not instructed in Scripture, he identifies the Biblical Sabbath as falling on the Saturday. Sunday is the first day of the week.

We conclude; *“Saturdays were special days for God’s people. They called Saturday the Sabbath. God had said it was a day for resting” (The Beginners Bible, 1989).*

THE BIBLICAL WEEK

DAY 1	D	D	D	D	DAY 6	DAY 7
SUNDAY -	A	A	A	A	FRIDAY – DAY OF PREPARATION	SATURDAY
CREATION	Y	Y	Y	Y		SABBATH
STARTS/CHRIST	2	3	4	5		
RESSURECTION						

Each day is measured according to Hebrew time - from sundown to sundown. The Sabbath is from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown (see Genesis 1).

Primary Sabbath Viewpoints

We may describe three primary perspectives regarding the Sabbath;

- i) **Sabbath Abrogation:** The idea that the Sabbath has fallen away and there is no longer any

commandment or instruction for a day of rest or sabbath.

ii) Sabbath Transference: The viewpoint that the Sabbath in its original sense is no longer relevant, and that the Sabbath of rest instructed in Scripture has been transferred from Saturday to another day (usually Sunday or 'The Lord's Day'). This viewpoint holds that Bible instruction and law pertaining to the Sabbath now has reference to the "Lord's Day", or Sunday, rather than the original Sabbath. Most mainstream churches have this viewpoint.

iii) Sabbath Permanence: The belief that the Sabbath commandment in its original sense is still applicable and that Saturday remains the Sabbath. Commandments and instruction concerning the Sabbath are still binding to Christians.

The Origin of Sunday or Sabbath Transference

Most churches recognize Sunday as the day of rest and have transferred many of the commandments concerning the Sabbath to the Lord's Day (Sunday). This took place after the New Testament church, and grew in popularity over several centuries. Some founders of this viewpoint actually did not even refer to the "Lord's Day" as a Sabbath, and they would be somewhat startled at the use of the term 'sabbath' for Sunday.

Many folk are uneducated concerning the whole origin of the Lord's day and still have the belief that it is the original Sabbath. The origin of the "Lord's Day" (or Sunday) as the day of rest can be attributed to several factors. Research into this 'sabbath transference' indicates the following as the key reasons for such transference;

i) The "Lord's Day" was adopted as the day of worship and rest because it is the first day of the week - the day on which Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and God had begun creation; *"The Lord's day was not declared to the Jews but to the Christians by the resurrection of the Lord and from that event its festivity had its origin"* (Augustine, Epistula 55, 23, 1, CSEL 34, 194). *"The Lord's day has been preferred to the Sabbath by the faith of the resurrection"* (Augustine, Epistula 36, 12, 14 CSEL 34,4). *"Sunday, indeed is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and matter, created the world; and our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day"* (Justin, I Apology 67, 5-7).

ii) The adoption of Sunday was an effort by early Christians to set themselves apart from Judaism and political persecution. Cyril of Jerusalem exhorted; *"Fall not away either into the sect of the Samaritans or into Judaism, for Jesus Christ has henceforth ransomed you. Stand aloof from all observances of Sabbaths and from calling any indifferent meats common or unclean"* (Catechetical Lectures 4:37, A.D 350). But does Scripture agree with Cyril's perspective on the Sabbath! The keeping of Sunday, in place of a Saturday, would also exempt one from paying a Sabbath tax that was enforced by the Romans upon those keeping Saturday Sabbath; *"The introduction of Sunday worship in place of 'Jewish' Sabbath keeping - the latter being particularly derided by several Roman writers of the time - could well represent a measure taken by leaders of the church of Rome to evidence their severance from Judaism and thereby also avoid the payment of a discriminatory tax"* (Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday, The Pontifical Gregorian Press, 1977)

iii) Sunday was an established holy day in other religions - thus allowing ease of conversion for pagans; *"Paganism suggested to those Christians who had previously known the*

day and the cult of the sun, the possibility of adopting the venerable day of the Sun as their new day of worship” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday, 1977).

After examining the above reasons behind the transfer, one must still ask whether God and Scripture alone give instruction to switch from Saturday to Sunday. We did find that Paul and Barnabas preached on the Saturday Sabbath after the death, resurrection and ascending of Jesus Christ. Surely they would of known about reasons to change the day if Cyril of Jerusalem wrote about a change in A.D 350!

In conclusion we read; *“The adoption of Sunday observance in place of the Sabbath did not occur in the primitive Church of Jerusalem by virtue of the authority of Christ or of the Apostles, but rather took place several decades later, seemingly in the Church of Rome...this means, to put it bluntly, that Sunday observance does not rest on a foundation of Biblical authority and/or of apostolic authority, but on later contributory factors...” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday, The Pontifical Gregorian Press, 1977).*

Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:2 – “Proof” of the Sabbath Change?

The above two verses are the most common references cited to indicate the change from Saturday to Sunday. Examination of these two verses will leave one in doubt as to them serving as such proof. Moreover, these two verses virtually represent the only so called 'proof' in the entire Bible.

Acts 20:7 ; Here Paul gathers with Christians on a Sunday ('the first day') to fellowship and 'break bread'. Folk claim that this breaking of bread is a communion service held on the weekly day of worship - thus indicating Sunday as the new Sabbath. We must admit however that the breaking of bread may refer to a normal meal eaten by Christians, where grace is offered to God for the meal provided. Furthermore, the sacrament of Communion was never a regular Sabbath service but was linked to the Passover and Unleavened Bread festival. Communion at Passover and Unleavened Bread was held at sunset on Passover day – which fell on any given day of the week depending on the year (as in accordance to the Hebrew calendar). Communion was never a regular weekly Sabbath sacrament, and there are no concrete verses in the Bible to indicate that it ever was. Paul had a fellowship service on that day and we are left in doubt as to whether the breaking of bread actually refers to a Communion sacrament, or merely to a normal meal amongst Christian believers.

I Corinthians 16:2 ; Instruction is given that tithes and donations for Paul and preachers are to be gathered on the first day (Sunday) – so that there be no such gatherings or donations when he comes. We understand that Paul and other preachers would gather for Holy Convocation on the Sabbath (Saturday) according to their established custom (Acts 13:4, Acts 13:42-44, Acts 15:21, Acts 17:2). This verse indicates that all tithes and donations were to be gathered on Sunday to avoid tithes and donations to be collected at a Saturday service - thereby preventing violation of the Sabbath instruction not to trade on the Sabbath day. This cannot serve as evidence to indicate Sunday as the new Sabbath. It rather strengthens the fact that God still holds Saturday as His Sabbath. Churches are not suppose to pass collection plates on God's Sabbath.

There are very few verses in Scripture that may be used to 'transfer' the Sabbath. This transfer was actually encouraged by later Church theologians outside the New Testament writings. The Biblical 'proof' of this 'transfer' revolve around the two verses above, and those that refer to the 'breaking of bread'. But verses that indicate 'Sabbath permanence' in the NT and OT are plenty.

“The Breaking of Bread” - Did it Change the Sabbath?

A common point argued to show the transfer from Sabbath to Sunday are Bible verses referring to the “breaking of bread”. These are claimed to represent holy convocations involving Communion on Sunday rather than Saturday - thus proof of transfer by Divine authority and the early Christian Church, with Sunday was the new Sabbath. The verse often cited as proof of this Sunday observance is I Corinthians 16:1-2. Breaking bread however is also a term used to indicate the taking of an ordinary meal as seen in Acts 27:35.

We read; *“Break bread does not generally refer to the 'Lord's supper' as some have mistakenly assumed... they then used a kind of bread such as is used in many countries today; instead of slicing it, they broke it. 'Break bread' is a common term to indicate a meal” (God's Festival and Holy days, Worldwide Church of God, 1992).*

Efforts to Eradicate Sabbath Observance

Over the last two thousand years major efforts have been made by the political and religious arena to eradicate Saturday Sabbath observance. Emperor Hadrian (A.D 117-138) outlawed Saturday Sabbath keeping. In AD. 321 Constantine proclaimed his “Sunday Edict”, decreeing that citizens in the Roman Empire are to respect Sunday as the day of rest. His Sunday Law of March 7, 321, reads; *“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits”*. No labor was allowed on Sunday except in the field of agriculture. Theodosius extended the Sunday Edict in AD. 386 to incorporate agriculture, so that no citizen in the Roman Empire was allowed to work on Sunday.

In AD. 363, Canon 29 of the Ecclesiastical Law of the Council of Laodocia made it a crime to observe a Saturday Sabbath, and any person found not working on Saturday would be excommunicated (anathema) from the church of Christ; *“Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, (i.e resting on Saturday) let them be anathema from Christ” (Canon 29, A.D 360)*. Imagine the impact such a law would have had on Sabbath keepers – in a time when the Bible was not available for the common person to read and research. Folk who rested on Saturday would be excommunicated from their sole source of spiritual fellowship and study!

The conclusion is clear. Since previous attempts at adopting the “Lord’s Day” (Sunday) as the day of rest and worship had failed to turn many Christian folk away from God’s Sabbath, it became necessary for authorities to make Saturday Sabbath observance a punishable crime. There was just not enough evidence in Scripture alone to offer mass conversion from Saturday to Sunday, so the contemporary church and politics were forced to use other methods to bring about the transfer.

We ask the following;

? Is there any verse in Scripture that proves, without a doubt, that God abolished the fourth commandment of Sabbath observance?

? Is there any concrete verse in the Old Testament, Gospels or Epistles that indicates God to have changed the fourth commandment of Sabbath observance to that of the “Lord’s day” or Sunday observance?

? Is there any justification, based on Scripture, to ridicule folk who abide by the fourth commandment (a God ordained Sabbath) rather than transforming it to the observance of Sunday or the “Lords Day” (a man-made sabbath)?

