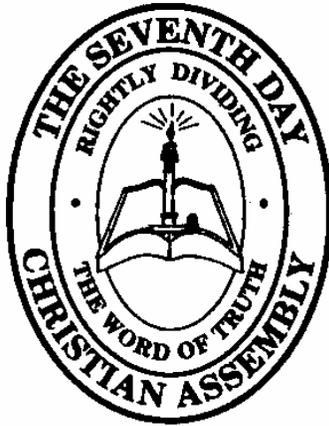


Rightly Dividing

THE
WORD OF TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Lesson Eleven:
God's Sabbaths
(His Plan of Salvation in Prophecy)
Part 1



God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days, and years." (Genesis 1:14; The Jerusalem Bible)

On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he had rested after all his work of creating. (Genesis 2:2, 3; The Jerusalem Bible)

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for Yahweh your God...on the seventh day he rested; that is why Yahweh has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred. (Exodus 20:8-11; The Jerusalem Bible)

an open letter from

The Pastor

Leviticus 23 is largely overlooked by Traditional Christianity because it is part of the Old Testament law that was *supposedly* abolished through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ – even though He plainly denied in Matthew 5:17-19 that He had come to do such a thing. We learned in Lesson 9 (p. 4) that He is not *duplicitous* – that is, He doesn't *deceive* us by telling us one thing and doing another. So, why did He go through all the trouble of creating the sun, moon, and stars to mark off *festivals* (seasons), days, weeks, months, and years...and to set laws concerning their observance...just to allow the holy, sacred seventh day to be abandoned for the first day of the week and...His *festival* days (*seasonal* holy convocations – *yearly Sabbaths*) to be done away with altogether? In the belief structures of many, He even *caused* these changes to occur. *Really?*

Speaking of being *duplicitous*, why would He turn around, then, during the Kingdom and require the inhabitants of the earth to observe those same festivals (see Zechariah 14:16-19)? Why, when all things have been reconciled to God the Father, would He *require this*: “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make [see Revelation 21 and Isaiah 65:17-25], shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed remain. And it shall come to pass, that from *one new moon to another* [the means by which *festival* seasons are determined], and from *one Sabbath to another*, shall *all flesh* come to worship before me, says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:22, 23; emphasis added)? What does this tell us?

First of all, it tells us that human beings will continue to exist beyond the creation of the new heavens and new earth (see Isaiah 9:7 – first part). Next, it tells us that the Lord God – who is the one who became Jesus Christ and was the creator of the original seventh-day Sabbath and the holy days – will require that the original system He created will be used to determine the weekly seventh-day Sabbath and the yearly holy days. Finally, it tells us – since He is not *duplic-*

itous and *did not come to destroy the law and prophets* – **that He never intended for them to be disregarded in the first place.**

Let me give you a couple of clues as to what happened. To me, this is *insidious*; it is something that has happened slowly and deceptively over a long period of time. Since it has been practiced for hundreds of years, those who do these things today have no reason to wonder why it is as it is. It is what they are accustomed to doing, and those who support it have their justifications for it: namely, they believe that Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week.

Note this: “In the Old Testament the *seventh* day of the week was set apart as the sabbath day (Exodus 20:8-11). The word ‘sabbath’ means rest. So, ‘sabbath’ refers primarily *to the purpose* – **not to the *number*** – of the day. ***One day out of seven was to be a rest day***” (Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*; Convention Press: Nashville; 1971; p. 93; emphases added). Can you tell from the highlighted portions of this quote what is *wrong with the logic*? Hobbs goes on to admit that the ***number*** came from the fact that God rested on the *seventh day* because He had finished His creative work.

Look at Exodus 20:8-11. Which specific day did He bless and declare to be holy? One day out of seven? The first day? If this law is based on Genesis 2:2, 3, why should just *any day* out of seven suffice? Would Thursday suffice? How about half of Tuesday and half of Friday?

And how does *this* quote by Hobbs help to clarify the issue: “*There is no **specific** command in the New Testament to change from the *seventh to the first day**” (Ibid.; p. 94; emphases added)? Does this kind of *logic* bother you? Who set such a change into motion in the first place?

So, the first clue has to do with the *logic* that has been handed down from generation to generation to rationalize and justify such a change. Absent *a specific command* for the change, what is the underlying rationale for the *necessity* of such a change? In Hebrews 8:6-8, the Apostle Paul admits that the problem with the old covenant was **not** the covenant itself – *the fault was with the **people***. If Paul had concluded that “the

(continued on p. 18)

God's Sabbaths

Why has man ignored God's commanded holy days? It is not a simple case of *ignoring* them. It is a simple case of being *deceived* into *abandoning* them – and, therefore, paying no attention to who did it or why it was done. The deception has been the result of *sleight-of-hand* like that spoken of in Ephesians 4:14. Since the change has been, supposedly, “supported” by scriptural claims – remember what Jesus Christ warned us of in Matthew 24:4, 5 – it has *seemed right*...like the *way* spoken of in Proverbs 14:12. We were warned in Daniel 7:25 that a man would arise in history who would “plan to *alter* the *sacred seasons* and the *law*” (*Moffatt* translation; emphasis added), but since we were also told that the law and the prophets had been done away with – nailed to the cross as it were – we paid no attention to the Spirit-inspired prophecy in Daniel (which, I suspect, was the reference point of Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:17-19).

Step by step, slowly and surely, we have been *deceived* into ignoring God's revealed truth and observing the traditions of men in its place (Matthew 15:1-9). Does this *shock* you? Can you be convinced that such a claim is *true*? Well, let me try with this very short quote from the *Kansas City Catholic*, February 9, 1893: “The Catholic Church of its own *infallible* authority created *Sunday* a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law” (emphases added). Enough said? Maybe not. That being the case, let's get ready to discover God's revealed truth – truth about how He has *prophetically* revealed His plan of salvation in the holy days listed in Leviticus 23. You are going to discover more than the *weekly* sabbath – as well as why God called His Sabbaths “a *sign* between me and you throughout your generations” (Exodus 31:13; emphasis added).

Lesson Eleven

Illogical Logic

Changing something that does not *need* to be changed is not necessarily *illogical*. It could be *whimsical* – or, *capricious*. Changing the paint on your house or automobile might not be *necessary*, but you do it because you want something else so you can alter your environment a little. So, let's stipulate that there is room in our universe for *change* without it being *illogical*.

But, our present subject of study should be carefully considered without bias or prejudice in order to determine if such a monumental *change* of God's commandments was *illogical*; *therefore unnecessary*. Why should *God* have decided to *change* His laws and sacred seasons *if there was nothing wrong with them* (consider Paul's assessment in Romans 7:12-14)? Surely He's not *whimsical*, *capricious*, *illogical*, or *duplicious*. Could it be that *man* made the changes under the guise of being *led by God* to do so –

or, even worse, by *his own authority*? The next two studies are of paramount importance in learning to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24). So, let's discover the *illogical* logic that is involved in these changes.

1. Genesis 1:14 – Considering the quote above from *The Jerusalem Bible*, for what *purpose* did God put “lights in the firmament of heaven”? Do you get the idea that it was merely for light and decoration? So, man should be able to understand the passing of days, months, seasons, and years from observing the heavens? Was this to serve as a special *timepiece* for mankind? What does it mean that God saw that it was *good*?

Comment: What was Elohim doing in this creation process? (To avoid repetition of previously discussed material, refer back to Lesson 3, “The Significance of God's Revelation,” pp. 15-18.) *Day 1* (vv. 3-5): The original word translated *light* here also signifies *fire*. So, after clearing away the obstructions in space that pre-

vented light from previously created heavenly bodies from getting to the earth (see v. 2 re: the *darkness* that prevailed), He diffused caloric, or latent heat, through every part of nature because it would be needed for the creation of the vegetation and animal life. Day 2 (vv. 6-8): The way He divided day from night was to *anticipate* the heavenly lights on Day 4 that would govern day, night, seasons, and years. So, He set the earth to spinning on its axis so that a rotation was completed every 23 hours, 56 minutes, and 4 seconds. If it were not already doing so – or had been interrupted from doing so – He set the earth and its moon on a revolution around the sun, which would last about 365.25 days. With those two creative acts, He made it possible for the earth to sustain life and for man to tell time in days, months, years, and seasons.

Each time He completed a particular process in this six-day period of creation, He said that it was *towb* (good). Many manuscripts show it to have been spoken at the end of each day's creation. What did Elohim mean by this expression? He meant that they were not only *beautiful*, but that they were also *perfect*. In other words, they were, in weight and measure, lacking nothing – complete and in no need of being changed or corrected. If each of the first six days' creations were considered by Him to be *good*, what does it mean that He would *bless* and *sanctify* His seventh-day Sabbath? Is it significant *above* the other six days as a result? Let's see and understand.

2. Were there any *Jews* around at that time? Were Adam and Eve *Jews*? So, did Elohim create the seventh day by resting from His work and blessing and sanctifying the seventh day to be a Sabbath (rest) day so that the *Jews* would be *marked* as a means of punishing them?

