

Worshiping God in

Spirit and Truth

A Magazine for Understanding God's Truth

Special Edition!

GOD'S HOLY DAYS:

A PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF
HIS PLAN OF SALVATION

WHY IS GOD INTERESTED IN MANKIND?

WHAT IS MAN'S GREAT POTENTIAL IN GOD'S PLAN?

APRIL – JUNE 2014

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from the desk of the Pastor:



If you would, please click on the “Holy Day Calendar” section of our website, and find the dates for and names of the holy days that The Seventh Day Christian Assembly will observe during 2014. Those who are unfamiliar with this practice might find it odd that a *Christian* group would observe what, to many traditional Christian groups, are considered *Old Testament*, *Jewish* observances. Because of the disconnect from things *Jewish* that has historically occurred in traditional *Christianity*, such a practice among *Christian* groups is generally met with disdain and (Dare I say it?) *anti-Semitic bias*. I assume also that some among Judaism might very well look askance at such a group of Christians and feel that Judaism’s historical religious territory has been invaded by people who are not Jewish and, therefore, do not understand the entire historical and religious fabric into which the observance of these days is woven. With those concerns in mind, this issue of *Spirit and Truth* is dedicated to explaining the meanings that we derive from these holy days and why we place them in the milieu of True Christianity.

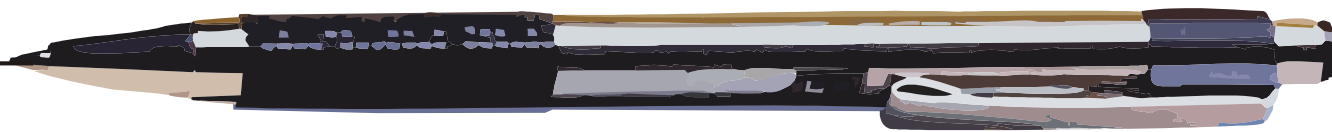
The *Prophetic* Nature of the Holy Days

Because we consider these holy days to be *prophetic* in nature, we understand them to be, therefore, meaningful *beyond* the historical and religious fabric into which they were woven. It is not an odd thing for prophecy to be treated in such a manner – even though some do not believe that it can or should be. Consider the following example as one among many that demonstrates my point.

I am not an expert in this matter, but I rely on information I have studied that is purported to be from such-like experts. Several centuries ago, Hil-

lel II constructed a mathematical formula by which he could predict with amazing accuracy the dates for the holy days for more than 50 years in advance. In fact, this formula is in use among Judaism to this very day. Why was such a project undertaken?

Because the Temple had been destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70. With that destruction, the *Sanhedrin* (the supreme council and tribunal, consisting of 70-72 members, that had jurisdiction over religious matters and important civil and criminal matters) was disbanded and not allowed to function. They were the ones who had typically set the holy day calendar for Judaism by observing the



moon's different phases –which was the idea behind Israel's *new moon feasts*. This method of setting the calendar was good for only one year at a time.

Hillel's formula allowed the Jews to continue to observe those holy days without the services of the Sanhedrin until they could come out from under the Roman oppression and resume their religious practices under a re-established Sanhedrin. Much of this optimism was based on prophetic considerations in the Old Testament about a new Temple that would be constructed at a time in the future more closely aligned with the appearance of Messiah.

It can be safely said that such a dependence upon that *prophetic notion* was also woven into the historical and religious fabric of Judaism. In the absence of the fulfillment thus far of those prophetic considerations, Hillel II's method has been used for centuries to calculate the dates for the observance of the holy days named in Leviticus 23 – complete with the intercalation of an extra month seven times in a 19-year time cycle (a "leap" month, so to speak).

Why do *we* (that is, *Christian TSDCA*) consider these holy days to be *prophetic*? Let's take a look at a few scriptures that set the focus on God's reason to be involved with mankind. That involvement is explained in both the Old and New Testaments. Genesis 1:26-28 explains that God determined to create a being in His own image. The fact that He created man from the dust of the earth

(Genesis 2:7) did not represent the *terminus point* of that creation – that is, the body of flesh was not the completion of the planned process. It was the *beginning*. Paul explains this in detail in 1 Corinthians 15:12-58 by showing that there will be a state of *immortality* to which God's faithful in Christ will be taken. This process *begins* with the body of flesh (1 Corinthians 15:46-49). It *culminates* with a transformation into a spirit body at a time designated by God (vv. 50-58).

In John 3:3-8, Jesus Christ explains that it will involve a *new birth* from flesh to spirit. You can see Paul's additional commentary on this in 2 Corinthians 4:7 through 5:10...where he describes the transition that will take place from an "earthen vessel/earthly tent" to an "eternal house from heaven not built with hands/heavenly dwelling." Any protest that this is merely New Testament theology is quelled by various Old Testament statements upon which this theology is based.

Read Job 14. There are several salient points that should make the point very well. First, vv. 1-13 point out man's *temporary nature* in the flesh. Second, v. 12 expressly says that there is a *terminus point* for life in the flesh and that man's *death* (Job euphemistically refers to it as *sleep*) can last for a very long time before God takes any action to remedy the situation. Third, vv. 14, 15 show that Job believed that there will come a time when God will call mankind out of the grave and effect a *renewal* (*KJV = change*). Jesus' statement in John 5:28, 29 supports this concept of life after death.

Paul attributes to Abraham the belief that God will raise the dead to life (Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:17-19). Finally, Job 14:16-22 demonstrates that God intends for mankind to learn about the very limited nature of the dust-to-flesh nature of man. This is expressed very well in the book of Ecclesiastes (see especially chapter 9:1-12). David expresses the same hope in Psalms 11:7 and 17:15 – that is, being awakened from the *sleep* of physical death.

I will continue the larger discussion of this in the articles that follow. Suffice it to be said at this point that this expectancy of life beyond the grave is a *prophetic* matter...if for no other reason, it is a testimony of God's ability to declare a thing and then bring it to pass at the time in the future that He has determined (see Isaiah 44:6-8; 46:8-10; 55:10, 11). Understand this very deeply: *The execution of this plan of God through the ages is the focus of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.*

Thus, we show from our various discussions of Ephesians 1:4-14 how this develops from the conception of the idea to its completion (see our free downloadable books: *God: Accused or Defended* [chapter six], *Meat in Due Season* [chapter six], *Salvation*, and *A Statement of Beliefs* [chapter three]). It is the most exciting plan ever conceived in all of creation!