? Is Sunday still really treated by the contemporary church world as a sabbath – as most church goers purchase goods on Sunday whilst many retail businesses are open to trade?

? Do we consider the early Church writings outside Scripture as good enough reason to transfer the Sabbath to the Lord's day (Sunday)?

? Is not sound doctrine based on Scripture rather than post-Scripture writings and theology – even in the case of the Sabbath day?

NOTES:

Passover and Unleavened Bread: God’s Salvation and the Deliverance from Bondage

The Biblical Festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread is a week long festival. Passover falls on the fourteenth day of the first Hebrew month and is followed by the week of Unleavened Bread.; *“In the fourteenth day of the first month (14 Abib) at even is Yahweh’s passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Yahweh: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread” (Leviticus 23:5-6).*

The Passover occurred over 3500 years ago in Egypt. It was then that the passover lamb was sacrificed - with its blood painted on the lintel and posts of the homes. This would cause the tenth plague or 'death angel' to 'pass over that household and spare the life of the firstborn. Unleavened bread is consumed during the seven days after Passover. The festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread commemorate this great event and direct us to its spiritual significance found in Jesus Christ.

During the week of unleavened Bread all leaven is to be removed from one’s dwelling, and no leaven is to be consumed for the duration of this festival week; *“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, wether he be a stranger or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitation shall ye eat unleavened bread” (Exodus 12: 18-20).* The first and last day of Unleavened Bread are Festival Sabbaths or Holy Convocations; *“In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein...in the seventh day is an holy convocation ye shall do no servile work therein” (Leviticus 23:7-8).*

Scripture commands that this festival is to be an ordinance forever; *“And this day (Passover) shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast unto Yahweh throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever” (Exodus 12:14).* *“And ye shall keep this thing (Passover) for an ordinance to thee and thy sons forever (Exodus 12: 24).* *“And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever” (Exodus 12:17).* *“Thou shalt therefor keep this ordinance (Unleavened Bread) in his season from year to year” (Exodus 13:10).*

PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD

PASSOVER [-----DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD-----]

PASSOVER (14 ABIB) Removal of Leaven	HOLY DAY Day 1 (15 ABIB)	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	HOLY DAY Day 7
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The fourteenth of the first Hebrew Month marks Passover. By the 15th Abib all leaven and raising agents must be removed from the household. The first and last days of Unleavened Bread are treated as Sabbath days. Passover day itself is not a Holy day but a day for preparation. Communion takes place on the evening of the 14th Abib.

Themes of Passover and Unleavened Bread

Passover and Unleavened Bread reflect upon the salvation and deliverance from the physical bondage in Egypt, and focus upon Salvation and Deliverance from sin bondage through Jesus Christ. These two primary themes of Passover and Unleavened Bread can be detailed as follows:

A) Passover and Unleavened Bread focus upon the salvation and deliverance from Egypt (i.e. the exodus from Egypt); *“Then Moses called for the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of this house until the morning. For Yahweh will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the side posts, Yahweh will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses and smite you”* (Exodus 12:21-24). *“Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Yahweh. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leaven bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shall show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which Yahweh did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that Yahweh’s law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath Yahweh brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefor keep this an ordinance in his season from year to year”* (Exodus 13:6-10). Passover and Unleavened Bread serve as a reminder of our forefathers’ deliverance from the Egyptian bondage.

B) This festival has focus upon Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb - with the week of Unleavened Bread serving as an object lesson for the family/nation to remove sin from their lives as new creatures living in Jesus Christ’s salvation; *“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefor the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefor let us keep the feast not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”* (I Corinthians 5:7-8)³. Removal of the leaven serves as the outward symbol of the need to remove sin from our lives. Passover and Unleavened Bread serve as a time for self examination and sin removal, with focus upon Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb offering salvation.

Communion and Passover: Jesus Christ the Passover Sacrifice.

The evening of Passover (14th Abib) prior to the week of Unleavened Bread is the time for Holy Communion. Christian Israelites are called upon to take Holy Communion in order to accept (make) Jesus Christ their Perfect Passover Sacrifice.

The link of the Old Testament Passover bringing salvation from the wrath of God in Egypt to Jesus Christ bringing salvation from sin is clearly noted; *“There are two important aspects of Christ’s role as a lamb. The first involves the concept of a perfect sacrifice. Bible students will recall that the defining moment for Israel in the Old Testament was the terrifying tenth plague in the land of Egypt. It was only by smearing the blood of a lamb upon the lintel and doorposts of their homes that were they able to escape the death angel’s lethal presence (Exodus 12:3-14). The death of the innocent lamb was the price of life, personal liberty, and nationhood. Harmless and mild, the lamb had to die in order to purchase freedom for Israelites from the bondage of slavery. Similarly,*

³ Leaven is likened unto sin in Scripture (Luke 12:1) and the removal of leaven from the household will convey to children how one must remove sin from our lives. It serves as a time when the household may learn and focus on keeping out of sin bondage.

Christ had to die to purchase the freedom of Israelites from the bondage of sin. The reason his death was absolutely necessary is found imbedded in the sacrificial rituals of the Old testament. In Leviticus we discover the essential requirement for a sacrificial lamb...” (Reed Benson, Jesus Christ as the Lamb, The Vision, Church of Israel, April 1999).

We no longer slaughter the lamb, as in the Old Testament, because Christ serves as this Lamb Sacrifice (I Corinthians 5:7). Holy Communion is taken the night preceding Unleavened Bread just as the Old Testament Passover lamb was slaughtered and consumed on the 14th of Abib (or night of salvation in Egypt). In Communion we accept and make Jesus Christ our sin sacrifice. The slaughter of the lamb at Passover did not fall away but is continued through Holy Communion - serving each year as evidence of our accepting Jesus Christ as our Passover Sacrifice.

Our conclusion is that the Passover Communion represents salvation from sin whilst Unleavened Bread serves as the removal of sin, or what kept us in bondage.

The Wave Sheaf Offering: Pointing to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The Day of the Wave Sheaf falls on the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath that is found during the week of Unleavened Bread. This day is not a festival Sabbath (high holy day) but it does have a significant meaning needing celebration. The wave sheaf celebration will always fall on a Sunday as it follows a weekly Sabbath.

During Old Testament times the Wave Sheaf offering occurred when the first fruits of ripened barley were waved by the priest on this day to be accepted by Yahweh Almighty *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf of the before the Eternal, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Leviticus 23:10-11).*

The most important concept of this day is that it points to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His representation as the “first fruits” from the dead. Christ was crucified as the Passover Lamb prior the the weekend falling within the week of Unleavened Bread. On Friday Christ’s body was removed from the cross by His followers. After placing His body in the sepulchre, they hurried to return home for Sabbath preparation⁴. They remained at home for Sabbath celebration and returned early Sunday morning to Christ’s sepulchre; *“And he (Joseph of Arimathea) took it (Christ’s body) down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre...and that day was the preparation (Friday), and the sabbath (Saturday) drew on...and they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week (Sunday), very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre...and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre...and found not the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 23: 53-56, 24: 1-3). “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week (Sunday), came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre” (Matthew 28:1).* This Sunday following the weekly Sabbath during Passover and Unleavened Bread was the Day of the Wave Sheaf Offering. It was this very Sunday morning that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead.

This resurrection of Jesus Christ on the day of the Wave Sheaf finds its fulfillment in that the bodily resurrection of Christ represents the first fruits of the future resurrection - and the acceptance of this resurrection by God; *“But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that*

⁴ Friday was the “preparation day” that allowed for Sabbath preparation.

slept” (I Corinthians 15:20). We read; “The annual offering of the wave sheaf by the priest at Passover and Unleavened Bread was a prototype, a prefiguring, or shadow of the coming resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and represented the pledge of all who would be resurrected at His coming (Pastor Dan Gayman, *The Wave Sheaf Offering, The Vision, October 1996*).

The Sunday resurrection of Jesus Christ serves as the pledge of all who would be resurrected at the second coming, just as the wave sheaf of the Old Testament represented the greater harvest to come. Jesus Christ, as the first fruits of the resurrection to come, stands as the medium through which the greater resurrection harvest is accepted by God - in the same fashion as the wave sheaf presented on the Sunday morning during Unleavened Bread brought approval of the future harvest.

**Diagram below shows the outline of Passover 2006 as an example:
PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD 2006**

PASSOVER [-----DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD-----]

Passover preparation (14 ABIB) Removal of Leaven communion in evening. <i>Wednesday 12th April 2006.</i>	HOLY DAY Day 1 (15 ABIB) Festival Sabbath. Thursday 13th April 2006	Day 2	Day 3 Weekly Sabbath <i>Saturday 14th April 2006.</i>	Day 4 <u>Day of Wave Sheaf Offering.</u> Christ rose from grave. <i>Sunday 15th April 2006.</i>	Day 5	Day 6	HOLY DAY Day 7 Last festival day. Leaven may be eaten after sundown. Wednesday 19th April 2006.
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Unleavened Bread takes place from 13th April to 19th April. The Day of the Wave Sheaf will be the Sunday following the Weekly Sabbath. Passover and Unleavened Bread are calculated according to the Hebrew lunar calendar – so it will not fall on the same dates of our Gregorian Calendar each year. It usually occurs around March/April. Passover will not always fall in the same week as Easter, but 'moves' around Easter because of the two different calendars used to calculate two different festivals.

NOTES:

Communion: Making Jesus Christ our Lamb Sacrifice for Salvation

Communion is the ceremony that takes place on the evening of Passover when believers partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. Communion is the sacrament that represents the believer partaking of Jesus Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb, and is related to the Passover celebration initiated prior to the Exodus from Egypt. This Passover Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt served as the foundation for Christ's sacrifice represented in the Communion sacrament; *"The Old Testament Passover meal is brought into perfection in the celebration of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion (Pastor Dan Gayman, The Holy Sabbath and Festivals of the Bible)*. In Communion we are making Jesus Christ our Sin Sacrifice to offer Salvation. The slaughter of the lamb did not fall away but is continued through the Holy Communion Sacrament.