Comment: It is absurd to even consider those two questions since we know that the *Jews* did not exist until after their progenitor *Judah* had fathered offspring. Remember that *Judah* was one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel). It makes no sense to draw the conclusions posed by those two questions.

3. 2 Kings 16:1-6 – Which three kings were involved in this incident? Is it clear to you that

Israel and *Judah* have *separate* kings? Which king was aligned with Rezin of Syria? Which king was the leader of the *Jews*? Why do you have two *separate* groups made up of *Israelites* – that is, one kingdom called *Israel* and the other kingdom called *Judah* (*Jews*)?

Comment: Get your *history* straight! Part of the *illogical logic* that is bandied about as *religious truth* is wrong-headed because people simply do not know who the *Jews* are! Back in late 1986, I asked a Sunday School class to which I was speaking to raise their hands if they believed *Noah* was a *Jew*. *All* of them did. They did the same for *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, and *Paul*. They were astonished when I told them that *none* of them was a *Jew*. The basis for their response lay in the fact that they had been *conditioned* to believe that the Old Testament is *Jewish scripture*; therefore, the law and the prophets are *Jewish*. Remember this: If you can *prejudice* people against the *Jews*, then you can *prejudice* them against so-called *Jewish scriptures*! Calling the Old Testament *Jewish* is inaccurate – especially since the first five books were written by a *Levite* named *Moses* under the inspiration of the *Lord God*. Whose revelation is it anyway?

4. 1 Kings 11:9-13 – How was God going to punish Solomon for his sins? How many of the *tribes of Israel* would Solomon's successors eventually rule over? For whose sake did God make that decision? Over which *tribe of Israel* would Solomon's successors rule?

5. Matthew 1:1-7; Luke 3:31-34 – Of which *tribe of Israel* (Jacob) was David a member?

Comment: You should be able to see that David – therefore, Solomon – was descended from the tribe of *Judah*. They were *Jews*. They were also *Israelites* – descended from Jacob, whose name was changed by God to *Israel* (see Genesis 32:24-32 and 35:9, 10). Read Genesis 29, 30, and 35:16-18 to see the children born to Jacob (Israel). Genesis 29:35 shows that Jacob's wife Leah gave birth to *Judah* – only *one* of the *twelve* sons Israel fathered. So, while all *Jews* (*Judaite*s) are *Israelites*, not all *Israelites* are *Jews*. If the *Jews* were so bad, why would God

make the coming Savior *Jewish*? Do you get the picture yet?

6. 2 Samuel 2:1-11 – Which tribe anointed David as king? How long was he their king in Hebron?

7. Verse 12-17 – Did *Israel* and *Judah* fight one another in this incident? So, would you conclude that *all of Israel* was not united under David as their king at this time?

8. 2 Samuel 3:1 – Was there continual war between the *Jews* and the House of Saul (a *Benjaminite* who ruled over *all Israel* – see 1 Samuel 9:1, 2, 15-10:1)? Do you get the impression that *Judah* was rebelling against Saul’s successor? Read the entire account to find out why. It is important to understand this history.

9. 2 Samuel 5:1-5 – Who came to David in Hebron to ask David to be their king? Why? Did *Israel* also anoint David as their king? So, in effect, *all Israel* was now united under David? Do vv. 4, 5 make a distinction between David’s reign over *Judah* only and over the united kingdom of *all Israel*? In what way?

Comment: I needed you to understand who the *Jews* are so that I can help you understand more fully the *illogical logic* we are discussing. This understanding will open up greater understanding of God’s truth – especially His laws, covenants and prophecies.

10. Leviticus 23:1-4 – To whom is the Lord God (the one who later became Jesus Christ – the Creator) speaking here? Is Moses a *Jew* (see Exodus 2:1-10)? Whom does the Lord God want Moses to tell about these feasts? Whose feasts are they? Is the seventh-day Sabbath one of them? When are they to be proclaimed, or *observed*?

Comment: Notice what is revealed here: (a) the Lord is speaking to *Moses*, of the tribe of *Levi* (see Genesis 29:34); (b) the command to observe these holy days is to *all of Israel*, not just the tribe of *Judah* (the *Jews*); (c) these are the *Lord’s* feasts – not *Israel’s*; not *Judah’s* (the *Jews*). Here is where you make that giant leap in logic: the Lord is commanding *all Israel* to

observe something that belongs to *Him*; therefore, it is not *Jewish* law, *Jewish* religion, or *Jewish* scripture! If you don’t know who the *Jews* are, you can be prejudiced against even the direct words of God Himself! Think about that very carefully! If He set the heavenly lights in place so that these sacred seasons could be calculated from year to year, why would He wait over *2500 years* to give them to only the *Jews* to mark them out for punishment? Does that *really* make sense to you?

11. Compare Genesis 3:21 to 4:3-5 (see also Hebrews 11:4) – What connection do you see between God’s use of *animal skins* to clothe Adam and Eve and the *sacrificial practices* of Cain and Abel? How did God acquire the skins without killing the animals? What do you understand the expression *in the process of time* to mean (4:3)?

Comment: The expression *in the process of time* (KJV), or *in the course of time* (RSV and others), does not mean “once upon a time” or “after some time passed” or “after a while” or “some time later.” It literally means “at the end of [the] days” – which is thought by some to mark either an *anniversary* or an *appointed time*. Daniel 4:34 uses a similar expression – *at the end of the days* – to show that the *appointed time* of Nebuchadnezzar’s curse was over (see vv. 19-27). Brown-Driver-Briggs defines that expression to mean “at the appointed time.” So, it means that he was released from God’s curse at the *appointed time*. If Genesis 4:3 were similarly translated, it would read: “*At the appointed time*, Cain brought [his sacrifice] and Abel brought [his sacrifice].” What would that mean? Well, it certainly does not mean a one-time *contest* to see who was favored by God! It means something that was done *habitually* at a specific time – at an *appointed time*.

Clarke referred to authorities who believed that these sacrifices were offered either on the *anniversary of the creation* or on the *weekly Sabbath* because it came at the end of each seven-day week – *at the end of the days*. Clarke favored the *weekly sacrifice* because he believed that *divine worship was definitely instituted by God*. So, at the least, sacrifices and weekly Sabbath observance seem to have been practiced by

custom at their *appointed times*. Since Cain and Abel are grown men at this time, this was something they were *accustomed* to doing (see Luke 4:16). *The Jerusalem Bible, The Anchor Bible, and The Moffatt Translation* translate Genesis 1:14 to show that the heavenly lights were created to mark out *fixed, sacred seasons*. Why would *God* refer to them as *fixed, sacred seasons*?

Ask yourself some reasonable questions. Why would *God* *not* have taught the first family how to sacrifice and worship Him so near the time when they committed the sin that brought upon them the *death sentence* – especially if the *sacrifice* was a *shadow of good things to come* (see Hebrews 10:1)? If He had a *plan of salvation* even before the creation of the orderly universe (see Ephesians 1:4-14), doesn't that indicate that He anticipated at least the *potential* of mankind running off track because of *freedom of choice*? Why would He *delay* its employment? Why wait over 2,500 years to give it to *Israel just to punish the Jews*? Why fix the *purpose* of the heavenly bodies before He had even created mankind? The weekly Sabbath and the seasonal holy days in Leviticus 23:4 are called *appointed times* in several translations. Could *God* have taught the first family His *plan of salvation* as expressed in these *appointed times* during the first or second year – with Passover being the 14th day of the first month when He sacrificed the animals from which He acquired the skins? I know: so many questions – so little specific information.

12. 2 Samuel 7 – What did the Lord *God* send Nathan the prophet to tell David? Was this a message about *all of Israel*? Was David's royal lineage to be established before *God forever* (vv. 13-16)? Who was to be the ultimate *Seed* to come from David's lineage (see Luke 1:24-35; 2:1-4, 11; 3:31, 32 and Matthew 1:6, 16-17; 9:27)? Were David and this *Seed Jews* – from the lineage of *Judah*? How does this square with the attitudes of Ignatius, Barnabas, and Justin Martyr?

13. Psalm 89:1-4 – To which covenant did David refer in these verses? Upon what basis was this covenant established?

14. Verses 18-27 – Who is this *Holy One of Isra-el* who is to be their king? With what means of help would *God* strengthen David?

15. Verses 28-37 – For how long will *God* keep covenant with David's house? What if they sin? Would *God* *lie* to David? With what two heavenly bodies did *God* liken the endurance of David's *Seed*? Why? Does this indicate that these two heavenly bodies will last *forever*?

16. Verses 38-52 – Considering that this Psalm was written by Maschil [son] of Ethan the Ezrahite – not David – did someone feel that *God* had, indeed, gone astray from His covenant with David? Could this be from a lack of spiritual understanding because of the sins of David's descendants – the punishment they incurred for it? So, you cannot say that this is *David's* complaint against *God*?