The Holy Days Involved

There are eight holy day periods that are commanded by the Lord God in Leviticus 23. This Lord God is the same divine being who became Je-

sus Christ (read John 1:1-14). He is the one who said that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (see Matthew 5:17-19). That being the case, one would expect that the divine requirement to observe these holy days would continue to be the responsibility of His True Church (see Exodus 31:12, 13).

The holy days are as follows:

1. The weekly, seventh-day Sabbath (v. 3);
2. The Passover (v. 4);
3. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 5-8);
4. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost; vv. 15-21);
5. The Feast of Trumpets (vv. 21, 22);
6. The Day of Atonement (vv. 26-32);
7. The Feast of Tabernacles (vv. 33-44); and
8. The Last Great Day (v. 36 = the eighth day).

In this issue, I will explain the significance of the first four holy days; I will explain the last four in the July-September issue.

You can find discussions of the holy days in Lessons 11 and 12 in our free, downloadable *Bible Study Course* and *A Statement of Beliefs*. Please visit our website and browse our literature offerings. It is well worth your time and effort to do so.....and highly useful in expanding your understanding of God's truth.

Larry E. Ford, Pastor

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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 car might not be *necessary*, but you do it because you want something else so that 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*** and, therefore, ***unnecessary***. Why should God have decided to *change* His laws and sacred seasons *if there was nothing wrong with them?* Paul, with *New Testament* fervor, asserted in Romans 7:12-14 that God's laws and commandments are *holy, righteous, and good* so that sin can be recognized as such and become *utterly sinful* as a result! Surely God is not *whimsical, capricious, illogical, or duplicitous!* Could it be that ***men*** created the changes *without God's permission* under the guise of having been given the authority by God to do so? In this study, we are going to deal with their ***illogical logic*** and show you God's truth.

God's Plan and Will Largely Ignored

Leviticus 23 is largely overlooked by mainstream Christianity because they consider it to be 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*. There are warnings in abundance in the *New Testament* that there will be deceivers in abundance who will come disguised as “Christians” and do exactly that kind of sleight-of-hand maneuver (the old *shell game*

scheme) to lead people away from God's will and plan (see Matthew 7:21-23; 24:4,5; 2 Corinthians 11:4, 13-15; and Ephesians 4:11-16 for examples). Most of them will have been deceived by the father of lies, Satan the Devil – the inventor of the deceptive *shell game* (Revelation 12:9).

God is not *duplicitous*. He does not plan out with intricate details how to get from *alpha* to *omega* and then change His mind and do something directly opposite. Let me give you three scriptures that illustrate my point here.

The Jerusalem Bible's translation of Genesis 1:14 says this: "God said: 'Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate *festivals, days, and years*" (emphases added). Here is how it translates Genesis 2:2, 3: "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 rested after all of his work of creating*" (emphases added). To demonstrate why God is not duplicitous, we refer to Isaiah 55:11: "...My word that goes out from my mouth...will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

These three scriptures show that God designed plans by which certain things will exist for holy purposes. His own power is the vehicle by which He commands something to exist as His *desired outcome* (that is, His *will*). Both the desired outcome and the power to accomplish it make *change unnecessary*. If He is able to cause His word to accomplish His desired outcome, then there is no motivation for Him to say one thing and do another or to stoop to the sleight-of-hand deception of an unholy *shell game*. That would be uncharacteristic of such a holy God. Yet...that is exactly the picture painted by mainstream Christian thought when it claims that He *abolished* some of the most holy, righteous, and good aspects of His plan and desired outcome. If I understand properly the *chasmic* difference between the mind of God and the mind of man (Isaiah 55:8, 9), I suspect that

man has attempted to wrestle out of God's hands the control of the plan and desired outcome (see Romans 1:21-25). If that suspicion is valid, then man is acting very much the same as God's ancient enemy, Satan the Devil (compare Isaiah 14:12-14 to Revelation 12:9 and 2 Corinthians 4:1-6).

Questions to Consider

Why did God go through the effort to create the sun, moon, and stars to indicate "...*festivals, days, [weeks], and years...*" – and set up laws concerning the observance of the *holy days* – just to either cause or allow the holy, sacred purpose of the seventh-day Sabbath to be moved to *Sunday* and the seven holy day observances to be *abolished* altogether? Does scripture anywhere declare the *necessity* for such to be done either by God or man? Daniel 7:25 warns that sometime in history some *human* would come along and do exactly that.

Hosea 2:1-13 says that God will not allow Israel to sully the *holiness* of His appointed holy day festivals. How? He will, by some means, **prevent** her from observing them (v. 11). Why? Because she has mixed and mingled the expressions of His holiness with pagan religious trash that makes them unclean in His sight. It seems that He has turned Israel over to the consequences of their action without surrendering His holy will. Paul says in Hebrews 8:7, 8 that the fault with the first covenant was with the **people**, not with God or the covenant. Romans 1:24, 26, and 28 reveal that God turns over to the consequences of their actions

those who suppress His truth by their wickedness. So, one could rightly wonder why mainstream Christianity – who have also mixed and mingled God’s holiness with paganism – would abandon His seventh-day Sabbath and appointed feasts. If the loss of such is God’s proper judgment of Israel, then it is proper judgment for anyone else who comes in God’s name and does the same thing.

Speaking of being *duplicitous*.....why should God change His mind again in the future and reinstitute the very same holy days after the return of Jesus Christ and in the eternity ahead? During the Kingdom period described in Zechariah 14, Jesus Christ will *require* all of mankind (not just the Jews) who survive the Day of the Lord – that final battle otherwise known as *Armageddon* – to observe the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

Isaiah 66:22, 23 says that He will require the inhabitants of the *new heavens and new earth* (see Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21) to observe the *new moons* (the means by which the holy days are determined) and the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. What does this tell us? *That God is **duplicitous***? No! It tells us that the fault has continued to be with *man*, not God’s original plan. How so?

First of all, it tells us that God does not stop the production of human beings subsequent to the return of Jesus Christ. Far from it – they will continue to exist and propagate beyond the new heavens and new earth. That is the sense of the *increase* of God’s government in Isaiah 9:7. Next, it tells us that Jesus Christ, the creator and sustainer of all

things (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17), was the one who created the weekly seventh-day Sabbath and the holy days. He will require that the original system that He set into place in the beginning will be used as He intended and not be subject to the whims of fallible man.