Jesus Christ as the Perfect Lamb Sacrifice

Jesus Christ represents the Perfect Lamb, without blemish or sin, that was crucified (i.e. sacrificed) to offer salvation from sin; *"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7)*. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Peter 1:18-19)*. Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah to come and His role as the sacrificial lamb; *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)*. Philip confirmed Jesus Christ as the perfect lamb sacrifice in his discussions with the eunuch; *"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb to his shearer, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and whom shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8: 32-35)*

Partaking of Jesus Christ's Passover Sacrifice

The sacrament of Holy Communion serves as the outward symbol indicating the partaking of Jesus Christ as the Passover Sacrifice. This Perfect Sacrifice offers salvation from sin. The Passover meal and sacrifice in Ancient Egypt brought salvation to Israel from the tenth plague, just as the Passover Sacrifice of Christ's crucifixion brings salvation from sin and the wrath of God.

Ancient Israel partook of the Passover sacrifice so that the blood of the lamb would offer Israelites salvation from the angel of death and God's judgment. New Testament Israelites partake of Jesus Christ's Passover Sacrifice that they may receive salvation from sin and God's judgment.

Communion serves as the method by which believers partake of the Passover Sacrifice found in Jesus Christ's death. Each year believers remember and partake of Christ's sacrifice - just as Old Testament Israelites partook of the lamb sacrifice each year after the exodus. We read; *"That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new*

testament in my blood: this do ye , as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11: 23-25). (See Mark 14:21-24 regarding Christ at the Last Supper communion service).

Sanctification Prior to Communion

The sacrament of Holy Communion must not be taken lightly for it represents the Body and Blood of Christ. Before the crucifixion of Christ we found great importance in Godly preparation prior to the Passover meal; *"And the Jews passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves" (John 11:55).* Even more so the act of Holy Communion, in remembrance and partaking of Christ's sacrifice, expects all earnestness and humility; *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11: 27-29).*

Children and Communion

Communion serves as acceptance or partaking of Jesus Christ as the Passover Sacrifice for Salvation. All men, including children, are with sin nature and are under God's Law; *"Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5).* *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin...for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:20,23).*

Children, as sinners, partake of the Passover Communion and are offered salvation through Jesus Christ. At Israel's salvation in Egypt the blood on the posts and lintel protected all in the household, including the woman and children. Likewise the Blood of Jesus Christ must protect all of God's elect, including the children. We conclude that the entire household, including children, would have partook in Old Testament passover preparation, removal of leaven, and the painting of blood on the door post for salvation. Are we to prevent children from partaking of the New Testament Passover that offers Salvation from sin?

One cannot deny children, who are corrupt with sin nature and condemned by the Law, the Communion sacrament that represents salvation from sin through Jesus Christ *"For whosoever shall offend one of these little ones (children) that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea...suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 9:42, 10:14).*

NOTES:

Pentecost: Festival of First - Fruits

The day of Pentecost falls on the Sunday following the seventh Sabbath after the day of the Wave Sheaf⁵. It is a day to be treated as a sabbath with the observance of Pentecost being a perpetual instruction; *“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days...And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations”* (Leviticus 23:15,16,21). The festival of Pentecost is also known as the feast of harvest (Exodus 23:16) and the feast of weeks (Exodus 34:22). The New testament refers to this festival as Pentecost (which means “fiftieth”) as it occurs 50 days after the Day of the Wave Sheaf Offering.

Themes of Pentecost

A) Pentecost places focus on the first fruits of the Spirit. This points toward two key thoughts;

i) That God's Elect have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit; *“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”* (Romans 8:23). The firstfruits of the Spirit offer promise to the full outpouring of the Spirit. The Greek word translated as “firstfruits” in Romans 8:23 may be defined as; *“firstfruits. The first portion of the harvest, regarded both as a first installment and as a pledge of the final delivery of the whole”* (Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers). We read; *“Pentecost symbolized the early rains of the agricultural year, which was a type of the coming of the early rain of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost which followed the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Acts 2:1 reveals that when Pentecost was fully come, on Pentecost Sunday, there followed a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the early rain of the Spirit, on the Living Church. The Old Testament Church received its Baptism or pledge of the Holy Spirit on this glorious day...The first Pentecost that followed the Exodus out of Egypt was attended with great signs and wonders (Exodus 19), and the first Pentecost that followed the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was witnessed by the symbols of wind, fire, and cloven tongues...The firstfruits of the Holy Spirit which came at Pentecost (Acts 2) are a pledge or earnest down payment of the great spiritual downpour that is to come when God’s covenant people repent and return to Him in the latter days”* (Pastor Dan Gayman, *The Vision, Volume 2 # 1*). We look forward to the time when the entire Spirit will be poured out and our bodies restored to their original uncorrupt state.

ii) That Pentecost has focus on the ‘spiritual’ aspects of God’s Law – by living according to the fruits, or guidance, of the spirit; *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law... If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Galations 5:22-25). The Old Testament gave focus upon keeping these spiritual aspects of God's Law as well as the physical aspects of God's Law. Often folk such as the Pharisees merely focused upon keeping the physical letter of the law and lost the

⁵The day of the Wave Sheaf is the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath that falls during Unleavened Bread

spiritual side of God's Law. The Law became a burden as they no longer kept it by bearing the correct spiritual fruits when applying God's Commandments. They twisted God's law and added man made laws in their effort to protect God's physical Law. Jesus Christ condemned them for this; *“But in vain do they (the Pharisees) worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men...For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man”* (Matthew 15:9,19-20). Pentecost places focus on bearing the fruits of the Spirit and not only obeying the physical letter of the Law. This begins by allowing our hearts to be under the guidance of the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit. We read; *“He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (Romans 13:8-9). These spiritual fruits of God's Law in no way remove importance in keeping the physical aspects of God's Commandments. There are still many practical aspects of the physical letter of the Law – especially with the health laws. See the diagram on page 42 regarding living according to the Spirit.

B) Pentecost reminds us of the spectacular wonders at Mount Sinai after the Exodus - with the outpouring of God's Law upon His Covenant People. It was at the time of Pentecost that Moses delivered God's ten commandments to our covenant people in the wilderness; *“In the third month, when the children of Isreal were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai...And Yahweh said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever...And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day Yahweh will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God...(Exodus 19)*. The ten commandments may be viewed as the representation (first fruits) or down payment of God's entire law. These ten commandments served as the first fruits or promise of the entire Law Word that would be given to Israel.

The Balance of Law and Grace

The call to focus on the spiritual aspects of God's law, rather than merely keeping the Law's physical aspects, is not restricted to the New Testament. Old Testament instruction was to... *“Circumcise therefor the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked”* (Deuteronomy 10:16) and that you must... *“rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Yahweh your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil “* (Joel 2:13). Most churches use the spirit of the Law, and Grace of Jesus Christ, as justification to abandon important physical components of God's Law. We are not to discard any part of God's Law, but are to keep it with with the correct spirit. Sin is the transgression of God's Law Word, and the Grace of Jesus Christ offers Atonement and Salvation for this sin. Without the Law we have no knowledge of sin – and no 'school master' to direct us toward Christ (Galations 3:24, I John 3:4).

Day of Trumpets: A Time of Revival and Gathering

The Day of Trumpets marks the beginning of the seventh Hebrew month. This month initiates the time of harvesting or gathering in Israel. Trumpets is treated as a Festival Sabbath with no trade or work to be done on that day. Scripture instructs that it is a festival of God with perpetual observance. We read; *“And Yahweh spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh” (Leviticus 23:23-25).*

Themes of the Day of Trumpets

A) The Feast of Trumpets focuses upon a time of revival: This involved trumpet blowing and a revival to God's Law and Principles. When the remnant of Judah returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity we find a great revival and reading of the Law on the Day of Trumpets; *“And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate: and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Yahweh had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and woman, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month (i.e. Day of Trumpets). And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and woman, and those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (Nehemiah 8:1-3).* The return of this remnant of Judeans, or “Jews” as they had become known, did not serve as the great 'exodus to come' or the regathering of God's people to their Covenant Land. It merely represented a mini revival and set the foundation for Jesus Christ to be born in Palestine. Trumpets brought about revival and a return to God's Law. The Book of Nehemiah offers example of the revival that took place.

B) The Feast of Trumpets focuses upon a time of trumpet blowing and gathering: This puts focus on the regathering of God's Covenant People at the return of Jesus Christ. God's people scattered throughout the world will be gathered together by His angels, just as a farmer gathers in the harvest. The dead shall be raised and incorruption will be poured out on those who have eternal life. We read; *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Yahweh in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isaiah 27:13). “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven... And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other Matthew 24:30-31). “And the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible (I Corinthians 15:52).* At this time of gathering and revival those who are found in the book of life, are judged (rewarded) according to God's Written Word or “books” as seen in Revelation 20:12-15.

Day of Atonement: The Frailty of Man and the Atoning Blood of Jesus Christ

The Biblical Festival of Atonement is a one day celebration to be observed forever by Christian Israel. It is considered a festival Sabbath on which no work is to be done. The instruction to “afflict your souls”⁶ indicates that it is to be a day of fasting (a 24 hour fast). Moreover, it is taught that a service gathering for believers (“holy convocation”) is to take place. We read; *“It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever...on the tenth day of this seventh month shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls...Ye shall do no manner of work : it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 16:31, Leviticus 23: 27,31).*

The Day of Atonement is observed according to Biblical times and therefor begins at sundown on the ninth day of the seventh Biblical month till sundown on the tenth day of the seventh month; *“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement...it shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath” (Leviticus 23:27, 32).*

Themes of the Day of Atonement

The primary themes of the Day of Atonement are the following:

A) By fasting we exercise the discipline of bringing the body (bodily desires and wants of the world) under the control of the spirit (conscience and connection with God). Through this outward action we remember the frailty and weakness of created mortal man when compared to the uncreated immortal God. It reminds of our sin nature and our physical shortages – highlighting the Atonement required for the sins committed. See the diagram on page 42 regarding living under the guidance of the spirit.