17. Jeremiah 33:15-26 – Who will grow up in the House of David? Who is this *Branch of Righteousness*? Will *Judah* be saved, and Jerusalem be called by His name? Will David ever lack a *man* (the word can mean *person* or *kinsman* – which could include a female – of royal blood) to sit upon his throne? How does *God* inspire Jeremiah to explain it in vv. 19-26? To what covenant does the Lord *God* refer this time? Does He explain, in vv. 23-26, the confusion brought by the author of Psalm 89? Has He, indeed, *lied* to David and cast off His people – the House of Israel and the House of Judah (refer again to Romans 11)?

Comment: Please grasp this firmly: *God* does not *lie*! When Jeremiah wrote this prophecy, there was still a descendant of David on the throne – a *Jew*. Even today, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain traces her lineage back to David and Judah. We have seen *God* make a covenant with David based on the heavenly bodies (sun and moon) and day and night. He casts these covenants in the realm of *forever* based on His intention that *these heavenly bodies will exist forever*. Why do I draw your attention to this?

It's really rather elementary: *they are fixed* (firm, stable, *permanently* fastened) *in the heavens*. If that is true, then their *purpose* for being there is also *fixed*. If their *purpose* is also *fixed*,

then there should never come a time when He would make void that *purpose* or the *times* and *sacred seasons* related to it. God reveals that He intended there to be a seventh-day Sabbath and holy days *in their seasons* that are reckoned by these heavenly fixtures. Man, however – by hook, crook, and/or prejudice – has been deceived into thinking that God inspired *him* to change what God *fixed*. ***If it's fixed, don't break it!*** There has been no need for God to change them.

With the above discussion as background, let's discover how God has prophesied His plan of salvation in the weekly seventh-day Sabbath and His holy days. Please pay close attention to the details. We don't want to be found opposing God.

The Weekly Seventh-day Sabbath

1. Genesis 2:1-3 – How did God – *Elohim* – create the seventh day? What did He do on that day that was different from the first six days? What does it mean that He *blessed* the seventh day and *sanctified* it? Why did He *bless* and *sanctify* it? Does this action indicate that He merely meant that *one day in seven* should be a day of rest? So, was His action *specifically* directed toward the *seventh* day?

Comment: The creation week was the cooperative work of *Elohim* – the Godhead made up of those we now know as God the Father and Jesus Christ (see John 1:1-3, 14). I use the pronoun ***He*** to refer to them in a cooperative sense – like you might refer to a family as ***it*** when they act in unity to accomplish something. I could use the plural pronouns ***They***, ***Them***, and ***Their(s)***.

All of His action in Genesis 2:1-3 is directed specifically toward the *seventh* day. The other six days had specific actions directed toward them in preparation for the creation of man on the sixth day: caloric heat, seed-yielding vegetation, rotation of the earth on its axis and revolution around the sun, heavenly bodies (which implies His concern for *worship* according to a fixed schedule for a specific *purpose*), sea life and various fowl, and various cattle and creeping things, along with man.

The objective for the *seventh day* was to create a time for *worship*, *reflection*, and *rest*. It is a time to reflect on the *testimony* provided that ***God*** engaged in a creative work with the objective to create ***mankind*** in His own image (refer to Romans 1:18-20). The *entire creation* – including the seventh-day Sabbath – is a *witness* that God exists and has the best interests of mankind in mind and heart and purpose. This specific objective for creating the seventh-day Sabbath was, therefore, to provide the time and atmosphere in which to contemplate your individual place in that purpose. God thought it a worthy enough objective to set the original example for it.

2. Exodus 20:8-11 – Does this commandment say that one day in seven is sufficient – or does it point to a specific day? What is meant that you are to *remember* and *keep holy* the ***seventh*** day? How many days are you to pursue your own work? Are you, your family, your employees, your visitors, and the tools you use to do your work – including animals – required to *rest*? Why is that true? Is this commandment based on Genesis 2:1-3? How can you tell?

Comment: The term *remember* is translated from the Hebrew term *zakar*. It means “to observe [celebrate] or commemorate [call to mind or memorialize].” Why would God command you to *celebrate* the seventh day as a *memorial*? What are you to remember and celebrate? Merely a *rest* taken by God? No. You are to celebrate that it is *God's holy rest* taken after He had created everything for mankind's benefit! It is a witness that all of this creation did not happen by blind, stupid chance – that God had a *supreme purpose* for bringing it into existence.

The *KJV* (1611 translation; American Bible Society) that I generally use for reference purposes puts it this way: “Remember the *seventh* day, to *keep it holy*” (emphasis added). However, I have another *KJV* that is called the *Authorized King James Version* that says: “Remember the *sabbath* day, to *keep it holy*” (emphasis added). Most translations say *sabbath* as opposed to *seventh*. There must be no confusion, though, because *anywhere* scripture refers to the *Sabbath* ***it always means the seventh day***

or a yearly Sabbath (we'll see an example of this later).

To keep it holy means at least a couple of things: (a) you are to regard the *seventh* day as being *holy time* because God Himself set it aside for that purpose; (b) you are to *maintain* the holiness, or *sacredness* (more properly, *sanctity*) of the seventh day by observing/commemorating its creation and purpose. *Sacred* means that it is "set aside for the service or worship of deity [God]."

God allotted *you* six days for the completion of your work. All things under your decision-making power are to be subject to the rule because the holy time represents at least three most important things: (a) it is a *sign* between God and His people so *they* can know that *He is God who sanctifies them*" (see Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:11, 12, 19, 20); (b) it is a day of thanksgiving for *deliverance from slavery* (Leviticus 19:30, 34; Deuteronomy 5:12-15) – so *you* and all the people and things under *your* decision-making power are freed from any *servile* obligations to demonstrate that *you* regard freedom in the same way God does; and (c) it is a *shadow*, or *type*, of some good thing to come (see Hebrews 10:1 and Hebrews 4). This last point is especially important for this reason: all *types* continue to be in force *until the things to which they point are actually achieved*.

Paul gives us two perfect examples of this in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. First, he calls Jesus Christ our *Passover*. When He *fulfilled* that type, did it *annul* the concept of *Passover*? No! It's ultimate *spiritual intent* – the thing to which it pointed – came into being. Jesus Christ is *still* our *Passover*. Notice, too, what Paul says about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-8). The connection between unleavened bread and being delivered from sin should be apparent in Paul's comment. Notice how he identifies the *spiritual intent* of the *type*: "Let us keep the feast [of unleavened bread], not with old leaven, neither with the *leaven of malice and wickedness*; but with the *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*" (v. 8; emphases added). So, the *shadow*, or *type*, of the *Sabbath* is yet to be fulfilled. Clarke concluded that "...the moral obligation of the [seventh-day] Sabbath must continue *til time*

be swallowed up in eternity" (p. 126; emphasis added).

Finally, James makes it clear that the Ten Commandments are an *inseparable* unit of law (see James 2:8-12) – break *one* of them, and you are guilty of breaking the entire unit. The fourth commandment *specifically* enjoins observance of the *seventh-day Sabbath*, ***not one day out of seven – especially not substituting the first day for it***. The change has been based on *illogical logic* driven by anti-Semitic bias, among other things.

3. Mark 2:27, 28 – For whom was the Sabbath made? Who is the *Lord* of the Sabbath? What does that mean?

Comment: Jesus is addressing the *creation* of the Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3. He says that it was created *for mankind* – not just the *Jews*. He alludes to an idea some had that man was made so God would have someone to worship Him on the Sabbath once it was created. Quite the contrary, says Jesus. God intended that the Sabbath would be for the *benefit of mankind*. The *original purpose* has never been changed because there has never been a *need to fix it*.

Why does Jesus call Himself the *Lord* of the Sabbath? The Greek term (*kurios*) from which *Lord* is derived means that He considers Himself to be the *owner* and *controller* of the Sabbath. He did not institute a change from the seventh day. Read the following two quotes and draw your own conclusion about how the change was made: (a) "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. ***The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify***" (Cardinal Gibbons [Roman Catholic], *The Faith of Our Fathers*; 1892, p. 111; emphases added); and (b) "Sunday is a *Catholic institution*, and its claims to observance *can be defined only on Catholic principles*....From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a *single passage* that warrants [that is, *authorizes*] the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first" (*Catholic Press*: Sydney, Australia, August 25, 1900; emphases added).

Your problem is to decide *who* the *Lord* of the Sabbath is. It was in conjunction with its po-

sition as the State Church of Rome that the Roman Catholics supposedly derived their authority to make such a change. Note this quote from *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (Rev. Peter Geiermann, C., SS., R.; p. 50; 3rd edition; 1913 – a work which received the “apostolic blessing” of Pope Pius X, January 25, 1910): “We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.” They claim credit based on *their* authority – which, of course, they would *claim* is ultimately derived from Jesus Christ Himself. Remember that the problem was with the *people*, not the *covenant* (Hebrews 8:8).

Finally, the *symbolism* attached to the *weekly* Sabbath is also attached to each *yearly* Sabbath listed in Leviticus 23 – that is, days that are commanded as either *Sabbaths* or *holy convocations*. Yet, each holy day period has significant *prophetic symbolism* of its own that helps us to more clearly understand God's plan of salvation. Let's study each briefly to understand what God intends us to know and have faith in.