It should be apparent to the observant reader, therefore, that God never intended that His plan and will should be changed and/or abolished. To think and practice otherwise is to fall victim to man’s *illogical logic*.

Sleight-of-Hand Theology

I know that it is difficult to believe that so many “Christians” could have fallen prey to such a colossal piece of sleight-of-hand theology. But, we must ask ourselves why Jesus would have warned us about the possibility of such in Matthew 24:4, 5 – and why He inspired John to write in Revelation 12:9 that Satan has deceived the *whole world*. If His word goes out to accomplish the purpose for which He intends it, where is the mystery about the presence of sleight-of-hand theology? You must understand that the deceived person does not know that he is deceived.....or that he participates in the deception when he passes it along as though it is the truth.

Paul even warns us about this sleight-of-hand theology in Ephesians 4:11-16. How does it enjoy such success? It takes advantage of the spiritually immature. Superficial, immature religion and superficial, shallow values and ethics are an easy mark

for the sleight-of-hand deceivers – who *appear* to be ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Read the following and make note of the sleight-of-handedness in it:

In the Old Testament the *seventh* day of the week is 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 out of seven was to be a rest day.*** (emphases added)

This quote pretty much represents the basis of theology in this matter for all of the 32,000+ Christian denominations extant today.

Can you tell from the highlighted portions what is wrong with this logic? Let me inform you further: The author says that the number *seven* simply indicates the day on which God rested – not the specific day intended for the rest He required. How would you determine God’s revealed will in this matter? Which scriptures would you use? It is patently obvious that ***any day out of seven*** is not the idea He was trying to get across! Why? Because from Genesis to Revelation the term *Sabbath* ***always*** refers to the *seventh day*!

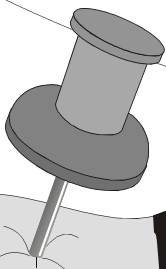
Read Genesis 2:2, 3. Which day did God bless and make holy? Read Exodus 20:8-11. Which day is the commanded *Sabbath*? Read Exodus 16. On which day were they forbidden (for 40 years) to gather manna? Read Exodus 31:12-17. Which day

is a sign between God and His people? Read Mark 2:23-28. Of which day is Jesus Christ the Lord? Read Hebrews 10:1 and Colossians 2:16, 17. Is the *seventh-day Sabbath* a shadow (a type or figure) of some *good thing to come* (that is, something that is presently *prophetic* that God will bring to *reality*)? Can you now see the sleight-of-hand that is used by sincere, well-meaning people who think they are spreading God’s *truth*? Such theology is *illogical!* It is patently *bogus!*

Here is a further admission by this same author: “*There is no specific command in the New Testament to change from the seventh to the first day*” (emphasis added). It is related to the following quote from the publication *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). What does this teach you?

So, the basis of the following articles is going to show that ***illogical logic*** has driven the changes that have been made to God’s will and plan by misguided men. Prepare yourself to learn the *truth* about God’s *prophesied plan of salvation* revealed in the *shadow* of His Sabbath and holy days. Remember our initial query: Why should God have decided to change His laws and sacred seasons if there was nothing wrong with them?

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Memo

“...God Blessed the *Seventh* Day and Made *it* Holy...”

(Genesis 2:3)

After the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church declared the following: “It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday [rest] 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; emphasis added). When brought to trial by the Catholics in Augsburg, Germany, Luther stated that one of the reasons for his rebellion 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 Luther did not (and his followers to this day do not) observe the seventh-day Sabbath!

In this astonishing and enlightening study, we are going to ferret out God’s truth about the place that God’s seventh-day Sabbath should hold for those who desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24). How can we be sure that God *never* intended for His Sabbaths to be set aside in favor of man-made traditions? Does it *really* make a difference to God?

Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?

All of God’s action in Genesis 2:1-3 is directed toward creating a rest period on the seventh day.

As a matter of fact, the creation of that rest period was the *cause* of the existence of the seventh day – instead of letting six days of creation suffice. We should notice that God did something different

with regard to this seventh day: *He blessed it and made it holy*. Whatever else you might think that means, it should be evident to you that God does something here that sets this day apart from the previous six days.

Blessed means that He endowed it with *divine favor by making that day a period of sacred time*. *Made it holy* means that He *set it apart for holy usage*. This day, like the other six, is marked out by the rotation of the earth on its axis. One of the lights (the sun) put into the heavens (Genesis 1:14) enables the periods of *evenings* and *mornings* to be identified in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 as *days*. It was *God's rest* during a similar period of time that created this day of *God's rest*. This lends to the importance of its existence.

In effect, God set this seventh day apart as a rest day wherein man will have a specified period of *holy time* that is special to God during which he can contemplate, meditate upon, and dedicate himself to God's purpose for his existence. Notice, by the way, that the word *Sabbath* is not used in Genesis 2:1-3. The *seventh day* is referred to as the *Sabbath* because the term *rested* is translated from the Hebrew word from which *Sabbath* is derived. The fourth Commandment ties the two together (Exodus 20:8-11).

In Mark 2:27, 28, Jesus Christ addresses some issues about this Sabbath day and provides some important information for the observant reader. First, He says that it was created for *mankind*. That means that it was not specially created and

reserved for Israel alone. Intrinsic in this thought is the idea that God intended that *mankind* should derive some benefit from this special day.

Second, Jesus claims that He is the *Lord of the Sabbath*. The term *Lord* is translated from the Greek term *kurios*, which means that He is the *owner* and *controller* of the seventh-day Sabbath. What does this mean? John 1:1-3 reveals that Jesus, before His incarnation (v. 14), was the God who personally handled the creation of all things – including the seventh-day Sabbath. Colossians 1:15-17 reveals that “...*all things* were created *by* Him and *for* Him...” (emphases added). However you want to parse it, Jesus Christ was the Being who created the seventh-day Sabbath by resting from His work! Isaiah 55:10, 11 says that His *word* will accomplish the purpose for which it was intended. What should we understand from this?

You will not find *one word* or *group of words* in scripture where Jesus Christ instituted a change from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday. Catholic Cardinal Gibbons, in his 1892 work *The Faith of Our Fathers*, wrote the following:

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*** [that is, the Roman Catholic Church] ***never*** ***sanctify***. (p. 111; emphases added)

Thus, we see historical evidence that, prior to 1892,

human beings who claimed to be Christians made the change in the day of rest.