Sin Nature

We are in sin nature and only the Blood of Jesus Christ offers atonement for sin; *“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received atonement. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:11-12).* *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).*

The Psalmist David writes that from conception one is corrupted by sin nature; *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).* No person is born without having the infection of sin nature.

⁶ Isaiah 58:3-5

B) Recognition (confession) of sin and reconciliation to God through the Atonement function of Jesus Christ. Leviticus 16 indicates the rites to be carried out on the Day of Atonement – and sets the foundation of Christ representing our High Priest and Atonement Goat. Hebrews 9 records how Jesus Christ has carried out these Atonement rites;

i) Jesus Christ as our High Priest : In Old Testament times the day of Atonement was the festival where the high priest went into the second tabernacle or 'holy of holies' to offer atonement for sins committed by Israel (see Hebrews 9:7-10). These sin offerings were in the form of animal sacrifices and done according to the method outlined in Leviticus 16. The high priest was commanded to wear special garments of linen and carry out extensive purification cleansing during the proceeding. In Hebrews 9 we see how Christ has become our high priest; *“But Christ being being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”* (Hebrews 9:11-12). We find that our Saviour removed the barrier between His redeemed people and God. This was symbolized in the tearing away of the curtain found in the second tabernacle upon His death; *“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom...”* (Matthew 27:50-51). No longer do we need an earthly high priest and tabernacle because these find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the High Priest and mediator between sinners and God. Jesus Christ offers Atonement for sin, just as the high priest would offer atonement for sin in the Old Testament. We read that; *“...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But his man (Jesus Christ), after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God”* (Hebrews 10: 10-12). The physical tabernacle and high priest is not required as we approach God through Jesus Christ our High priest. The high priest and festival atonement function have not fallen away - but continues through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our High Priest and Atonement offering.

ii) Jesus Christ as the Atonement Sacrifice and 'scapegoat': On the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament two goats were presented before the high priest. One was sacrificed to offer atonement for sin whilst the other was sent into the wilderness alive (this may be referred to as the 'scapegoat'). Before being sent into the wilderness the priests would lay their hands on the live goat, and confess over it the sins of the people. This goat would bear the sins of God's people when released into the wilderness. Scripture indicates Jesus Christ's representation of the Atonement Goat and the scapegoat when we read; *“but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Yahweh hath laid on him (Jesus Christ) the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken... And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself?, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Hebrews 9:12, Isaiah 53:6-8, Acts 8:34-35). Jesus Christ is the Atonement Sacrifice, and the scapegoat, who bore our sins and made Atonement for His people; *“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”* (Romans 5:11). The Atonement Festival serves as a time to confirm Jesus Christ as our Atonement Sacrifice – the festival and sacrifice did not fall away but is continued each year through the function of Jesus Christ as the Atonement Lamb.*

Difference between Atonement and Salvation

Atonement: Refers to the payment required to reconcile or restore sinful man to Yahweh God. It refers to one having to pay restitution for wrong doing.

'Atonement' can be defined as the following:

“reparation made for an injury or wrong, the reconciliation of God and man brought about by the life and death of Christ” (American Heritage Dictionary).

“exchange (fig. adjustment) i.e. restoration to divine favor:- atonement, reconciliation” (Strong’s # 2643 of Strong’s Greek Dictionary).

Salvation: Is the blood spent to offer salvation from the wrath of God for our sins - as found in Jesus Christ being our Passover Sacrifice (just as the lamb on the door posts in ancient Egypt brought salvation from the judgement of the tenth plague).

'Salvation' can be defined as the following:

“act of saving; deliverence from danger or destruction; the setting free of men from the power and punishment of sin... (Royal English Dictionary, Thomas T Maclagan, M.A, Nelson and Sons, 1894).

Festival of Tabernacles: God’s Tabernacle with Men - and the Blessings He provides

The Festival of Tabernacles is a week long festival beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh Hebrew month. The first and last day of Tabernacles are festival Sabbaths on which no work or trade is to be done. Scripture records that daily Bible reading, and holy convocations on the first and last day, are to take place during this important festival. Moreover, the Bible instructs that the celebration of Tabernacles is a perpetual commandment; *“And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days...on the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein...on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you...and ye shall do no servile work therein...and ye shall keep it a feast unto Yahweh seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month” (Leviticus 23:34-36, 41).* *“Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he (Ezra) read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast (Tabernacles) seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according to the manner” (Nehemiah 8:18).*

Themes of the Festival of Tabernacles

The primary themes of Tabernacles are the following;

A) Tabernacles serves as a week to focus on the concept of 'God’s Tabernacle with Men' (or presence with men). This directs us toward three key events:

- i) **Israel living in tabernacles after the Exodus from Egypt**, when God tabernacled with, and led, our Covenant people to Palestine; *“That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths (tabernacles), when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I am Yahweh your God” (Leviticus 23:43)*. We are reminded, as with other festivals, of our people’s history.
- ii) **The birth of Jesus Christ when God (in Christ’s flesh form) tabernacled or was with his people on earth.**
- iii) **The time when God’s tabernacle in the Eternal Kingdom is established on earth;** *“Behold the day of Yahweh cometh...and Yahweh my God shall come, and all saints with thee...and Yahweh shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one... and it shall come to pass ,that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:1,5,9,16)*. *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first earth was passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:1-3)*.

B) The Festival of Tabernacles focuses upon the blessings that God provides for His Covenant people and creation; *“Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto Yahweh thy God...because Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thy hands, therefor thou shalt surely rejoice” (Deuteronomy 16:13-15)*. It is to be a festival of joy and thanksgiving. Tabernacles is seven days – with the 8th day as the 'great day' to be treated as a Sabbath.

Jesus Christ kept the Festival of Tabernacles, where he stayed throughout this festival week and taught in the temple; *“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry (Judea), because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews feast of Tabernacles was at hand...then went he also up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret...now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught...in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink’⁷” (John 7:1-13)*. Surely we can celebrate Tabernacles if Jesus Christ attended this Biblical festival?

The Week of Tabernacles

Day1	Day2	Day3	Day4	Day5	Day6	Day7	Great Day (8)
Treated as Sabbath							Treated as Sabbath

7 Tabernacles had focus on Godly blessings – this included prayers for rain and water that is in short supply this time of year in Palestine. So Jesus Christ announced the ultimate blessing – He is the greatest 'water blessing' of all.

New Moon – The Beginning of the Biblical Month

The New Moon⁸ marks the start of each Hebrew Month. New Moon is not treated as a Sabbath day, but is an important time for the family and community to have an evening dedicated unto God and His principles. New Moon serves as an excellent time to have Bible study and family activities. It may serve as a time of song and prayer - offering worship and thanksgiving for the past month and the month ahead. The New Moon is not mentioned in Leviticus 23, but we find that it was celebrated with the other festivals. We read; *“Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto Yahweh on the altar of Yahweh, which he had built before the porch, Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles” (II Chronicles 8:12-13).*

After the Babylonian captivity the New Moon, with the other festivals, were still observed; *“They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to custom, as the duty of every day required; And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of Yahweh...” (Ezra 3:4-5).* The above verse describes the period of revival that took place when the prophet Ezra, and some that were taken captive to Babylon, had returned to Jerusalem after the collapse of the Babylonian Empire.

Scripture indicates that the New Moon will be kept after the great judgment and Kingdom to Come.; *“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Yahweh. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh” (Isaiah 66:23-24).*

Collection for the New Moon was carried out with the collection for the church and the other festivals; *“Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with, The third part a shekel for the service of the house of our God; For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of God (Nehemiah 10:32-33).* Jesus Christ now represents the sacrifices made for Israel's Atonement – but the New Moon and festivals continue with the emphasis on the sacrificial function of Christ.

The New Moon serves as a monthly evening for the gathering of Christian Israelites. I Samuel 20:5-24 indicate that a great evening meal was held at New Moon. Focus is placed upon thanksgiving for each month and the sacrificial function of Jesus Christ. Bible study, song, eating a nice meal, family activities and other related events will make New Moon a joyous event. The New Moon is not treated as a Sabbath on which no trade or labor is to be carried out.

Our question is this;

? Is there any harm in observing the start of the Biblical month with the New Moon of thanksgiving, worship and family activities?

⁸ The New Moon is calculated by the phases of our moon. Most modern diaries still indicate the evening of the New Moon.

Outline of The Biblical Festivals

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Key Themes</i>	<i>Time of Year</i>
Passover and Unleavened Bread	i) Passover and Exodus from Egypt ii) Jesus Christ as Salvation from Sin and firstfruits of resurrection to come; iii) Removal of sin (leaven) from our lives.	March/April/May – Hebrew month of Abib. <i>Jewish name: Pesach</i>
Pentecost or 'feast of weeks', 'first fruits'.	Festival of Firstfruits: i) Giving of ten Commandments; ii) Outpouring of first fruits of Holy Ghost - and living by the guidance and fruits of the Spirit.	June/July – 50 days after Wave Sheaf - 3 rd Hebrew month (Sivan) <i>Jewish name: Shavout</i>
Trumpets	Revival and gathering: i) Law reading and revival; ii) Gathering of God's Elect at end times	September/October - 1 st day of 7 th Hebrew month (Tishri or Ethanim) <i>Jewish name: Rosh Hashanah</i>
Atonement	i) Jesus Christ as Atonement for sin, High priest and Scapegoat; ii) Frailty and sin nature of man compared to our all-powerful and all-knowing God. (day of fasting).	September/October - 7 th Hebrew month (Tishri or Ethanim) <i>Jewish name: Yom Kippur</i>
Tabernacles or 'the festival of booths'.	Gods tabernacle with Men and the blessings He provides: i) God with us in the wilderness, Birth of Jesus Christ, God's Tabernacle with us at the Restoration of His Kingdom on Earth; ii) The blessings that God provides.	September/October - 7 th Hebrew month (Tishri or Ethanim) <i>Jewish name: Sukkot</i>
New Moon	Start of Biblical Month. Thanksgiving, worship, and family/community gathering and activities.	Evening of the New Moon.
Sabbath	Weekly day of rest.	Saturdays

Service Suggestions – Making the Festival a Joyous Event.