The Symbolism in *Sabbath*

What value should it have for *you* to be able to set aside all of the demands of the workaday life for a dedicated period of time in order to contemplate the existence of a beneficent Divine Being who has plans and expectations for human beings? For you to rest from your labors? For you to find peace, happiness, contentment, prosperity, health, and well-being? What if you could make warfare *obsolete*? And...cause the absolute, complete extinction of *all* diseases, handicaps, and mental disorders? Such is part of the fulfillment of the *symbolism* found in seventh-day Sabbath observance. Let's understand God's revelation of this marvelous plan.

1. Genesis 2:1-3 – Can *past time* be used in the *future* – or is it gone and unable to be recovered? Would it be reasonable to believe that God's blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, then, would imply its *future use*? Would it also be reasonable to believe that such blessing and sanctification would apply to all *recurring* sev-

enth days and any other day set aside by God as a *Sabbath*?

Comment: Be aware of the fact that the seventh-day legislation has been used to justify the sanctification of the first day of the week as the “New Testament” Sabbath – that is, all succeeding *Sundays* are likewise considered by Traditional Christianity to be sanctified. That being the case, it is recognized that God's purpose in establishing the seven-day Sabbath implied the sanctification of all succeeding seventh-day Sabbaths.

2. Hebrews 4:4, 5 – Does Paul reference two different scriptures here to make his point about a *future Sabbath* for God's people? Does he reference Genesis 2:1-3? What is meant by the expression “If they shall *enter into my rest*” (KJV; emphasis added)? Do you get the impression that God's *rest* is something to be *done*, as well as a *place* where it is to be done?

Comment: Although other translations say: “They [that is, the rebellious] shall not enter [into] my rest,” the point remains the same: God's *rest* is something to be entered (action), as well as a *place* for that to happen. Paul also refers to Psalm 95, which concludes with the statement that God swore in His wrath that the *rebellious* Israelites would not enter into His *rest: the Land of Promise*. This gives out the idea that God's *Sabbath* – that is, *yet future* – is as much a *place* as it is a *condition*.

3. Exodus 16 – Why did God propose to rain *bread from heaven* on the Israelites (see especially v. 4)? So, was God not sure they would be obedient? Do you think their murmurings were valid? Did they long to go *back* to Egypt (a symbol of *sin* and *slavery*)?

4. Verses 16-28 – Why were they to gather it only *six days* a week? Was it going to fall on the seventh-day Sabbath? Why? Were all of them obedient? After having been slaves in Egypt for 400+ years, do you suppose it was necessary for God to teach them which day was, in fact, the seventh-day Sabbath? Why would the Lord God go to all this trouble for *40 years* – proving which day is the seventh-day Sabbath –

just to either (a) do away with it or (b) *allow* it to be done away with by the crucifixion?

5. Exodus 18:13-16 – Why did Moses sit as a judge all day everyday (especially v. 16b)? What is significant about making them *know the statutes and laws of God*?

Comment: Genesis 26:5 shows that Abraham knew God's *commandments, statutes, and laws*, too – 400+ years before Moses did this. The important point here is simple: *God's laws, commandments, and statutes were known and in force before He concluded the "marriage" covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai*. This shows that the seventh-day Sabbath – and the rest of the Ten Commandments – were not *unknown* factors prior to Mt. Sinai. If Abraham kept them as a *charge* from God, then he, too, observed the seventh-day Sabbath – and, no doubt, he did so because he understood the *future rest* because it was part and parcel to the covenant God made with *him*! After all, the *Land of Promise is the "rest" God promised him*. God was leading Israel out of Egypt to that Land of Promise just as He told Abraham He would (see Genesis 15:13-21).

6. Hebrews 11:8-16 – What did Abraham expect from his covenant with God? Merely a Land of Promise? Was he expecting something yet *future*? What have the *faithful* of God expected that God will do for *them* in the *future*? So, none of them have yet received it (see vv. 39, 40)? Do you see the connection between this and Hebrews 4 – a future *Sabbath rest (condition and place)* for God's people? Write a brief explanation of what you understand about this matter.

7. Matthew 11:28, 29 – What did Jesus Christ say He will give to those who labor and are under heavy burdens? Would such people just be trading one burden for another? Does it sound like a promise of *deliverance* similar to the exodus from Egypt? How does what He says relate to a *future Sabbath*?

8. Romans 6:11-23 – Why should we yield to God rather than to sin and unrighteousness? To whom are you a *servant*? Can you be the *ser-*

vant of sin *and* righteousness? What is the final result of each kind of *servitude*? Would being a *servant* of righteousness lead to a life of eternal *rest* from the burdens and vanities of this present life? (Read Romans 1:18-32 and Galatians 5:16-26 for more insight into how *sin* has enslaved mankind.)

9. Read the following scriptures in Isaiah that reveal much about this *rest* God has reserved for the *faithful* in the future – that *Sabbath* discussed in Hebrews 4: Isaiah 2; 11; 12; 14:1-3; 40; 43; 65:17-25; 66. Does it appear that God ever intended to do away with His Sabbaths?

Comment: Notice the *relief of burdens, the healing of body and spirit, and the peace, contentment, and prosperity* God has planned for the faithful in His coming Kingdom – the *prophe-sied rest symbolized by the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath and the other yearly Sabbaths revealed in Leviticus 23*.

Exodus 23:14 and 34:23 commanded Israel to appear before the Lord God during three seasons of the year: (a) Passover and Unleavened Bread – held at the beginning of the barley harvest and commemorating the exodus from Egypt; (b) Pentecost – held at the time of the wheat harvest and commemorating God's gift of the Promised Land to Israel, as well as the giving of the Law; and (c) the Fall Festival known as the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles – held at the beginning of the governmental new year (fiscal year) as a time for covenant renewal with the Lord God. These were known as *pilgrimage festivals* when they journeyed to the *place where God put His name* (see Deuteronomy 12:5). Psalms 120-134 are known as *Psalms of Ascent*, which appear to have been a handbook used by pilgrims as they made their ways to Jerusalem during these festival seasons. Let's discover the significance of these festivals to True Christians.

Passover

The earliest *scriptural* record of Passover observance is in Exodus 12. Whether or not it was observed as a result of the sacrifices offered

by the Lord God in Genesis 3:21 is a matter of speculation. It is without doubt or speculation, however, that the focus of our deliverance from sin and death is focused on the account of Passover found in Exodus 12. What it symbolizes is the heart and core of the mission of Jesus Christ.

1. Genesis 3:15 – What punishment was to be executed against the serpent for leading Adam and Eve into sin? What was the woman’s *Seed* to do to him? What would happen to the *Seed*?

Comment: This verse is generally considered to be the first mention of a *Messiah* who will come to deliver mankind from the penalty of sin. This record is brief, so we do not know what further explanation the Lord God might have proffered. It should be plain that the serpent will be destroyed (head wound – which destroys his power and lordship over mankind), but the *Seed* will receive a deadly wound in the process. It is subsequently revealed that the deadly wound will not cause the *Seed’s permanent* death.

To be fair, however, there are opinions that say *seed* is a plural reference indicating *mankind’s* fight against Satan. But...notice Paul’s comment in Romans 16:20: “And *the God of peace shall bruise Satan* under your feet shortly.” He shows in Ephesians 6:10-18 that such warfare is to be conducted *in concert with Jesus Christ* and the armor He has provided. In other words, even if the context does refer to *multiple seeds*, such a fight will be done in concert with the *Delivering Seed*. The coming of this *Delivering Seed* is a key focal point in all of scripture.

2. Genesis 3:21 – With what did the Lord God cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness? How do you suppose He got the animal skins?

Comment: Not very many commentaries approach the significance of this verse relative to a sacrificial system. How much time do you suppose passed between v. 15 and v. 21? I dare say that it was a matter of *minutes*. Again, the brevity of the record does not allow for much explanation of what the Lord God might have said to explain what He was doing and why. For that reason, any comment about it is speculative, at best. I agree with Adam Clarke that “It is very likely that the *skins* out of which their

clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured out as a sin offering to God...” (p. 23). I suspect that this was done on the 14th day of the first month of the year during which the sin occurred. I have no proof, but it would certainly coincide with a later use of the 14th day of the first month in the holy day seasons listed in Leviticus 23.

3. Genesis 4:3-5 – From where do you suppose Cain and Abel learned the two types of sacrifices they used in worship of God? Would it make sense that they were *taught* – by the Lord God – a sacrificial system? Why should the Lord God prefer Abel’s sacrifice over Cain’s? (See Hebrews 11:4 for a hint.)

Comment: I also agree with Clarke that the *original* idea of sacrificing animals as an act of worship would *not* have occurred to man without the express revelation from God. Cain and Abel were grown men at this time – and, evidently, had a *habit* of doing so on a regular basis – at *appropriate* times, perhaps even *appointed* times that God had intended by the placement of *lights in the firmament of heaven*. Abel’s sacrifice was an *atonement* sacrifice – which acknowledged the need for shed blood to cover sins (see Hebrews 9:22-28). Cain’s sacrifice was merely a *thank offering*. Abel’s sacrifice *foreshadowed* the sacrifice of the woman’s *Seed* so that mankind could be delivered from Satan’s dominion and the death penalty imposed for sin.