Read Matthew 5:17 where Jesus Christ said that He did not come to *abolish* the Law and Prophets; rather, He came to make them achieve the purpose for which they were intended. Your problem is, once and for all, to decide who is the true *Lord of the Sabbath*: God or man?

The Revelation of the Fourth Commandment

Does Exodus 20:8-11 say that ***one day out of seven*** is sufficient to satisfy God's expectations? Or...does it point to a specific day? What is meant that you are to *remember* and *keep holy* the ***seventh*** day? Are you allowed to be lazy and forsake your ordinary work during the six days set aside for such? Are you, your family, your employees, your visitors, and the tools you use to do your work (including your animals) required to *rest* on the ***seventh day***? Is this commandment predicated on Genesis 2:1-3? How can you tell?

The term *remember* means "to observe [celebrate] or commemorate [call to mind or memorialize]." Did God intend for mankind to do these things merely to give them *rest* from working six days in a row? No. It is a celebration that God rested from His work because He had concluded creating man, the place and environment He wanted man to inhabit, and the things man needs for sustenance, work, and recreation. It is a calling to

mind that all of creation is not the product of blind, stupid chance as evolutionists and atheists would have us believe. On the contrary, it is a testimony that God has a *supreme purpose* for having brought mankind and his universal habitation into existence (see Isaiah 45:18, 19).

So, the objective for creating the seventh-day Sabbath was to create a time for mankind to worship, reflect, and rest. It is a time to reflect on the testimony of God that He engaged in a creative work with the objective of creating man in His image and to set him over *all the works of God's hands* (see Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2) – in effect, ultimately placing mankind in the God Family (see also Ephesians 1:4-14). All of that is bound up in *remembering* the seventh-day Sabbath.

The expression *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 apart for that specific purpose, and (b) you are to *maintain* the holiness, or *sanctity* of the day by setting aside holy time to celebrate and remember God's role as Creator. It's holy to God; it should be holy to you. Paul says in Romans 1:18-25 that God has become very angry at mankind because they have left Him out of their knowledge, taken to worshipping the *creature* rather than the *Creator*, and changed His truth into a lie. In other words, they have become a bunch of lying idolaters!

Some theologians assume that God never enforced the observance of the Sabbath until it was included in the Law (10 Commandments) He gave

to them at Mt. Sinai. They base this assumption on Nehemiah 9:13, 14 because in the recounting of the history leading up to the renewed covenant agreement (vv. 5-37) it is stated that God *made known to Israel the holy Sabbath*. That mystery is not difficult to solve once you remember that Israel was subjected to *slavery* in Egypt for over 400 years (see Genesis 15:13-16 and Exodus 12:40). Do you suppose that the Egyptians honored the seventh-day Sabbath? No...they worshiped the sun god on the day dedicated to him: *Sunday*.

The Israelites were *slaves* in Egypt and were subjected to the cruel conditions of *forced labor*. It would not be ridiculous to believe that each succeeding generation of the Israelites simply *forgot* what kinds of religious concepts their ancestors had held dear – what they remembered and kept holy.

Read Exodus 16 for understanding. Why do you suppose that God put special emphasis on *not gathering manna on the seventh day*? This went on for 40 years! Was God *revealing the seventh-day Sabbath* to Israel because they *forgot* it in Egypt? Be *logical* here! This event began *before* they had even reached Mt. Sinai. For what other reason did He require this of Israel? The last part of v. 4 says: “In this way I will test them and see whether or not they will walk in my law” (author’s paraphrase based on *KJV* and *NIV*). This was preparatory to the covenant at Mt. Sinai.

Is it worthwhile to believe that God, so soon after the creation of mankind and His *appointed*

times, would not have shared such a wonderful plan with Adam and Eve...which subsequently was passed down to succeeding generations? Many commentators believe that the expression *in the course of time* (*NIV*) and *in the process of time* (*KJV*) in Genesis 4:3 is a reference to one of two things: (1) the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, or (2) the anniversary of the creation. Some translate this expression to read *at the end of days*...adding that it has the connotation of meaning “at the appointed time.” Leviticus 23:4 refers to God’s holy days as being *appointed times* (*NIV*) and *in their [appointed] seasons*. Does Exodus 20:8-11 reveal that the weekly Sabbath is an *appointed time*?

Here’s what Adam Clarke says about it:

...It is more probable that it means the weekly Sabbath...as the divine worship was certainly instituted, and no doubt the Sabbath properly observed in that family. This worship was, in its original institution, very simple. It appears to have consisted of two parts: (1) Thanksgiving to God as the Author and Dispenser of all the bounties of nature, and oblations [that is, sacrifices] indicative of that gratitude. (2) Sacrifices to His justice and holiness, implying a conviction of their own sinfulness, confession of transgression, and faith in the promised Deliverer. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967; p. 24)

It is most difficult to disagree with that when you

properly understand what went on in Genesis 3:15, 21. God promised a delivering Seed (v. 15), and He sacrificed some innocent animals in order to clothe Adam and Eve (v. 21). Did God also teach them the proper sacrifices and when to make them in their *appointed seasons*?

How else shall we understand Zechariah's song in Luke 1:69, 70 where he declares that God had *prophets* proclaiming this "horn of salvation" from the beginning when Adam and Eve were created? Paul cites Abel's faith in Hebrew 11:4 and that he *still speaks*. Was Abel the first of these ancient prophets because he spoke a message about salvation through the Delivering Seed as he offered sacrifices each seventh-day Sabbath that were accepted by God? Are all of the righteous men from Abel to Israel to be counted among those prophets?

See if you can make a connection between Genesis 26:5 and Exodus 20:8-11. God says that Abraham kept His *requirements, commands, decrees, and laws*. Is there any reason to believe that God did something totally different between the two parties? In Genesis 26, God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son and heir. He is passing on to Isaac the covenant He had made with Abraham. Can you imagine that Isaac had a different set of requirements, commands, decrees, and laws than Abraham? What did Jacob (Israel) inherit from his father Isaac (Genesis 27; 28:10-15)? Did Israel live according to a different set of expectations? Can you imagine and allow for the possibility that God had people from Abel to Moses who knew and

taught the things that He expected of the people to whom He would be their God – complete with the understanding of the weekly Sabbath and the holy days?