“And I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved” (Psalm 119:47)

The Biblical festivals are to serve as joyous times of the year. Not only are they yearly reminders of our historical and spiritual Christian heritage, but they offer a time for families and Covenant Christians to gather together. The Bible feasts are in no way to be religious burdens. Each festival can have daily Bible studies and Bible song. Children may be encouraged to enjoy the festivals with color in pictures and activities relating to festival themes. We are in a world that places stress and pressure upon those who celebrate the Bible Holy days.

Often work obligations and contemporary peer pressure make it difficult to keep the festivals as outlined in Scripture. Even with pressures of work, time may be made in the evenings to have festival activities and functions. We are all working out our salvation before God. Each has their own circumstances they are in – yet we are not to use society and circumstances to remove our obligation and opportunity to celebrate God's Holy days. God knows our hearts and efforts. Our attitude and what we make of the festivals will dictate whether we find them a joy or a burden.

We are in a generation that knows and respects little about the festivals outlined in this booklet. Yet for the sake of the faith delivered to the saints, and our children's future, we need to find the time and make the effort to celebrate the Christian heritage God gave us; *“Also I heard the voice of Yahweh, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).* Let us be like Isaiah when it comes to God's special days! Our family can be excited and interested about God's feasts just as folk get excited about their pagan influenced holidays.

The Bible festivals of Leviticus 23 have many practical and spiritual benefits today. Let us look at some notes and ideas;

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Study Ideas</i>
Passover and Unleavened Bread	Passover is the preparation day for removing the leaven and raising agents from the home. Teach children how this reflects the removal of sin; Communion held on Passover day at sundown; First to last days of Unleavened Bread serve as a time where no leaven or raising agents are consumed. Try exciting menus and methods in doing this. We really get to see how much bread and raising agents feature in our lives – so does sin and the need for Jesus Christ!; Children may be encouraged to assist in making the unleavened bread and helping with the communion service.	Story of Exodus; Story of Christs death; Talks about Ancient Egypt; Daily Bible study and song; Examine ourselves and remove sin leaven from our lives.

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Study Ideas</i>
Pentecost	<p>Single feast day that always falls on a Sunday.</p> <p>Festival of First fruits;</p> <p>Giving of Ten Commandments;</p> <p>Outpouring of first fruits of Holy Ghost - and living by the guidance and fruits of the Spirit.</p>	<p>Story of Ten Commandments;</p> <p>Story about Holy Spirit and bearing good fruit by the way we live and conduct ourselves.</p>
Trumpets	<p>Revival and gathering together;</p> <p>Law reading and revival;</p> <p>Gathering of God's Elect at end times.</p>	<p>Story of Assyrian, Babylonian Captivity and our scattered people;</p> <p>Study of 2nd coming of Christ with the greater exodus and gathering to come;</p> <p>Study on the practical aspects of God's Law.</p>
Atonement	<p>Single festival day;</p> <p>Day of fasting from sundown previous day to sundown on Atonement day.</p> <p>Jesus Christ as Atonement for sin, High priest and Scapegoat;</p> <p>Frailty and sin nature of man compared to our all-powerful and all-knowing God.</p>	<p>Talk about the scapegoat and Jesus Christ as our Atonement;</p> <p>Study on us as created mortals and Yahweh as the Uncreated God.</p> <p>Have a big family supper or eat out when the sun goes down!</p>
Tabernacles	<p>First and 'last great day' (8th day) are treated as Sabbaths;</p> <p>God's tabernacle with Men and the blessings He provides;</p> <p>God with us in the wilderness, Birth of Jesus Christ, God's Tabernacle with us at the Restoration of His Kingdom on Earth;</p> <p>The blessings that God provides.</p>	<p>Candle and lamp song evenings;</p> <p>Daily Bible studies;</p> <p>Count the blessings we have!;</p> <p>Story of Christ's Birth and God's Tabernacle;</p> <p>Christ as the water and bread of life – God's finest blessing for us.</p>
Sabbath	<p>Weekly day of rest. Activities to preserve life and property are allowed. The Sabbath was made for man - to <u>respect</u> and enjoy ! Time for the</p>	<p>Day of rest for the family;</p>

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Study Ideas</i>
(Sabbath cont.)	whole family to relax and have a Church service; Good day for games, puzzles and activities that build the family. Children enjoy the festivals if you make it enjoyable. No trade or heavy labor. Use Friday to prepare and get your last minute groceries!	Light/easy meals – mothers must rest too!; Standard Church service Make a Sabbath folder for each child - for them to collect their Bible study pictures etc. Use stars when they do really well and participate in the Sabbath and festival days.

Bible Festival Dates 2006-2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>Passover**</i>	<i>Unleavened Bread</i>	<i>Pentecost</i>	<i>Trumpets</i>	<i>Atonement</i>	<i>Tabernacles*</i>
2006	April 12	April 13 - 19	June 4	Sept. 23	Oct. 2	Oct. 7 - 14
2007	April 2	April 3 - 9	May 27	Sept. 13	Sept. 22	Sept. 27 – Oct. 4
2008	April 19	April 20 - 26	June 8	Sept. 30	Oct. 9	Oct. 14 - 21
2009	April 8	April 9-15	May 31	Sept. 19	Sept. 28	Oct. 3 - 10
2010	March 29	March 30 - April 5	May 23	Sept. 9	Sept. 18	Sept. 23 - 30
2011	April 18	April 19 - 25	June 12	Sept. 29	Oct. 8	Oct. 13 - 20
2012	April 6	April 7-13	May 27	Sept. 17	Sept. 26	Oct. 1 - 8
2013	March 25	March 26 - April 1	May 19	Sept. 5	Sept. 14	Sept. 19 - 26
2014	April 14	April 15 - 21	June 8	Sept. 25	Oct. 5	Oct. 9 - 16
2015	April 1	April 2 - 8	May 24?	Sept. 14	Sept. 23	Sept. 28 – Oct. 5
2016	April 22	April 23 - 29	June 12	Oct. 3	Oct. 12	Oct. 17 - 24

Above table drawn up from resources on the internet – festival days are according to Hebrew reckoning (sundown to sundown). The above dates have been compiled as accurately as possible with the information that was available in 2006. ** Passover and Unleavened Bread may be considered one festival. *The last day of Tabernacles is the 'great day' or 8th day – this is treated as a Sabbath.

Christmas: A Pagan Festival fused into Modern Christianity

Christmas is a pagan celebration that was 'Christianized' around the fourth century in order to increase the number of converts, and allow new converts to maintain some aspects of their original pagan practice; *"Christmas seems to have started widely in the fourth century, to commemorate the birth of Jesus. There was considerable uncertainty about the correct date. Most of the Eastern churches settled for 6th January, but the West chose 25th December. It is not known for certain why these dates were picked, but it is possible that Christian churches chose days which are already public holidays for pagan celebrations (Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity, Purnell and Sons Ltd, 1977). A definition of 'Christmas' is given as the... "Annual festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. It has been kept throughout Christendom on Dec. 25, since about the year 400 (The New Standard Encyclopaedia, Odhams press Ltd, 1936).*

It is certain that the modern Christmas celebration is remnant of the heathen feast of 'Natalis Invinci'; *"The adoption of 25th December for the celebration of Christmas is perhaps the most explicit example of Sun-worship's influence on the Christian liturgical calendar. It is a known fact that the feast of the 'dies natalis Solis Invicti' - the birth of the Invincible Sun was held on that date" (From Sabbath to Sunday, S. Bacchiocchi, 1993). Moreover, many activities of Christmas originate from pagan activities practised in honour of heathen gods; "The authors whom we consulted on this point are unanimous in admitting the influence of the pagan celebration held in honour of Deus Sol Invictus on the 25th December, the 'Natalis Invicti', on the Christian celebration of Christmas. This influence is held responsible for the shifting to the 25th of December the birth of Christ, which had until then been held on the day of Epiphany, the 6th of January. The celebration of the birth of the Sun god, which was accompanied by a profusion of light and torches and the decoration of branches of small trees, had captivated the followers of the cult to such a degree that even after they had converted to Christianity they continued to celebrate the feast of the birth of the Sun god" (Gaston H. Halsberghe, The Cult of Deus Sol Invictus).*

December the 25th was also the last day in the pagan week of Saturnalia; *"Christendom celebrates Christmas from December 24-25. Astronomers and historians, secular and ecclesiastical, are however unanimous that December 25 of the year zero was not the authentic date of the birth of Christ, neither as regards the year nor the day...December 25 is referred to in documents as Christmas day in AD. 354 for the first time. Under the Roman emperor Justinian it was recognised as an official holiday. An old Roman festival played a major part in the choice of this particular day. December 25 in ancient Rome was the "Dies Natalis Invinci", "the birthday of the unconquered", the day of the winter solstice and at the same time, in Rome, the last day of Saturnalia, which had long since degenerated into a week of unbridled carnival..." (Werner Keller, The Bible as History, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1958).*

It must be noted that nowhere in Scripture is there any instruction to celebrate Christmas. On the contrary, the Bible warns that one must 'not learn the way of the heathen'; *"Thus sayeth Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they they fasten it with nails and hammers that it move not" (Jeremiah 10:1-4). Does this verse not describe the 'Christmas tree' – the pagan symbol which God's people will encounter when taken captive to*

Babylon?