4. Exodus 12:1, 2 – During which *month* is this event to occur? Does the Lord God designate it as the *first month* of the year?

Comment: This *first month* did not occur during the dead of the winter as it currently does. It occurs during the first *moon cycle* that occurs during the *vernal* equinox – or *spring* equinox (which occurs around March 20, 21, or 22 when the sun crosses the equator toward the northern hemisphere). If the *full moon* occurs *on* or *after* the *vernal* equinox, the *first month* begins with the new moon that *begins* that *moon cycle* (that is, the *month*). So, this event occurred either in March or April.

5. Verses 3-10 – What kind of lamb were they to set aside for this event? On what day were they

to set it aside? On what day were they to kill and eat it? What were they to do with its blood? How were they to prepare the lamb? What were they to do with the leftovers?

Comment: Israel was commanded to kill these lambs “in the evening” of the 14th day. According to Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31, the day *begins* at *evening*. This is why the weekly Sabbath is observed from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday – and all of the *yearly Sabbaths* follow the same rule. So, at the *beginning* of the 14th day, they killed the lambs and painted their doorposts in preparation for the Lord’s *passover*, which would begin at midnight. The Hebrew word for *evening* [*ben ha arbayim*] means “between the two evenings; at twilight; dusk; *between sundown and dark*.” So, *ben ha arbayim* is the *beginning* of the day. Note that v. 8 commands them to eat it with *unleavened bread*. While this makes Passover a day of unleavened bread, it is not part of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*.

The *Jewish Publication Society of America* makes a distinction between *evening* in v. 6 and *even* in v. 18 that is important in understanding the confusion brought by different translations – confusion that changes God’s revelation. *JPSA* uses the term *ben ha arbayim* in v. 6. That term shows that the lambs were killed *between sundown and dark* at the *beginning* of the 14th day of the first month.

Now, understand this very clearly: v. 18 has another term that is translated in the *KJV* and others as *even*. It is not the same as *ben ha arbayim*. It is the Hebrew term *ba erev* – which is the time that signals *the close of the previous day*. So, the 14th day at *ba erev* would be the *close* of the 14th day – *at sundown, the 3-5 minutes it takes the sun to disappear beneath the horizon*. Once *ba erev* of the 14th day occurs, the 15th day begins. So, the seven days of Unleavened Bread are separated from the Passover. *Ba erev* of any day *ends* that day. For example, Leviticus 23:27 says that the Day of Atonement is on the 10th day of the seventh month. Verse 32 describes it as *beginning* at *ba erev* on the ninth day and ending at *ba erev* on the tenth day (*JPSA*). That pretty much defines the parameters of the 10th day – *sundown to sundown!*

6. Verses 11-17 – How were they to eat the lambs? What is this event called? Why? What purpose was the *blood* to serve? Were they to mark this occasion as a *holy day* in the future? For how long? Was there another event that was to follow this one? What was it called? What were they to observe on the first and last days of this event? What occasion did it memorialize? How long were they to observe these *holy days*?

7. Verses 18-20 – What were they to eat during the seven days that follow Passover? What was the penalty for not eating it?

8. Verses 21-51 – Read the remainder of the chapter to focus on the entire event Israel was to experience. Note especially that the events are connected to Israel’s exodus from Egypt.

9. John 1:29 – Why does John refer to Jesus as *the Lamb of God*? What special purpose is He to serve as God’s *Lamb*?

10. 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 – How does Paul connect *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread* to Christianity? What does he call Jesus Christ? With what does he connect *leavening*? Would it make sense to say that we no longer need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – God’s *Passover Lamb*? Would it make sense to say that we no longer need to get *sin* out of our lives through God’s *Passover Lamb*?

Comment: Here is a case where Paul, a *New Testament Christian*, makes reference to a *permanent* law given by the Lord God – the one who, in fact, became Jesus Christ, the true Passover Lamb. Read Romans 9 and pay careful attention to Paul’s argument about those who are called *God’s people*. Are they *Israel after the flesh*? No. Note especially vv. 25, 26. By virtue of God’s saving grace, *Gentiles*, too, have been made part of *God’s people* through *faith* (see Galatians 3:8, 9, 26-29 and Hebrews 11). Would it follow, then, that the Gentiles would be responsible for keeping Passover and Unleavened Bread as commanded in Leviticus 23? **Yes!** Why? Because Jesus said that He did not come to do away with (*destroy*) the Law and prophets (Matthew 5:17-19). Did He *fulfill* the law regarding Passover? Yes. Is it subsequently

done away with (*destroyed*)? No. Has *sin*, which is pictured in the *leavening*, been conquered yet? No. How do we know?

11. Compare Romans 6:23 to 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26. What are the wages of sin (being *leavened*)? How long must Jesus Christ reign? What is the *last enemy* He will conquer? If *death* is the *last enemy* He will conquer before He turns everything over to God the Father, has He *fulfilled* the entire symbol of Unleavened Bread? (Remember that God's Holy Days are both *law* and *prophecy*.)

Comment: If *death* is the last conquered enemy, then *sin* must still be alive and doing well until He finally conquers it. It has not yet been conquered once-and-for-all.

12. Compare Leviticus 23:4-8 to Numbers 28:16 – Do you see a clear distinction between the Passover on the 14th day of the first month and Unleavened Bread on the 15th day through the 21st day of the first month? Do you understand them to be *separate* observances that are tied together because of the exodus from Egypt?

13. Mark 14:1 – How does Mark make a distinction between the two observances (follow *KJV*, *Modern Language*, *RSV*, *NIV*, *The Jerusalem Bible*, and many others)?

14. Verses 12-16 – What were Jesus and His disciples observing here – *Passover* with unleavened bread as per Exodus 12:8 or the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*? Does this appear to be a meal eaten *before* Passover?

Comment: All New Testament references to this night should be understood in the context of the *Passover* observance on the night of 14th of the first month (known as Abib [Hebrew] and Nisan [Babylonian]). Today, the seven days of Unleavened Bread are called the *Feast of Passover* by some who believe that *Passover* was eaten the night of the 15th. It was not. They cover this mistake by saying that Jesus was not *really* eating Passover with His disciples – that He was eating a *pre-Passover* meal. That is a gross mistake.

15. 1 Corinthians 11:20-34 – Did Paul describe this gathering as one where the *Lord's Supper* was being eaten? To what is Paul referring that is linked to *the same night in which* [Jesus] *was betrayed*? Was this the same night in which He ate His final *Passover* with the disciples before being crucified (read Matthew 26:17-56, Mark 14:12-45, Luke 22:7-48, and John 13-18:5)? Did Paul practice the *new covenant/testament* changes in the *Passover* symbols that Jesus instituted? Was Paul instructing the Corinthian Christians about observing *Passover*?

Comment: This letter was written around A.D. 59. This shows that *New Testament Christians* were still observing God's Holy Days 28 years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. If the Law had been *nailed to the cross*, why were they still observing them? Because God never intended for them to be done away with (Matthew 5:17-19). And...he plainly states that they were not gathering to eat the *Lord's Supper* – the essence of which means that they were to eat their Passover *meal* at home; they were there to partake of the unleavened bread and wine that Jesus Christ used as symbols to institute the new covenant.

This *yearly* observance is not referred to as *the Lord's Supper*, *the Eucharist*, or *communion*, which are observed at times that have nothing to do with the *yearly/annual* observance of *Passover* on the 14th day of the first month. "*As often as you eat the bread and drink the wine*" **does not mean that you can do it anytime you want to**. Would it allow you to observe it every five minutes? That would be excessive, don't you think? Passover comes only *once a year*. The term *remembrance*, therefore, implies a *yearly* observance. The point of this discussion is simple: the concept of the symbols involved in Passover evidently pre-date the giving of God's law at Mt. Sinai – in which case it would be unreasonable to claim that they were merely part of the Lord God's covenant with Israel after the Exodus. Although the Bible gives no specific evidence of this, here are three examples, from reputable sources, that these symbols existed before the Mt. Sinai covenant with Israel: (a) "The Passover was in all probability an institution already existing when the Jewish [actually, *Israelite*] legislation was codified, but taken up and

transformed by the Legislator” (*Dictionary of the Bible*; New York: Charles Scribner’s Son; 1924; p. 683); (b) “Analogies for [Passover] have been pointed out among ancient and modern Arab tribes, and all of its details can be accounted for among the customs of a shepherd people....The Israelites had been semi-nomads [sic] prior to their settlement in Canaan, and they may have celebrated this feast even in Egypt before the Exodus. But sometime after that event they altered its meaning radically” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.; 1967; p. 1068); and (c) “The etymology [the history of a linguistic form shown by tracing its development and relationships] reaches much farther back into Israel’s history than the oldest O.T. records of the feast” (*Harpur’s Dictionary of the Bible*; 1952; p. 527).