Here are three important, scripture-supported things you should take with you from this section of the discussion:

1. The seventh-day Sabbath is a sign between God and His people so they can know that He is God who sanctifies them (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:11, 12, 19, 20);
2. The seventh-day Sabbath is a day of thanksgiving for *deliverance from slavery* (the *Egyptian* angle – Leviticus 19:30, 33, 34; Deuteronomy 5:12-15);
3. The seventh-day Sabbath is a *shadow*, or *type*, of some good thing to come (Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 10:1; Hebrews 4).

The second point is important because it suggests that there is a transcendental purpose of which we should be aware: Neither be a slave nor make anyone else a slave. The last point is of primary importance in this discussion because all *types* and *symbols* continue to be in force *until the thing toward which they point becomes a reality*.

The Reality Toward Which the Sabbath Points

Here is where the discussion gets very meaty and informative. The #3 reference above gives in-

formation about a scriptural *mystery* to which many do not pay attention: *types, examples, symbols, and shadows*. For example: Romans 5:14 says that *Adam* was a *pattern* of the one to come (NIV). Paul identifies *Jesus Christ* as the *one to come* in 1 Corinthians 15:20, 21, 45-49. In 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11, Paul says that *Israel* was an *example* of a life of rebellion against God to which we should pay heed. In other words, such *types, examples, symbols, and shadows* have meaning beyond their mere existence. Identifying the Sabbath and other things as *shadows* should tell the observant reader that they have meaning beyond their present mere existence. Let's see how this works...remembering that such meaning was there from the beginning when the Word *blessed and sanctified* the seventh day and appointed seasons (Leviticus 23:4).

What *symbolic* purpose does it serve for you to be able to set aside all of the demands of the workaday life in order to contemplate the existence of a Divine Being who has plans and expectations for human beings? To *rest* from your labors and enjoy peace, happiness, contentment? God had this *shadow, or type*, in mind when He set aside the seventh day for holy usage. The creation of the seventh day established the seven-day week and, thereby, the *perpetuation* of the *blessedness* and *sanctity* of all *recurring* seventh days.

Traditional Christianity uses the same reasoning to justify the recurring blessedness and sanctification of recurring *Sundays* – to which they refer

as the *perpetual eighth day*...a reference to the eternity ahead when the new heavens and new earth will be created (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21). The eighth day is often symbolized with the infinity sign: ∞. It is an interesting concept, to be sure, but it is not supported by scripture.

Isaiah 66:22, 23, for example, would argue forcefully against it:

As the new heavens and new earth will endure before me...so will your name and descendants endure [that is, *Israel's*]. From one new moon (a holy day indicator) to another and from one [seventh-day] Sabbath to another, *all of mankind* will come and bow down before me. (emphasis added)

These verses dispute two major traditional Christian teachings: (1) human existence and opportunities for salvation will cease at the return of Jesus Christ, and (2) *Sunday* represents the perpetual eighth day regardless of scriptural evidence that God will continue to enforce the observance of His seventh-day Sabbath and the holy days in the eternity after the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

The *first day* can be used to refer to the *beginning* of God's creation, but it has nothing to do with the *rest* that His original seventh-day Sabbath symbolizes. *Sunday* is the name derived from the pagan worship of the sun god – it's called *the venerable day of the sun*. I will show in an article below that it is not even correct to refer to *Sunday*

or the *first day* as the day of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. Though its elevation to such a high religious status has endured for centuries, you will see that it has been a deceptive house-of-cards waiting for the winds of God's judgment to be executed against it.

In Hebrews 3 and 4, Paul uses Genesis 2:1-3 and Psalm 95 to make his point about a *future Sabbath* that God has in store for His people. Using the example of Israel's initial failure to enter the *Promised Land* (3:7-19), he makes it plain that God will not grant entry into that *rest* to the *rebellious* – even among *Christians*. In order to understand Paul's point, you must understand the three Greek terms he uses that have been translated as *rest*: *katapausis* (*rest*; 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10, 11), *katapauo* (*rest*; 4:4, 8), and *sabbatismos* (*Sabbath-rest*; 4:9). When properly understood, these terms reveal not only a *time* of future rest but a *place* of future rest! Let's understand how that works.

With regard to *katapausis*, the *Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Greek/English Lexicon* and the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* dictionary give the following combined definition: "a reposing abode; rest; a concrete [that is, *actual and specifically defined*] place of rest." In the case of *katapauo*, it is defined as follows: "to cause to desist; to settle down as in 'to colonize'". In the Hebrews 4:8 reference, *BAG* shows it to mean: "to bring someone to a place of rest"; v. 8 is shown to mean: "God stopped His work." Hebrews 4:9 concludes the

thought relative to Genesis 2:1-3 by using the term *Sabbath-rest* – "sabbatismos" – to demonstrate that the symbolism of the *seventh-day Sabbath* (*rest*) is connected to this future *Sabbath-rest* in an *actual, specifically defined place*.

The often misinterpreted John 14:1-3 expresses just such a thought: *Jesus Christ has gone to sit at the right hand of the Father to **prepare the place** where His people will "rest" – that is, where they will take up a permanent abode and, from there, "colonize" the uttermost parts of the earth...and eventually move out into the vast universe (as implied in Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:4-6).*

Where might that *place* be? Heaven? No. The *heaven* where God presently has His throne and abode is shown in Revelation 21:1-4 to be a *temporary abode* by virtue of the fact that He is going to *relocate* it to the *new earth* as a *permanent abode*. That being the case, is it practical to want to go to the present *heaven* as an *eternal* reward when it is revealed by God that He will not *eternally* dwell in the present location where so many desire to take up *eternal residence*?

That leads us to Hebrews 11:8-10. This account is based on the promise and oath found in Genesis 15 where the Lord God (the one who became Jesus Christ) promised and swore an oath to Abraham that He was setting aside a *specific territory* on earth for Abraham and his "seed" to occupy in perpetuity and colonize. The amazing revelation in Hebrews 11:8 is that Abraham also expected God to design and build a city in that same territory. This,

no doubt, was part of Abraham's expectation that God will eventually come and dwell among His people. Paul also shows the *temporary* nature of Abraham's life there by using the imagery of *tents* (v. 9; temporary, mobile abodes) in contrast to God's city *with foundations* (v. 10; permanent, immoveable structures). How can we know that this is the *Sabbath-rest* about which Paul wrote in Hebrews 3 and 4?