It is worth noting that the above verse was written prior to the deportation of Judah into ancient Babylon - where God's people would be pressured by an assortment of heathen customs. This ties up with the evidence that the date of December 25th, and its pagan activities, extend not only back to the cult of 'Deus Sol Invictus' but originated in ancient Babylonian religion; *"It is important to remember that the religious festival of Christmas has not always been a feast day of the Christian Church...The heathen origin of Christmas can be traced to Babylon, back to Babel and Nimrod, the founder of the city of Babel, and the religion of Babylon in the post-flood history of Genesis...historians claim that Nimrod married his mother and to this union was born a child. After Nimrod died, his mother/wife perpetuated him as a spirit being who never died and claimed that a full grown evergreen tree sprang from a dead tree stump which symbolized the dead Nimrod springing to life. On each anniversary of his birthday, December 25th, Nimrod would visit this evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it"* (Pastor Dan Gayman, *The Holy Sabbath and Festivals of the Bible*).

We know for certain that Jesus Christ was not born around the month of December as the temperature was too cold at that time for the shepherds to be out at night; *"At Christmas-time Bethlehem is in the grip of frost, and in the Promised Land no cattle would have been in the fields in that temperature...the flocks were put out to grass in March and brought in again at the beginning of November. What St. Luke tells us points therefore to the birth of Jesus as having taken place before the onset of winter (i.e not in December)"* (Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*).

The viewpoint often announced is that it does not matter what day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and many claim the adoption or 'Christianizing' of the December 25th pagan festival as allowed and in the interest of Christian growth. Some questions do arise from the above;

? If it is acceptable to adopt, and Christianize, a pagan festival how are we to interpret, and what do we do with, the verses that instruct us to *"learn not the way of the heathen"* (Jeremiah 10:2).

? If we Christianize the pagan festival of sun worship may we also adopt other pagan temples, traditions, statues and symbols in order to Christianize these?

? Does the modern celebration of Christmas with its drunkenness, lust of flesh, big business, gift giving and Santa decorations reflect what God expected and instructed during his holy festivals?

? How can we justify adopting heathen festivals whilst doing away with the Biblical festivals of Sabbath, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles - especially when these Biblical festivals are instructed as being perpetual ?

? Is there any verse in the Old Testament, Gospels or Epistles that gives encouragement, or instruction, to adopt December the 25th as the festival to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ?

? Did Jesus Christ and New Testament Christians observe Christmas or the Biblical festivals described and instructed in Scripture?

Considering the facts regarding the origin of Christmas one must acknowledge it would be foolish to ridicule Christians who do not celebrate Christmas but prefer to celebrate Biblical festivals.

Easter: Originating in the Ancient Pagan Festivals of Fertility

Easter is a pagan celebration, like Christmas, that was incorporated into Christianity around the second century - long after the birth and death of Jesus Christ.

The word 'Easter' is derived from a pagan goddess. Encyclopedia definitions under the word 'Easter' read; *"Ecclesiastical festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. Celebrated since the 2nd century"* (*New Standard Encyclopedia*). *"Easter, n., Anglo Saxon, from Eastre, a goddess whose festival was held in April"* (*Royal English Dictionary, 1894*). Historically an assortment of pagan goddesses can be attributed to the origin of the word 'Easter'; *"It is well known that 'Easter' is not a Christian expression - not in its original meaning. Easter is but a more modern form of Eostre, Ostera, Astarte⁹, or Ishtar¹⁰, the latter, according to Hislop, being pronounced as we pronounce 'Easter' today"* (*Babylon Mystery Religion, Ralph Woodrow, 1981, Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association*).

As with Christmas many Easter activities and symbols are from pagan sources and not the Bible. The egg and rabbit of Easter celebrations are items used by ancient pagan nations to associate with fertility; *"The egg as a symbol of fertility and renewed life goes back to the Ancient Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of colouring and eating eggs during their spring festival...the rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility"* (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). The 'easter rabbit' had found its origins in ancient Egypt and other pagan nations; *"Like the Easter egg, the Easter hare came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples...Through the fact that the Egyptians word for hare, 'um', means also 'open' and 'period', the hare came to be associated with the idea of periodicity, both lunar and human, and with the beginning of new life in both the young man and young woman, and so a symbol of fertility and of the renewal of life. As such, the hare became linked with Easter..."* (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

Folk often turn to Acts 12:4 to indicate that Easter is mentioned in Scripture, and that the word 'Easter' in the above verse is the same as the word 'Passover'; *"And because he (Herod) saw it pleased the Jews he proceeded to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison...intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people"* (*Acts 12:3-4*). Peter was arrested during the week of Unleavened Bread - Remember that Passover day always preceded the days of Unleavened Bread. The Biblical day of Passover had already passed when Peter was arrested during Unleavened Bread. Herod celebrated the pagan festival of fertility that is translated 'Easter' in Acts 12:4. He had intended to deliver Peter to the mob after his pagan celebration. The translators of the 1611 Authorised King James version give us a clear distinction between the festivals of Passover and Easter when they translated 'Easter' in Acts 12:4. Furthermore, there is no actual instruction to celebrate Easter in Acts Chapter 12. Dr. Samuel C. Gipp writes; *"Coming to the word 'Easter' in God's Authorised Bible, they seize upon it imagining that they have found proof that the Bible is not perfect. Fortunately for lovers of the Word of God, they are wrong. Easter, as we know it, comes from the ancient pagan festival of Astarte. Also known as Ishtar (pronounced 'Easter'). This festival has always been held late in the*

⁹ Astarte is the Phoenician and Canaanite goddess of fertility also known as Ashterah to other pagan nations.

¹⁰ Ishtar is a goddess of fertility that can be traced back to the Mari Empire and other ancient Mesopotamian kingdoms over 4000 years ago.

month of April. It was, in its original form, a celebration of the earth regenerating itself after the winter season. The festival involved a celebration of reproduction. For this reason the common symbols of Easter festivities were the rabbit (the same symbol as "Playboy" magazine), and the egg. Both are known for their reproductive capabilities. At the centre of attention was Astarte, the female deity...It is elementary to see that Herod, in Acts 12, had arrested Peter during the days of unleavened bread, after the passover...Shortly there after would come Herod's celebration of pagan Easter...Thus we see that it was God's providence which had the Spirit-filled translators of our Bible (King James) to correctly translate "pascha" as "Easter". It most certainly did not refer to the Jewish passover. In fact, to change it to "passover" would confuse the reader and make the truth of the situation unclear" (Samuel C. Gipp, Th.D., The Answer Book: A Helpbook for Christians, Bible and Literature Missionary Foundation, 1989).

Whichever way one looks at it concerning the translation 'easter' in Acts 12, the point is that not one verse in Scripture instructs Christians to celebrate Easter in its modern form. There are distinct differences between Passover and Easter that make it impossible for these two festivals to be considered the same.

A final word of caution may be summed up by the Word of God; *"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them (foreign nations), after they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise" (Deuteronomy 12:30).* Surely the modern Easter celebration is in clear violation of the this verse?

NOTES:

The Day of The Vow: It is God who Provides His People with Victory

(for South Africans)

The Day of the Vow (Also known as Dingaan's Day or Day of the Covenant) commemorates the victory God gave a group of His Covenant People over a numerically superior hostile non-covenant nation. The Day of the Vow falls on December 16th each year and is to be treated as a day of remembrance because of the promise made by Bible believing Covenant South African's prior to their victory over the powerful Zulu army. On 16th December 1838 a small force of South African Voortrekkers (Pioneers) fought the 'Battle of Blood River' against approximately 11 000 Zulu warriors. Several days before that great battle the Trekkers made a promise to God, should He give them victory, that the day would forever be kept as a day to remember the victory God gives His people.

The European pioneers or voortrekkers had left the Cape Colony in 1836 to inhabit areas of Southern Africa which had been made sparsely populated by the earlier Bantu wars. We read *"There were few dangers, however, apart from wild beasts. There were no Native tribes to bar their way; there were deserted kraals and the veld was littered with the bones of the tribes that had been massacred by the warlike Matabele and Zulu in their devastating raids"* (*Europe and South Africa: A History for South African Schools by A.N Boyce, 1970, Rustica press*). The Zulu nation was at the same time settling itself along the east coast of South Africa after having annihilated the other Bantu tribes in the area. A trekker leader, Piet Retief, had got the Zulu chief Dingaan to cede areas of land to the voortrekkers. But shortly thereafter Dingaan murdered Retief's party and attacked many voortrekker settlements in the area. With tension between the Zulus and Trekkers the scene was set for a major showdown between the two expanding races.

A book on South African history writes; *"...in November 1838 there arrived the last of the Voortrekker leaders to have left the colony - Andries Pretorius. He was now made commandant and put new heart into the people. Early in December he had formed a commando of 464 men and they moved off into Zululand...they were conscience of the fact that they faced terrific odds and knew that if God was not with them their chances of emerging victorious were slight...at a place called Danskraal, Charl Cilliers, standing on a gun carriage, led the combined commando in a prayer for deliverence. An oath was taken to the effect that if God gave them the victory, the day would ever afterwards be held in remembrance as a day of thanksgiving. About a week later the commando occupied a position on the banks of a river called Ncome, a name soon to be changed to Blood River. The site of the laager was well chosen for on one side the camp was protected by a donga fourteen feet deep which opened into the river, and on the another side there was the river which at this spot formed a long deep pool. On the other side the laager was on open ground and so here the wagons were placed end to end and bound together. Ox hides were bound over the wheels. Behind each wagon there were heaps of gunpowder and bullets. At dawn on Sunday, 16 December, thousands of savage warriors attacked the laager but they were driven off after an engagement of two hours...the commando routed the retreating Zulus about 3,000 whom died that day. only three Trekkers wee wounded in the engagement"* (*Europe and South Africa: A History for South African Schools by A.N Boyce, 1970, Rustica press*). Since that day many Covenant South African's have held true to the vow made in 1838 and have observed December the 16th as a day to celebrate the victory .