Whether or not I agree with everything these sources have to say about the subject, one thing is sure: they point to the existence of a “Passover” concept *before* the event described in Exodus 12. That is significant in the face of the Traditional Christian argument that the Old Testament laws were done away with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ because that marked the point at which the old covenant was annulled by being “nailed to the cross.” As you studied in Lessons 4 and 5, the transition between the old and new covenants is not that cut and dry. There is more involved in the subject than simply doing away with laws. When Jesus fulfilled the Passover symbolism, He did not thereafter declare that observing Passover is no longer necessary (see Matthew 5:17-19).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

What is so special about eating bread that has not had *leavening* mixed into its batter? What is the purpose of *leavening* anyway? What message are we to derive from enduring seven days without eating *leavening*? Is God *really* serious about something that sounds so silly? Remember this: Hebrews 10:1 says that the law is a *shadow* of a good thing to come. What does that mean here?

1. Leviticus 23:6-8; Numbers 28:17, 18, 25 – On which day of the first month does the Feast of

Unleavened Bread occur? For how many days does it last? On which days do *holy convocations* occur? What kind of bread are you to eat during those seven days?

2. Exodus 12:15-20 – With regard to the Exodus, what is significant about observing seven days with unleavened bread? What was the penalty for not observing it as the Lord God commanded? Was that a harsh penalty for non-observance?

3. Verses 31-39 – What problem – relative to leaving Egypt in haste – presented itself to cause the Israelites to have to eat *unleavened* bread?

4. Compare John 6:48-58 to Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; and Luke 22:19, 20 – To what does Jesus Christ compare the wine and unleavened bread? Read the entire context of each New Testament reference and see which holy day they were observing.

Comment: I have already shown you that Passover is a day during which *unleavened bread* is eaten with the Passover meal. The literal translation of Matthew 26:17 is “...on the *first* of the *unleaveneds*...” (emphasis added). Passover precedes Unleavened Bread. So, Jesus and His disciples were eating the *Passover* meal. During this meal, Jesus instituted the new Passover symbols of the unleavened bread and wine. Notice especially that the *unleavened bread* represents *the sinless body of Jesus Christ*. If you apply that symbolism to the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* relative to coming out of *Egypt*, then it represents *coming out of sin* – *the thing that holds God’s people captive*. As a result of coming out of sin, it also represents *the intentional act of taking into one’s life the sinless nature of Jesus Christ*.

5. Revelation 11:8 – To which two places does John compare the city “...where also our Lord was crucified”? What would be significant about using those two places?

Comment: This is one way by which we understand the connection between *sin* and *Egypt*. In this scripture, *Sodom* represents the presence of perverted, unnatural sin (see Genesis 19:1-28). Such sins are not acceptable to a holy God.

But Passover and Unleavened Bread do not focus on the exodus of God's chosen nation from *Sodom*. They do, however, focus on Israel's exodus from *Egypt*. Why relate that to an exodus from *sin*?

Egypt represents a *sophisticated wickedness*. Do not be deceived by the use of the word *sophisticated*. *Sophistication* might be secondarily defined as being "intellectually appealing" or "complex," but, its primary definition is "made wise or worldly-wise by experience or disillusionment." In other words, it symbolizes the insidious, deceitful type of wickedness that enslaves God's people. It is the proud, arrogant power that seeks to replace God with a religion that idolizes man and nature – leaving the True God and His ways out of the picture (see Romans 1:18-32). It represents the earthly, temporal order as opposed to the heavenly, eternal order. It is the embodiment of *puffed-up sin*. Read Matthew 16:6-12 to see how Jesus used the term *leaven* to describe a religious condition like I have noted above. Write down your understanding of why He used it in this situation.

6. 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 – In v. 2, how does Paul describe the Corinthians relative to the sin he is addressing? What effect does "a little *leavening*" have on "the *whole lump*"? What analogy does he use in v. 7 to make his point? What remedy does he suggest in v. 7 for their "puffed up" condition? To what does he relate the *leavened* condition? To what does he relate the *unleavened* condition? Does he suggest a manner in which they should observe (keep) the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Does it appear that he couples *Passover* with the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*?

Comment: While it could be argued that this analogy is relative only to Passover with its symbols of wine and unleavened bread, those who understand the symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread know that he is addressing both observances. Paul says in v. 7 that they are *unleavened* because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They became unleavened by faith in the body and blood of Jesus Christ – the sacrifice He made on our behalf so our sins could be passed over by God and forgiven. Once that confession of faith is made and the individual is baptized

and given the down-payment of the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13, 14), it is mandatory that s/he *continues to come out of sin* – that s/he becomes *unleavened*. The *unleavened* state represents the *sinless* nature of Jesus Christ. Why would God do away with such a meaningful observance as that? For what reason should it be annulled?

7. Ephesians 1:10, 20-23; Philippians 2:8-11; I Corinthians 15:25 – What is the last enemy Jesus Christ will conquer before He turns all things over to the Father? What is significant about His ultimate defeat of *death* (remember Romans 6:23)? Is He in a process of *de-leavening* all things?

Comment: There is evidence that Christians (who were considered a sect of Judaism known as *Nazarenes* – see Acts 5:17; 15:5; and 24:5) were observing God's Holy Days 28+ years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This opposes the concept in Traditional Christianity that they were *nailed to the cross* and effectively annulled.

The Wave-Sheaf Offering

1. Leviticus 23:9-12 – When was this *sheaf of the firstfruits* to be to be "waved" before the Lord? Would that be on the first day of the week (Sunday)? Was it to be accompanied with an animal sacrifice? Describe the animal. Was the animal to be a *burnt offering*?

Comment: There are two important symbols involved in this exercise. First, this wave-sheaf offering is the *first* of the *firstfruits* – the first of two seasons of harvest. This was done relative to the Feast of Unleavened Bread as they prepared to reap the first two crops of the year, the barley and wheat harvests.

According to Alfred Edersheim, a Pharisaic rabbi who converted to Christianity, the sheaf was identified and tied into a bundle during the daytime portion of Passover (the 14th day of the first month). At *ba erev* (the 3-5 minutes between sundown and dark ending the previous day) of the 15th day – at the end of the *yearly Sabbath* (v. 7) that began the Feast of Unleavened Bread – those responsible for cutting the sheaf asked bystanders three times if the sun had

gone down. If so, then that *yearly Sabbath* was past, and they could engage in the work necessary for cutting it. The *Pharisees* reckoned that day to always be on the 16th day of the first month, regardless of the *weekly Sabbath*.

However; when the *Sadducees* were in charge of the Temple services, they reckoned that day from the *weekly Sabbath* that occurred during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In other words, it would always occur at the beginning of the first day of the week (that is, at sundown on Saturday). If the first day of Unleavened Bread occurred on the weekly Sabbath, oddly enough the Pharisees and Sadducees agreed that it would be done at the beginning of the first day of the week and on the 16th day of the first month! But what did the Lord God reveal about when it should be offered?

Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, April 25, A.D. 31. The *Pharisees* would have cut the sheaf at sundown ending Thursday, April 26 had they been in charge of the Temple services. The *Sadducees* would have cut it at sundown ending Saturday, April 28. Acts 5:17 indicates that the *Sadducees* were in charge of the Temple services that year. If you go by Matthew 12:38-40, counting three days and three nights from sundown on Wednesday (see Matthew 27:57-61) would put Jesus being resurrected at sundown on Saturday – just moments before the beginning of the first day of the week, not at sunrise the next morning as so many believe (you cannot count three days and three nights from sundown on Good Friday until sunrise on Easter Sunday morning – even using only *parts* of days). This will become evident as we look at other scriptures.

2. Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-9; John 20:1 – When did Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome come to Jesus' tomb? Had the stone been rolled away from the door of the tomb? Was it rolled away to let Jesus *out* – or to let His disciples *in*? So, had Jesus risen *before* the rising of the sun on the first day of the week? According to Luke 24:12 and John 20:7, what had been done to Jesus' burial garments? Does this suggest that Jesus was in a hurry to leave the tomb?

Comment: If you harmonize these scriptures with Matthew 12:40, you see that Jesus was raised from the dead about sundown on Saturday and took His time about leaving the tomb. We do not know what He did between then and sunrise, but we know that He could have left the tomb anytime He wanted to because He was *spirit*. The two Marys and Salome reached the tomb while it was still dark – just *before* sunrise – and witnessed the rolling away of the stone from the door. Jesus had already departed the tomb – having neatly folded His burial garments before He left.

3. John 20:11-17 – Did Mary Magdalene think someone had stolen Jesus' body? Would that indicate that she did not anticipate His resurrection from the dead? Did Jesus appear to her? Did He allow her to *touch* Him? Why/why not?

Comment: Jesus' having not yet ascended to the Father is significant to the symbolism of the wave-sheaf offering. Remember when that offering was to be made. This might prove which sect was correct: Was it to be on the 16th day of the first month, or was it to be on the first day of the week following the regular Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? *This was not a year during which the first day of the Feast fell on Saturday.* It was on Thursday, April 26, A.D. 31.