The Perpetuation of the Seventh Day Concept

I won't comment on the content, but read for yourself the following scriptures in the order given: Hebrews 6:13-20; Galatians 3:15-19; Romans 4:13-25; 8:12-17; Galatians 3:26-29. Now, assuming that you are spiritually astute and mature, what have these scriptures revealed to you about the *rest* and the *place of rest* symbolized by the seventh-day Sabbath? Can you make a connection to the idea bound up in Genesis 2:3 that God *rested* from all of His creative acts because He had set into existence the *place* and the intended *inhabitants* for the *Kingdom* He had in mind? Isn't that implied in Jesus' statement in Matthew 25:34 that there is an *inheritance* that He had in mind for His people **from the founding of the orderly universe:** *a kingdom...a place* for them to *inhabit* and *colonize*? Isn't rulership *over the earth* implied in Genesis 1:26-28, Matthew 25:14-30, and Luke 19:11-27? If God is described as one who calls things that do

not *presently* exist as though they were, in fact, *already accomplished* (Romans 4:17), isn't all of this a positive indication that the *blessedness, sanctity, and perpetuity* of the seventh-day Sabbath is implied (read again Hebrews 3, 4, and 6:13-20)? Why should He grant man the authority to change anything about it? To *re-define* or *fix* something that needs neither re-definition nor repair?

The perpetuation of the "seventh day" concept is not at all a strange thought. Nor is it original with me and this article. Again, this is based on the symbolism found in the creation of the seven-day week. Read the Genesis 1 account of the creation of the first six days. Notice in vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 that each day is clearly marked out with the following statement: "And there was *evening* and there was *morning* – the ___ day." Now notice that no such finality was stated for the seventh day.

In William Barclay's *The Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Hebrews*, he points out the following:

...On the [Genesis 2:1-3 description of] the seventh day, the day of God's rest, *there is no mention of evening at all*. From this the Rabbis argued that, while the other days came to an end, the day of God's rest had no evening; it was *eternal* and *everlasting*. The rest of God had no evening, no close to its day, it was for ever and ever. (p. 31, emphasis added)

Paul, having been a trained rabbi, uses this con-

cept in his argument that “there ***remains*** a Sabbath-rest for God’s people” (Hebrews 4:9; emphases added). How does he pursue the argument?

His argument in Hebrews 3 is that Jesus Christ has greater honor than Moses (vv. 1-6). He compares the “house” over which Moses was placed to the “house” over which Jesus is placed...and concludes that Jesus has the greater responsibility and honor. In vv. 7-19, he demonstrates that Israel failed to enter the *rest* that God had set aside for them because of their rebellion and unbelief. He “peppers” his argument with comments about ***today***. The point that he is making is that ***Jesus Christ*** has made it possible for the invitation to enter *God’s rest* to remain open while this ***today*** still exists. So, in 4:1 he issues the warning: “Therefore, since the promise of entering *His rest still stands*, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it” (emphases added).

So, we are confronted with two astounding revelations largely unnoticed (or, if noticed, then definitely unheeded) concepts: (1) Jesus Christ is, indeed, *Lord of the Sabbath* (Mark 2:27, 28) and has the power and authority to give us *rest* (Matthew 11:28) in a specified *place of rest* (John 14:1-3); and (2) the symbolism of the seventh-day rest in Genesis 2:1-3 is clearly defined in Hebrews 4:9 as *God’s rest* – a rest to which those who desire to be true Christians are invited (with the warning and invitation of Isaiah 55:6, 7 in mind).

Since the Old Testament was the only scripture available to Jesus Christ and the New Testament

writers, only the ***seventh day*** and ***the territory described in Genesis 15*** could be the object of this discussion. Barclay discusses this in terms of the Numbers 14:12-23 account when Israel had the opportunity to enter the Promised Land, find the peace and contentment (the *place of rest* God had promised *for faithfulness*), and settle the land according to God’s thoughts and ways (Ibid.; pp. 30-32). *Traditional Christianity has fared no better than ancient Israel did by ***refusing to enter*** the specific rest and place of rest that God has revealed as His plan for His people.*

Conclusion

There are two comments made in what, for all practical purposes, are two very significant scriptures in the New Testament – which is definitely known as being directed to true Christians and those who wish to be. The problem is that they are either overlooked or ignored because of the *anti-Semitic bias* mentioned earlier. Let’s use the instruction in them to conclude our argument in this article.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is the first one. In vv. 29-31, Abraham (the Father of Faith) tells the Rich Man two things: (1) his brothers have in ***Moses and the Prophets*** all the information they need to figure out how to avoid the judgment of damnation (v. 29), and (2) if they will not listen to ***Moses and the Prophets***, then they will not even listen to someone who has been resurrected from the dead.....as ***Je-***

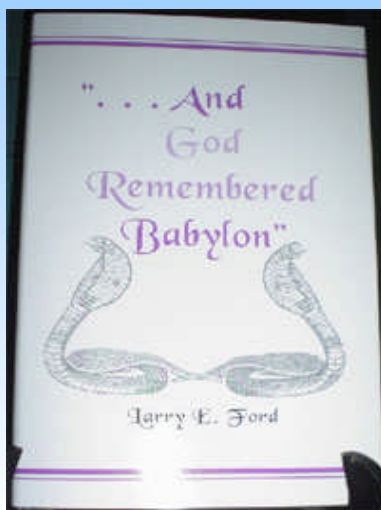
sus Christ was (see Matthew 5:17-19 and John 4:23, 24).

The other reference is found in Acts 15:13-21 where James, the brother of Jesus Christ, renders his conclusion about the conference regarding the circumcision of the Gentile converts. He cites Amos 9:11, 12, which is the Lord God's (the one who became Jesus Christ) promise to restore Israel to the Land of Promise (see Isaiah 2:1-5 and Ezekiel 37). Then he lays out four requirements for them in v. 20. Why doesn't he mention the fourth Commandment about the seventh-day Sabbath? Was it because they had already begun observing *Sunday* in its place? **No!** The answer is simple: "**Moses** has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues **every Sabbath**" (v. 21; emphases added). So, James recommends that the Gentiles get involved with Moses and the Prophets – a thing most distasteful

to the New Covenant and Dispensation theologies.

Jesus Christ was correct when He prophesied in Matthew 24:4, 5 that many would come in His name and lead many into a gross deception. Paul was also spot-on when he revealed in 2 Corinthians 11:4, 13-15 that Satan would lead "Christians" to teach another Jesus, another gospel, and another spirit. In doing so, Satan has led them away from *God's rest* and *the place* where that *rest* will take effect. Most among the 32,000+ traditional Christian denominations do not believe that they have been led to believe a lie. Eye and ear problems?