The Day of the Vow is not restricted to Afrikaans South Africans only. It can be noted that on many occasions others besides Afrikaners took part in the struggle against non-believing nations in Southern Africa. Three English folk were actually present at the Battle of Blood River. Moreover, several months before, Theresa Viglione from a band of Italian peddlers rode along the banks of the Bushman's river to warn the Trekkers that the Zulus were on a rampage, and had slaughtered Trekker families along the Bloukrans. It would be arrogant to consider Afrikaans or Dutch pioneers as the only Europeans who took part in the Great Trek, Battle of Blood River, and building of civilization in South Africa. All covenant South Africans can share in the victory and focus of this important date involving the struggle against the savage non-Christian nations of Southern Africa.

Unfortunately in South Africa the Day of the Vow has been replaced by the 'Day of Reconciliation' - that serves as another step to blotting out the history of Christianity in South Africa. The Day of the Vow has been turned into a holiday rather than a day to offer thanksgiving to God. The Day of the Vow is not a time for holiday activities but rather serves as a time to observe a remembrance day of rest with emphasis on its important history and theme.

Themes of the Day of the Vow.

Important themes are found in the Day of the Vow;

A) Most noticeably this day is a remembrance of the victory God gave the Bible believing Trekkers camped at Blood River over a pagan nation. It indicates the struggle of civilization to penetrate and settle a dark continent, and identifies with the struggle to maintain self preservation and separate development.

There is no sin in allowing every species or race created by God to maintain its heritage, culture and survival through self preservation. God does not ordain the extinction of any part of his creation and desires the preservation of His original design for all of His creation. The Day of the Vow has focus upon the victory that an outnumbered Christian people had over a non-Christian race that sought to physically exterminate their existence.

The Zulu army had no intention of sending missionaries, building schools, putting the Trekker's language into writing or offering any other blessings of civilization introduced into Africa by those European pioneers – the Zulu military had the sole desire to wipe out the Trekkers and, as observed so often before, they would show no mercy to man, woman or child.

The celebration of this victory given to the European pioneers is no form of racism, nor any encouragement to bring any part of Gods creation to extinction. This celebration serves as testimony that God provides victory and deliverance for His people. A remembrance of this day does not serve as a call to wipe out any race upon this earth. It rather testifies to the victory God gave to a Bible believing people that faced genocide at the hands of the Zulu military machine. I do not promote race hatred nor do I encourage violence against other race groups. We promote the right to exist, as a race and heritage, just as other races have the right to exist and practice their heritage.

B) The Day of the Vow draws our attention to other great victories in our people’s history.

Examples may be;

<p>Battle of Jericho (Joshua 6)</p>	<p>Upon entering the promised land the Israelites had to conquer the fortified city of Jericho. God's people had no chance without divine help - as they had no siege weapon training or equipment capable of destroying the city walls. After following God's instruction to march around the city several days followed by their blowing of trumpets and shouting, the city walls came crashing down. This allowed the Israelites to invade the city and destroy the army of Jericho.</p>
<p>Victory over the Canaanites</p>	<p>The Canaanites swept over Palestine with a great army that included chariots and infantry under the leadership of Sisera and Jabin. Israel became a subject people. God prophesied victory however, and an army of 10 000 Israelites with the guidance of Barak and Deborah swept down Mount Tabor upon the Canaanites. A storm broke on the Canaanites just before the Israelites engaged them - so the enemy chariots got bogged down in the mud and were swept away. The Canaanite army was routed and its leadership fled. So Israel was delivered.</p>
<p>Victory over the Midianites</p>	<p>The Midianites plundered and killed the Israelites. But an Angel of God promised to Gideon that he would lead the numerically inferior Israelites to victory. Gideon was told to take only 300 men who were each armed with a trumpet, pitcher and torch. They quietly surrounded the Midianite camp. At Gideon's signal the trumpets blew, torches blazed and pitchers were broken. The Israelites cried: “The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon”. The enemy, awakened with fright, started killing each other and ended up fleeing.</p>
<p>The Assyrian defeat at Jerusalem (II Kings 19:35)</p>	<p>The Assyrians, after conquering the Northern Kingdom of Israel, attacked the city of Jerusalem (in Judah). The Assyrian army was larger and better experienced with superior weaponry. Rab-shakeh, the Assyrian general, mocked God and taunted king Hezekiah of Jerusalem saying “Where are the gods of other nations conquered by Assyria” ? Hezekiah trusted in God who had promised victory. During the night an angel of God moved through the enemy camp and a terrible disease broke out amongst the Assyrian forces, killing thousands and causing the Assyrian campaign to be called off. So God saved Judah from King Sennacherib of Assyria.</p>
<p>Battle of Tours (A.D 732)</p>	<p>The army of Charles Martel met the Muslim hordes on the plain of Tours in France. Martel's army, comprising mostly infantry, defeated the Muslim host of cavalry that had swept through North Africa never seeing defeat. The victory of this Christian army over the Moorish invaders prevented the complete take over of Christian Europe by a Muslim nation – Martel's army served as the last force capable of offering any resistance of note. Remembrance of this Battle does not celebrate hatred for Muslims or a desire to exterminate Arabs. It represents a victory that preserved our race and Christian lands.</p>

C) The Day of the Vow also allows the Covenant people in South Africa to remember their important history and the close ties early European pioneers had with God and Scripture.

Our forefathers desired to walk close to God. In the early stages of the Great Trek Thomas Philipps, on behalf of the British Settlers, handed a Bible over to the the Trek Leader, Jacobus Uys. Unlike modern society the pioneers from various European backgrounds found great importance in the Word of God. The Day of the Vow calls for Covenant South Africans to hold dear to God’s Word in every area of their lives.

The Vow Taken at Danskraal (Translated by Manfred Nathan)

“My brethren and fellow countrymen, at this moment we stand before the holy God of heaven and earth, to make a promise, if he will be with us and protect us, and deliver the enemy into our hands so that we may triumph over him, that we shall observe the day and the date as an anniversary in each year and a day of thanksgiving like the Sabbath, in His honour: and that we shall enjoin our children that they must take part with us in this, for a remembrance even for our posterity; and if anyone sees a difficulty in this, let him return from this place. For the honour of His name shall be joyfully exalted, and to Him the fame and the honour of the victory must be given.”
Sarel Cilliers

Arguments used to do away with Biblical Festival Observance

The hypocrisy of most who justify that the Biblical festivals have been written off, is that they celebrate holidays or feasts which find their origin in paganism (such as Christmas and Easter). These folk claim that Scripture declares no relevance in keeping Biblical feast days, and often go as far as saying that Scripture condemns those who follow such festivals. Yet most of these people diligently keep holidays that do not find approval in Scripture. These contemporary holidays were born through a union between the old Latin Catholic Church and paganism (see pages 31 and 33 concerning Christmas and Easter). I have never seen the point in religiously abandoning God's holy days in exchange for religious observance of Christianized pagan festivals.

It is not the purpose of this booklet to offer exhaustive coverage on the arguments used to abolish Biblical festivals. There are some common arguments that need to be examined.

Let us look at the following:

Argument 1: The New Testament indicates through verses such as Colossians 2:16 that we no longer are under obligation to keep laws such as the festival days.

Reply: This argument contradicts Scripture. Jesus Christ said in the New Testament that no part of the law will fall away even until all is fulfilled. The festivals are part of God's law. We read; *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill¹¹. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20).* We know that heaven and earth will never pass – they will be restored to a new heaven and earth in the latter days. Serious Bible students know that all has not been fulfilled. There are a host of unfulfilled events - especially with regards to Jesus Christ himself. We read; *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which god hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20-21).* Here we clearly see that the function of Jesus Christ, and the plan God has for His people and creation, are still unfulfilled. Some unfulfilled events include: the Restoration of Israel¹² (Ezekiel 37:25-28),

¹¹ Fulfill means as 'carry out' a function. As in Jesus Christ fulfilled the law by being the our Perfect Sacrificial Lamb. Fulfill does not necessarily mean to complete or end as many believe. 'Fulfill' according to Strong's Concordance of the Bible can have several meanings. Used in this verse it means to perform the promise or carry out a duty as defined in the 1894 Royal English Dictionary; *“Fulfil or Fulfill (fool-fil), v., to fill full: to bring to pass: **to carry into effect: to do any duty fully: to perform a promise; to be fitted for (a purpose).** - S. Complete, accomplish, perform, answer. Pars. Fulfilling, fulfilled”.* Fulfill does not mean bring an end to the law as many interpret it. It means that Jesus Christ came to carry out functions demanded by the law. If we take the entire scope of scripture regarding the festivals and law the word 'fulfill' cannot mean to bring an end to the festivals – this contradicts many verses regarding the law and festivals.

¹² Israel as found in the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Scandinavian and kindred people scattered throughout the world. “Israel” in this booklet does not refer to the current Jews of Israel in the Middle East.

The Greater Exodus to Come (Isaiah 12:11-16, Jeremiah 16:14-15, 23:6-8, 31:37-40, Amos 9:14-15) The Unification of the 12 Tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-24), The Second Coming of Jesus Christ, The Great Judgment (John 5:29), The Resurrection of the Dead (John 5:28, Dan. 12:2-3, Ezekiel 37:13-14), The Full Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Complete Redemption of our Bodies (Job 19:26). These literal events, plus others, are still to be fulfilled with time.