4. Matthew 28:9 – Were Jesus' disciples allowed to touch Him in this scene? Do we have a *contradiction* in the stories presented in all of these accounts? How can we resolve the seeming contradiction?

Comment: Early in my own experience with God's truth, I learned that you have to *harmonize* the various accounts of these seeming contradictions to get the true picture. There are reasons why they appear to be contradictory. For instance, Mark 16:9 would make some think that Jesus was resurrected just before sunrise on Sunday morning. There is a good reason why this is a wrong assumption: *there was no punctuation in the original Greek* – so, this verse would be more properly translated “Now when Jesus was risen[,], early the first day of the week He appeared to Mary Magdalene...” Properly placing the comma changes the meaning of the

passage. A literal translation of this verse would read like this: “Now having risen, early the first day of the week He appeared to Mary Magdalene....” Once this correction is made, then all of the accounts harmonize and the seeming contradiction goes away.

But, what about Matthew 28:9? John 20:17 shows that Jesus was – *at that moment* – about to ascend to the Father’s throne. The *RSV*, *The Jerusalem Bible*, and *Moffatt* translate this verse giving that sense of meaning: “I am ascending....” Having told Mary Magdalene to go tell His disciples that very thing, she sets off to complete her mission, and Jesus ascends to the Father. Matthew 28:9 does not indicate how much time passed between His conversation with Mary Magdalene and His meeting with the disciples who held Him by His feet. We can only observe that He would not allow her to touch Him because He had not yet ascended. That being a given fact, why would He allow the others to touch Him if He had not yet ascended?

5. Leviticus 23:9-14 – How does Jesus’ ascension to the Father relate to the wave-sheaf offering?

Comment: Note two aspects of this ceremony: (a) the wave-sheaf is the *first* of the *firstfruits*; and (b) the lamb is a burnt offering – to be totally consumed by fire. The *smoke* and odor of that burnt offering represents a *spirit rising* to God. ***It is not to be confused with an immortal soul!*** It foreshadows the Lamb of God rising *in spirit* to God the Father (see v. 13 where the burnt offering is called a *sweet savor* unto God). The waving of the barley sheaf represents an *unadulterated* offering – the sacrificed Christ – of the *first* of the *firstfruits* to God. This sheaf had to be cut and offered before any of the *first harvest* could be harvested.

6. James 1:18 – How does James refer to True Christians?

7. Revelation 14:14-20 – Does the imagery revealed to John indicate two types of *harvests*? Is the first group *harvested* by Jesus Christ, and the second one *harvested* by the angels?

Comment: Although there are two harvests shown here, this only relates to two ultimate

types of *resurrections* mentioned by Jesus Christ in John 5:28, 29. My point here is that Jesus Christ does, in fact, effect the *first resurrection at His return*. We will learn about the second harvest by Jesus Christ in Part 2.

8. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 – Of which group did Christ become the *first* representative? Would He represent those True Christians who are *harvested when He returns*? Is there an *order* in which the *harvests* will take place?

9. Acts 26:22, 23 – Who was to be the *first* to rise from the dead? If He was the *first*, had anyone *before* Him done it?

10. John 3:13 – Has anyone other than Jesus Christ ascended to heaven? So, He would be the *first*? Would that mean that no one *before* Him had done such a thing? When did He do it?

Comment: What all of this demonstrates is that Jesus fulfilled the symbolism of the wave-sheaf offering. He was the *first* of the *firstfruits*. The *firstfruits* will not be harvested until His return. We gratefully acknowledge that Jesus has gone before us to prepare for our being resurrected from the dead or changed from flesh to spirit at His return (see 1 Corinthians 15:50-58). You should be able to see how this observance was *prophetic* in nature – as well as how Jesus brought that particular *good thing to come* (see Hebrews 10:1) to fulfillment.

The Feast of Pentecost

Pentecost is not determined by a *moon cycle*; it is determined by counting days from Unleavened Bread to Pentecost – it means “count fifty.”

1. Leviticus 23:15-21 – From which point does the counting of *fifty days* begin? How many weekly Sabbaths will be included in the fifty days? On which day of the week will the fiftieth day occur?

Comment: During each Feast of Unleavened Bread, there will be at least one weekly Sabbath. The count toward Pentecost – the fiftieth day – will begin with the *Sunday* following that *weekly Sabbath* – the same day as the wave-

sheaf offering. *Completing seven Sabbaths* will amount to 49 days (7 x 7 = 49). The Sunday following that seventh Sabbath will always be Pentecost – the fiftieth day. That’s how you “count 50.”

2. Verse 17 – What are the two loaves of *leavened bread* called? Why do you suppose these loaves are *leavened*? (Don’t jump to any unwarranted conclusions!)

3. Verse 20 – Are these loaves *waved* before the Lord? What would that suggest to you based on what you now know about the wave-sheaf offering? By whom are these two loaves eaten?

Comment: Here’s a hint: If Christ was the *first* to be resurrected from the dead, by necessity others will follow. If *Christ* fulfilled the symbolism of the *first wave-sheaf offering*, then someone else will fulfill the symbolism of the two *leavened* loaves that are called *firstfruits* and waved before God.

While leavening can represent sin, this could show that these loaves represent something that had been tainted with sin – yet, presented to God as an offering. In that sense, you could find them representing the saints of the Old and New Testament periods, before Christ’s return, whose sins have been forgiven (read Hebrews 11).

It can also represent *the ability to affect something in its entirety*. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 13:33 that “The Kingdom of Heaven is *like unto leaven*, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, *till the whole [lot] was leavened*” (emphasis added). Once this first harvest of saints occurs, they will be like *leavening* in the world as the Kingdom of God moves to conquer all of the world and, with Jesus Christ, begin to reconcile all things to God the Father. That work will continue until it is complete (see 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 and Colossians 1:12-20).

4. Exodus 23:16 – By what name does Moses call Pentecost (it is identified with Pentecost because it is the next holy day following Unleavened Bread in this discourse)? Is it called the *feast of harvest*, the *firstfruits of your labors*? How many *harvest seasons* does Moses identify (vv. 14-17)?

5. Revelation 14:4 – What are the 144,000 who are “redeemed from the earth” called? Can you understand the connection this has with vv. 14-16?

6. 1 Corinthians 15:23 – When will the *first* harvest begin?

7. Revelation 20:4, 6 – What responsibilities will these *firstfruits* have alongside Jesus Christ?

8. Revelation 19:6-9 – Who is called the *Bride* of Jesus Christ? At what point does Christ “marry” His *Bride*? Does Paul show in 2 Corinthians 11:2 that she is presently only *espoused* (engaged – promised for marriage)? Does this indicate that God’s historic True Church will be those who make up the *firstfruits* and subsequently “marry” Jesus Christ at His return?

Comment: Please understand that those who are redeemed at the return of Jesus Christ *will be the only ones who will “marry” Jesus Christ and serve as judges, priests, and kings in His Kingdom*. Any who are subsequently redeemed will be in God’s family, but they will not have the same honor bestowed on them as the firstfruits have.

So, *Pentecost* – the Feast of the *Firstfruits* – symbolizes a salvation event that has not yet been fulfilled. Today is not the only day of salvation, but those who are privileged to be in the *first* harvest will be given some very important responsibilities for *really bringing change you can believe in!*

9. Acts 2 – On which feast day were the disciples gathered? What happened on that day (vv. 2-4)? Which prophecy did this fulfill (vv. 16-21)?

Comment: Another aspect of the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost relates to the widespread gift of the Holy Spirit. While this account is only a *partial* fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (see Romans 8:23), the Holy Spirit will be made more powerfully available when Christ and the Saints begin to conquer the earth and put into place the re-education of the survivors of the tribulation period and the Day of the Lord. So, there is another aspect of Pentecost

that is yet unfulfilled – something to which we can eagerly look forward.

* * * * *

In Part 2, we will learn about the spiritual significance of the Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the eighth day that is attached to the end of Tabernacles as a closing ceremony for the festival calendar. Please remember that these Holy Days are significant to God's plan of salvation.

an open letter from (continued from p. 2)

The Pastor

law is holy, and the *commandment* holy, and just, and good...[and] spiritual" (Romans 7:12-14; emphasis added) and that God sent Jesus Christ in order to condemn *sin* – which, according to 1 John 3:4, is the transgression of the law – "that *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us..." (Romans 8:4; emphasis added), then you do not find *any* acceptable rationale or justification for *changing or annulling* God's law.

Why change such a beneficial law when the problem is with the *sinner*? This would lead me to suspect a more sinister motivation for doing so. And...*allowing for the fulfillment of Daniel 7:24, 25* appears impressively in the shadows of my mind. There God warned of the coming of a politically powerful individual – or system of government – who would, in fact, *change* God's *laws* and *sacred seasons*. Did God inspire that prophecy in vain?

Here's an example of good logic gone awry. During the 400+/- years between the last writings of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the religious leaders in Judaism realized that their disobedience to God's laws in the centuries past had brought upon them great suffering from God's punishment: 10 of the tribes of Israel had been completely cut off from the covenant community and deported to foreign lands never to return, while those who were left had been placed in Babylonian captivity for 70 years

and under foreign rule for most of the time thereafter. What could they do to solve the problem found *in the people*?