The one great consolation we have is that **today** is still open and available to those who want to understand God's plan regarding that *rest* and the symbolism embodied in it. Don't refuse to enter. For God's people, the seventh-day Sabbath has never been a **temporary rest**.



"...And God Remembered Babylon..."

"... And Great Babylon came in remembrance before God ..." (Revelation 16:19). Why, in God's revelation to John about the events to occur at the end of this age, did he include this statement? What does Babylon represent and how is it relevant to this present age? Learn the truth about this ancient system and its influence in our world today – if you dare!

Available Upon Request at tsdca@hughes.net.

“...Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7)

All four gospel writers show the role of John the Baptist in preparing the way for Jesus Christ as revealed in Malachi’s prophecy (see Malachi 3:1 and 4:5, 6). Only the Apostle John records the Baptist’s remark that Jesus was “...the *Lamb of God*, who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29; emphasis added). That one remark should be understood better by those who profess faith in the singular event in history that made it possible for all of mankind’s sins to be eradicated by such a magnificent God ...and treated as though they had never occurred (read Psalm 103 in its entirety).

What is even more remarkable is that the vast majority of traditional Christianity takes no notice of the *holy day* that prophesied this momentous event, and they declare in their doctrines that it is now of no consequence in faith and practice. Oh, they serve the wine and bread that are the New Covenant symbols of Jesus’ broken body and shed blood, but they *ignore* the fact that such symbols rightly belong to ***Passover*** observance. All the while, they ignore the significance of that observance in relationship to ***Passover*** and take the wine and bread whenever they desire. ***Passover*** is a holy proclamation that Jesus Christ did, indeed, pay the ultimate sacrifice for all of our sins for all time (Hebrews 10:1-18), and Paul rightly associates the symbols of the New Covenant with ***Passover*** in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and 11:23-32. Let’s understand this holy day of God (the one who became Jesus Christ) better!

Passover’s Historical Foundation

The earliest *scriptural* record of Passover is found in Exodus 12. The main question is whether or not this is the first *historical* observance of this holy ritual. It is impossible to confirm that due to the sparsity of historical witness that such is the

case. However, there is reason to believe that this holy ritual was observed all the way back to the time of Adam and Eve. The conclusion that is drawn from the situations reviewed in the following discussion is an *inference* and is not meant to be accepted as *historical fact*. *But...inference* cor-

rectly made is not without merit or substance.

First, let's consider Genesis 3:15 where the Lord God prophesies that the woman's *offspring* (NIV) will engage in a struggle with the Serpent's offspring. Many commentators have claimed at various times in history that this is the first prophecy about the coming of a *Savior Seed* to deal with the problem of man's sin. It sets the stage for the proclamation of the gospel message proclaimed by God's prophets from the beginning (Luke 1:69).

If you go back to the most distant "beginning," you will find that the Christ/Messiah concept was in God's plan *before the creation of the orderly universe* (Ephesians 1:3-6). Paul's revelation in Ephesians 1 is testimony that God anticipated the very real likelihood that mankind, being given an independent mind, would fall victim to sin – the violation of what God considers to be *holy, blameless, and loving*. He had to have in place a contingency plan in order to deal with that prospect; otherwise, the first sin would have resulted in man's immediate death (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23). Genesis 3:15 is the first revelation that God had such a contingency plan.

The record of this is so brief..so, we do not know what further explanation the Lord God might have proffered to Adam and Eve. It should be evident that the Serpent and the power that supported him will be ***destroyed*** while the Savior Seed will suffer a deadly blow in the process. It is speculative, to be sure, to imagine that the deadly blow was not intended to cause the *permanent death* of

the Savior Seed. Why so?

Within what must have been *minutes* of that discussion, the Lord God slaughtered some innocent animals in order to clothe Adam and Eve's nakedness (Genesis 3:21). The symbolism here shows the Lord God's concern with dealing with that which caused His greatest creation *fear* and *shame* (see Genesis 3:10 and Romans 8:15). The death of the innocent victims – the shedding of their blood and the tearing of their skin from their bodies – is a *shadow* of a future event necessary for the remission of the sin and shame brought by disobedience (read Isaiah 53). The *vicarious* death of the *Savior Seed* is the focal point throughout scripture (read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

Not many commentators approach the significance of Genesis 3:21 relative to a *sacrificial ritual*. Indeed, 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. I cannot imagine that there was stone, cold silence. Any other comment I might make would be 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" (emphasis added). I suspect that this was done on the 14th day of the first month of the year during which the sin occurred. Although I have no specific proof, I further suspect that the first holy day observance after the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath was taken

from this very event (see Leviticus 23:4, 5).

Genesis 4:2-7: The Sacrifices

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 the time of this Genesis 4 account. The wording that describes this event indicates that they did it on a regular basis at specific, appointed times...as opposed to its having been a one-time event. My question revolves around whether or not this ritual of worship was an outgrowth of the slaying of the animals in Genesis 3:21. It appears to have been an act of *worship that they had been taught*.

Paul describes it as an act of *faith* in Hebrews 11:4. But...there is a decided difference between Cain's sacrifice and Abel's. Paul speaks of *faith* relative to Abel three times, but he does not describe Cain's sacrifice as an act of *faith*. *Faith* in what? Because of his definition of *faith* in v. 1 ("...being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see..." [NIV]), I conclude that Abel's *faith* was in reference to the sacrifice of the Savior Seed relative to the forgiveness of sins – a *shadow* of an event that is in the future from his time by which God will **pass over** the sins (being covered by the blood of the sacrifice – Hebrews 9:22) of those who accept the promise and the Savior!

Abel offered the appropriate sacrifice that *shadowed* the good thing to come through Jesus

Christ (Hebrews 10:1). It was, in fact, an *atonement* sacrifice.

The entire thesis of the book of Hebrews is to validate Paul's claim in 1:1, 2 that God speaks to us *today* through Jesus Christ, the Savior Seed. *Faith* in Hebrews is directly tied to *Jesus Christ* and His role as the Savior Seed. It is as if Paul has called Abel and all of the Old Testament saints *Christians!* When you consider his last statement in Hebrews 11:40 (that is, we will receive the "something better" that God has planned for us *at the same time with them*), then it is not an unwarranted leap in logic to believe that Paul considered them to have been *Christians because of their faith*. It is not ill-conceived to believe that the Lord God taught this most important article of true faith to Adam and Eve in the event spoken of in Genesis 3:21. It is not unwarranted to suspect that His sacrifice of the animals marked an event out of which the *Passover* event of Exodus 12 was patterned.