God declares the festivals as being “perpetual” commandments (Leviticus 23, Exodus 31:16). We find that in God's future Kingdom the Sabbath, new moon and other festivals will be observed; *“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Yahweh, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Yahweh. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isaiah 66:22-24).*

The argument that New Testament verses do away with festival observance contradict what Jesus Christ said, and questions the validity of God's written instruction and promise. If God changed His mind concerning the festivals then how can we have absolute faith in Him. Maybe he will change His mind over Jesus Christ saving us. The hypocrisy is that most who claim that the Bible says festival keeping is no longer relevant find no problem in adopting the pagan influenced holidays. How do they discard festivals written in Scripture for those that are not found in the Bible? When it comes to the observance of God's feast days we need to interpret the New Testament verses right.

Let us examine the following:

Verse	Notes
<p><i>“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the mew moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17).</i></p> <p>Other verses in the Bible that represent 'proof' to discard the Biblical festivals must be read in their correct context – this booklet does not have the purpose of covering all these verses.</p>	<p>We must read the entire chapter and not take this verse out of context. This verse does not say anything about discarding the festivals. It instructs that we are not to judge salvation by how one keeps the festivals and law. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ – pure festival keeping and law observance will only come about in the future Kingdom of God. So the imperfect festival and law keeping we have now are but 'a shadow' or unclear reflection of the perfect things to come. This does not mean that we completely abandon the festivals and law! Let the Bible speak for itself and say what it says- To use this verse as evidence to discard Biblical festivals and other relevant Bible laws, is reading into God's Word what some may like to find written.</p>

Argument 2: The days have changed several times in history when calenders have been changed and modified. So it is not possible to know if a specific day of the week in our time, is that very same day centuries ago.

Reply: Calenders have changed. But in all cases it has been the dates or the months that have changed, and not the order of the days of the week. The seven day weekly cycle has remained unchanged since the beginning of the institution of God's seven day week in Genesis. In cases where the calender was modified for correction, the dates where dropped – but the days of the week remained in the seven day cycle.

Argument 3: It is too difficult to work out which dates the festivals fall in our Roman calender. We may get it wrong.

Reply: Who adopted the Roman calender – us or God? So why do we penalize God by discarding His festivals because of a calender man chose to live by! We gave ourselves the hard work. We can also argue that is difficult not to commit sin. This does not mean that we give up trying not to commit sin.

Argument 4: God is a God of love – believing in Him is what counts. The Bible festivals are being religious. We must not be religious but just be a believer.

Reply: So why bother to hang onto Christmas and Easter? What does Scripture declare? Being religious is important. God calls for us to love Him with all our hearts, and those that love Him keep His commandments; *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (1 John 5:2-3). We are to be doers of the Word and place His Law daily in our lives; *“And these words that I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Surely this is being religious¹³? Is not trusting in God with all your might and living daily to His Word in your thoughts and actions being religious! Folks must stop playing games with words. Those that delude themselves with the 'not to be religious but just believe' attitude are really just justifying their comfort and lukewarm zone. When we 'believe' in God we should perhaps also believe His Word regarding His unchanging festival plan. The problem of weakening contemporary Christianity results from too many Christians 'just believing' and not being 'religious' in their daily lives.

God is a God of Love... But he also is a jealous God of truth, obedience and justice; *“Thou shalt fear Yahweh thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are around you; (For Yahweh thy God is a jealous God among you)”* (Deuteronomy 6:13-15). *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Argument 5: It does not matter what day we keep as the weekly Sabbath or other festivals – as long as we keep it in the correct spirit. With regards to the Sabbath: we are to have a day of rest according to the 4th Commandment – but the day we choose is irrelevant.

Reply: The choice of the day for the Sabbath and other festivals do matter – because the day and times matter to God. Yahweh God chose specific days for His Sabbath and festivals. Each has a festival theme or plan. The Bible does not refer to us having to keep 'a' Sabbath, but refers to keeping 'the' Sabbath. The 4th Commandment of the Sabbath refers to the specific day chosen by God. This day is Saturday (see page 8 on the identification of the Sabbath).

During our forefathers sojourning in the Sinai wilderness God was interested in the specific day of His Sabbath. This was to be the same Sabbath day for the entire nation. We read; *“And it came to*

¹³ Religious may be defined as *“of or pertaining to religion; paying attention to the duties of religion; belonging to a religious order, as a monk, etc. - S. Godly, devout, holy, conscientious”* (Royal English Dictionary, T. Nelson and Sons, 1894). A serious Christian is no doubt to be religious.

pass, that on the sixth day (Friday) they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told moyses. And he (Moses) said unto them, This is that which Yahweh hath said, To-morrow is the day of rest of the holy sabbath (Saturday): bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning... eat that today; for to-day (Moses then speaking on the Sabbath) is a Sabbath unto Yahweh: to-day ye shall not find it (manna) in the field. Six days ye shall gather it: but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And Yahweh said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that Yahweh hath given you the sabbath, therefor he giveth you on the sixth day (Friday) the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day (Saturday)” (Exodus 16:22-26). Reading the above we see that God does not give each individual a choice of the Sabbath. Yahweh expects a nation to keep His festivals – not allow every man to choose what day they see fit.

The question is this;

? Is there any verse in the Bible that gives permission for us to choose which day we are going to observe the Sabbath?

Naturally God would be specific about the times and days of all His festivals - not only the Sabbath.

NOTES:

Living According To The Spirit

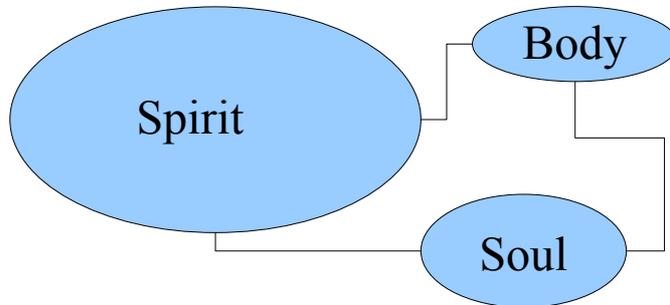
Man is comprised of three parts;

Body: Physical wants, desires and drives.

Soul: Human intellect and decision making.

Spirit: Conscience and communication with God and His principles.

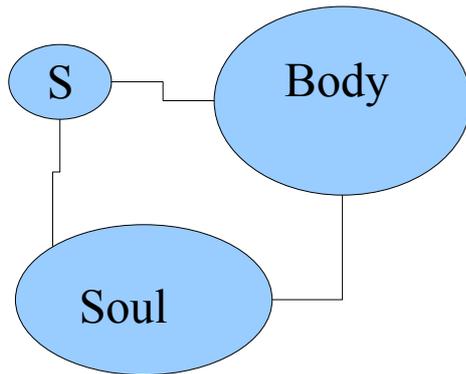
We are to live according to the spirit. We strengthen or grieve the spirit by our actions, habits and lifestyle.



↑ **Living according to the spirit**

Body and soul is primarily influenced by the Spirit. The Spirit is strengthened by:

- * Bible activities;
- * association with positive and devout folk etc.



↙ **Living according to the flesh**

Decisions and actions are controlled by body and human soul (intellect). Leads to sin and grievance of the Spirit. Spiritual grievance is caused through;

- * lack of Bible activities;
- * repeated transgression of God's Word;
- * association with those who live according to the flesh etc.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law... If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit (Galations 5:22-25). We are to live our lives under the guidance of the Spirit. The method by which we live our lives are the outward representation of the fruits within us.

This I say say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to

the other: so ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galations 5: 16-17). Living according to the flesh brings failure in God's eyes. Living according to the Spirit brings God's approval. The flesh is of this world, the Spirit is of the world to come.

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Corinthians 9:27). We minister to those around us. By living according to the Spirit, rather than the flesh, our ministry can remain a faithful and true example to others.

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4). The law has not fallen away but is carried out in its correct function by those who live under the guidance of the Spirit. Not keeping God's Law by living under the guidance of the Spirit leads toward one becoming a Pharisee. We read; *“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefor love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:9-10).* All aspects of God's Law, including the festivals, are fulfilled in the correct manner when we live according to the Spirit. The law and prophets are based on love toward God and fellow men (see Matthew 23:37-40). Jesus Christ came to restore the law, prophets and festivals to their intended function, which had been corrupted through the commandments and doctrines of men. Christ also came to fulfill or carry out functions required of the law.

“Knowing this , that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6) . We are new creatures in Christ. Our purpose as His Elect are to live as citizens of His Kingdom – we are to fight sin by living our lives according to the Spirit. This enables us to keep God's Law and find the Grace of Jesus Christ where we fail in keeping God's law. We can let sin (law violation) be our master or we can allow Jesus Christ to be our Master. (See the 'Balance of Law and Grace' on page 20).

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 5:30). To carry out our purpose for God in our lives we are to practice things that nourish the Spirit and do not grieve the Spirit. We are 'sealed' with the first fruits of the Spirit, and look forward to the day that we shall receive the full outpouring of the Spirit with the complete redemption (restoration) of our body.

CONCLUSION

When we live according to the Spirit the festivals become a blessing rather than a burden. God's feast days are yearly events that offer Bible ministry with focus upon our historical and spiritual heritage. We need not be as the Pharisees who kept God's Law and festivals by the letter only – but are to let the festivals bring joy into our lives by keeping His Law and Festivals in the method that they were intended. Jesus Christ never came to abolish the Festivals of God. His purpose is to restore them to their original state by His example and ministry. The Bible instructs that they are perpetual commandments - this allows our Christian heritage to continue from one generation to another. Jesus Christ and His followers kept the festivals outlined in this booklet. The early Christian Church kept the festivals outlined in this booklet. We are called to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3). This booklet has been written in all humility for this purpose.....

“These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons” (Leviticus 23:4)