Their answer was simple: build a high, strong "fence" around God's law by interpreting it and applying it to every minute detail and circumstance of life. Without overly exaggerating the situation, it came to be like the observation of Tevya in *Fiddler on the Roof*: there was a *tradition and a blessing for everything*. There came to be an ever-increasing mass of regulatory interpretations of what God's law allowed and disallowed. It became so bad that the law itself was put into the place of the Messiah – that is, adherence to all of those traditions and interpretations of the law *became their means of salvation*. Their justification for their beliefs and practices was based more on what Rabbi So-and-So said than on the actual scripture. This was the context of Jesus' confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15:1-9. This was His personal judgment against their misguided, wrong-headed logic. Traditional Christianity has fared no better. Many, many traditional "Christian" teachings are nothing more than the misplaced, misguided logic of well-intentioned people. The *logic* has been misplaced.

The second clue is well documented in history. Our modern problem is that our knowledge of history seems to *thin out* over time. We simply do not take the time to pay attention to more than the *highlights* – which might be demonstrated by noting the difference between watching the news on NBC, ABC, and CBS – so brief and selective – as opposed to Headline News, CNN, and Fox News – so plentiful and exhaustive. Knowing the *highlights* of history serves a *limited* purpose.

The problem that gradually arose in the Gentile-dominated Church after Christ's death was simple *anti-Semitism*. How did this work? In the three examples below, I want you to note the misplaced logic and the gradual way it affected the typical, uninformed "Christian" of those times – especially, perhaps, the Gentiles. Also, remember that Christianity began as a *sect of Judaism* (see Acts 24:1-9 and 28:17-31). That's a critical component. [I am indebted to Samuele Bacchiocchi's work *From Sabbath to Sunday* ("Anti-Judaism in the Fathers and the

Origin of Sunday"; The Pontifical Gregorian University Press: Rome; 1977; pp. 213-235) for the historical insights that follow.]

Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch between A.D. 98-117. According to C. S. Mosna, in his work *Storia della domenica* (p. 95), Ignatius warned those in his bishopric against their tendencies to *Judaize* – that is, to practice Christianity according to the *Jewish* pattern of religion. He taught that even the earliest prophets imitated *Christ*, not the *Jews*. While he did not advocate observing Sunday as opposed to the seventh-day Sabbath, he did advocate *not observing* the seventh-day Sabbath with the same sacraments, rituals and traditions as the Jews. This was the proverbial *toe-hold* – that critical *crack* or *crevice* or *ledge* where you can get a place large enough to *firmly plant at least your big toe* for lift and balance. He was teaching against *appearing to be Jewish!*

The next gradual change came from what is called *The Epistle of Barnabas* (dated between A.D. 130-138). It is speculated that it was written by someone, perhaps Jewish, who used the pseudonym “Barnabas” – frankly, probably because Barnabas was such a well-known mission partner with Paul and because he was so highly regarded as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. It is also speculated that it was written in Alexandria, Egypt – a *hotbed of tension between Jews and Christians*. *Barnabas* attempted to neutralize *Jewish beliefs and practices* by repudiating their historic validity and by using an *allegorical method* of reasoning (the meaning is not derived from what is specifically stated; it is all *symbolic*) to proclaim that God did not intend the *literal* practice of observing the Sabbath during this day and time. The true Sabbath will be instituted at the return of Jesus Christ because man is presently too impure and unholy to observe it properly. God had declared that He hated their new moons and Sabbaths (Amos 5:21-26), which, supposedly, demonstrated His total disdain of their beliefs and practices. Whereupon, *Barnabas* introduced the *eighth day* concept, which supposedly marks the beginning of another world and a prolongation of the Sabbath to be instituted at Christ’s return, which was symbolized by the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the

eighth day. To borrow a modern expression: *Say what?*

If you understand the context of Amos 5:21-27 correctly, you will understand a very specific reason why God hated the Israelites’ new moons and Sabbaths. Verses 25 and 26 pretty much demonstrate the reason: “You sacrificed to me for forty years while you were in the desert, Israel – but always your real interest has been in your *heathen gods* – in Sakkuth your king, and in Kaiwan, your god of the stars, and in all the images of them you made” (*The Living Bible*). The reason God hated *their* new moons and Sabbaths was because they mixed in pagan practices with *God’s* holy days. As Bozo the Clown used to say: “That’s a Bozo no-no!”

Finally, there is Justin Martyr, raised and educated under the influence of the Greek culture to become a philosopher. Justin, who lived, taught, and wrote in Rome from A.D. 138-161, admitted in his writings that there was present in Rome *strong anti-Judaic feelings* – as Ignatius did regarding Antioch and *Barnabas* did regarding Alexandria. Because of this, Justin, too, called for “Christians” to avoid any semblance of being *Jewish* by social and/or religious beliefs and practices. Such advice *seems* to be well-founded, but it actually leads one down a very slippery slope (Proverbs 14:12) toward making some changes that need not be made. Why do I say that? Remember that the *logic* is faulty.

How did Justin pursue his case for a cessation of *Judaizing*? In a succession of arguments, he excoriated the Jews by casting them into the role of the lowest, most sinful people in all of creation. He claimed that God knew ahead of time how they would be reprobates and crucify the Christ, so He gave the Ten Commandments and other religious laws – even circumcision – to *mark* them and segregate them from other nations. So, the Sabbath, holy days, circumcision, Ten Commandments, and all other social and religious practices were imposed on them because of their sins and hardness of heart. *All of the “Mosaic” legislation was, therefore, temporary, unimportant, and added to scripture merely because of the special wickedness of the Jews*. The only solution was a complete divorce from Judaism and any hint of pursuing the Christian faith according to *Jewish* rituals and

practices. So, this *Gentile* “Christian” pursued a propaganda campaign against Judaism that would have been the envy of Nazi Germany.

Notice this carefully: Jesus Christ was resurrected about sundown on Saturday, April 28, A.D. 31 – not Sunday morning at sunrise. By A.D. 161 (Justin), the full switch to Sunday was ***not*** a *fait accompli*. There would continue to be wrangling over it for over 150 years! It is the unquestioned witness of history that Constantine the Great, who united the Christian Church of Rome with the State of Rome, executed legislation in A.D. 321 that enjoined the Christian observance of Sunday as the legal day of worship. This was the practice in Rome and Alexandria – but not in the *Eastern Church* of Constantinople (who actually observed *both* days in the middle of the fifth century – ca. A.D. 450). The final blow came at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 364, which in the 29th canon declared: “Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day....If, however, they are found Judaizing, *they shall be shut out from Christ*” (notice the anti-Semite bias; emphasis added). So, they were threatened with *eternal damnation* for refusing to change. Pope Innocent I declared in A.D. 416 that Saturday would be a day of fasting, which would condition them to be prejudiced against the seventh day. In A.D. 590, Pope Gregory denounced Sabbath-keepers as prophets of the Antichrist – a horrible, prejudicial stigma. Added to that, it was generally stressed that Saturday was a day of bad luck because Saturn – for whom the day was named – was the god of the underworld who imprisoned nature from the winter solstice until the spring equinox. Propaganda. Prejudice. Myth. Lies.

Even after the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church declared this: “It was the *Catholic Church* which, by the authority of Jesus Christ [who said He did not come to abolish the law and the prophets], has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus *the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] church*” (Monsignor Segur, “Plain Talk About Protestantism Today,” p. 213; emphases added).

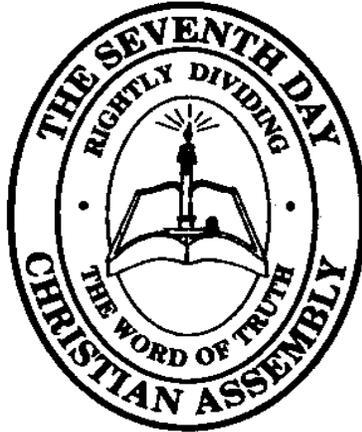
There is an important point to be made here: In his trial defense at Augsburg, Martin Luther – in what is called his *Augsburg Confession* – stated that one of the reasons he rebelled was that the Pope put himself into the position of *abolishing one of God’s Commandments* – the seventh-day Sabbath. Luther considered that to be the height of presumption and arrogance – even though the Lutherans have *never* observed the seventh-day Sabbath.

So, in this lesson, we are going to consider *logic* and *history* as we ferret out God’s revelation of His truth about His Sabbaths and holy days. If they are *prophetic*, what do they hold in store for mankind? How can we be sure that God *never* intended for them to be set aside in favor of what is commonly practiced by Traditional Christianity? Does it *really* make a difference to God? Be ready for an astonishing, enlightening study. May God bless you with “eyes to see and ears to hear” as you seek to understand His truth.

In Christ’s Service,

Larry E. Ford

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It is published by The Seventh Day Christian Assembly, Inc.
as a free educational service in the public interest.



Straight Talk . . . Plain Truth

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Contributions to help defray the costs of publication and mailing are gratefully accepted.

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