Relevant Comments About Passover's Historical Roots

Some of the anti-Semitic bias in New Covenant and Dispensation theology is based on the convictions of Justin Martyr, who lived, taught, and wrote in Rome from A.D. 138 to 161. He called on Christians to avoid any semblance of being *Jewish* by social and/or religious beliefs and practices. Why?

In a succession of arguments, he excoriated the Jews by casting them in 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 them the 10 Commandments and other religious laws – even circumcision – to *mark* them and segregate them from other nations. The Sabbath, holy days, circumcision, 10 Commandments, and all other social and religious practices were imposed upon 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.

Justin’s ignorance has been perpetuated into our own time by “Christian” tradition and practice. He showed his ignorance by not being able to properly identify who the *Jews* are – especially the *Jew* who was “God with us” (Matthew 1:22, 23; see also John 1:1-3, 14; 4:22). In Genesis 17, the Lord God (the one who became Jesus Christ) made a covenant with Abraham that was sealed by *circumcision* – but... Abraham was not a *Jew* or an *Israelite*. Neither *Moses* nor *Paul* was a *Jew* (see Exodus 2:1-10 and Romans 11:1).

God’s laws were given by the Lord God to *Israel* – not merely to the one Israelite tribe of *Judah*. Justin’s (and others’) anti-Semitic propaganda has been the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew 24:4, 5 about the many who have/will come in Je-

sus’ name and *deceive many*. Read Leviticus 19:30; 23:1-5 and Exodus 31:12-17. Do you get the picture intended here? Whose laws are they? Read Romans 8:1-4 and Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:1-18. The *law* mentioned in these scriptures is the *law* that is based on the 10 Commandments. The problem with the Old Covenant was with the *people*, not the law or the covenant. The *New Covenant* will be new in quality (Greek = *kainos*) not new in type (Greek = *neos*).

Jesus came to *magnify the law* (Isaiah 42:21). The *NIV* says that it pleased Him to make His law “...great and glorious...”. He did this, in part, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) when He revealed the *spiritual* nature embedded in the law’s fabric. And...He said that He did not come to abrogate one jot or tittle of it, but to bring about the very purpose for which it was given (see Matthew 5:17-19 and Isaiah 55:10, 11). What a deep and unspiritual pit into which traditional Christianity has fallen – led astray by the specious arguments of *Jew haters!*

The point of this discussion is simple: The symbols of 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 the symbolism prior to Mt. Sinai, there are reputable sources that have concluded at least the possibility that such is the case. Consider the following sampling of opinions:

1. “The Passover was in all probability an institution already existing when the Jewish [actually, the *Israelite*; take note of the slip of the theological tongue] legislation was codified, but taken up and transformed by the Legislator” [that is, *Moses*] (*Dictionary of the Bible*; New York: Charles Scribner’s Son; 1924; p. 68).

2. “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 prior to their settlement in Canaan, and they may have celebrated this feast even in Egypt before the Exodus [they were there for 430 years prior]. But sometime after that event they altered its meaning radically” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.; 1967; p. 1068).

3. “The etymology [that is, the history of a linguistic form shown by tracing its development and relationships] reaches much farther back into Israel’s history than the oldest records of the feast” (*Harper’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 *possibility* of the existence of a “Passover” concept *before* the event described

in Exodus 12. That being the case, it is difficult to see how this could have been “nailed to the cross” with the Old Covenant, as is claimed by those who are staunchly entrenched in New Covenant and Dispensation theology.

When Should *Passover* Be Observed?

Easter is widely recognized as a **pagan** religious observance relative to the goddess of fertility and the vernal (spring) equinox when nature becomes renewed after winter. It is a pagan religious observance that was syncretized into “Christianity” due to the similarity of the *resurrection* theme it contains...and the involvement of the belief in the reincarnation (“resurrection”) cycles of the immortal soul. That blending of paganism with God’s revealed truth is forbidden in Deuteronomy 12:29-32 and Jeremiah 10:1-16.

It is implicitly forbidden in Jesus’ Matthew 4:4 citation of Deuteronomy 8:3. We are to live by every word that comes out of the mouth of God... without adding to it or diminishing from it. It is put into a New Testament *Christian* context by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and by Jude in Jude 3 regarding the faith once and for all delivered to the saints of God – who go all the way back to Abel (read Hebrews 11). Paul expressly declares that **there is no relationship to be had between God’s truth and paganism.**

That said, we can now pursue the question about when it is proper to observe *Passover*. This

naturally involves the observance of things like *communion*, the *Eucharist*, and the *Lord's Supper*. It involves Paul's instructions about Passover in 1 Corinthians 11:17-32. It will be seen that Jesus Christ and His disciples observed Passover consistent with the Old Testament law.

There are three references in the Old Testament about the time of the Passover observance. Exodus 12:6-14 is the primary source. The beginning of the observance was at *twilight on the 14th day of Abib*. *Abib* is the Hebrew name of the first month of the holy year calendar; *Nisan* is the Babylonian name. It would follow, then, that Leviticus 23:5 and Numbers 28:15 refer to the same time. It would also follow that Jesus and His disciples observed *Passover* at the same time as the Exodus 12 pattern (see Matthew 26:17-21; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-16; and John 13:1-30). What is given scant attention among most "Christian" denominations is that the Jews were similarly *denominationalized* and did not believe the same things (read Acts 23:6-8). The same divide existed then and now regarding major, pivotal scriptural revelations. Our task is to understand what *scripture* reveals – regardless of what religious groups have accepted and traditionally practiced (see Matthew 15:1-9 and John 4:23, 24).

Exodus 12:6 set the standard because Moses recorded the very words of the Lord God's instruction. The pattern upon which the "passover" was based began at *twilight during* the 14th day of Abib. Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 show that the day

is made up of two parts: *evening* (Hebrew = *erev*) and *morning* (Hebrew = *boqer*). Basically speaking, then, this shows the *evening begins* the day – so, each day has only *one evening* and *one morning*. A marginal note in my *King James Bible* for Exodus 12:6 says that the word *evening* in the Hebrew means "between the two *evenings*." That is the literal meaning of the English word *twilight* ("two lights"). What does this mean?

There are two Hebrew words that help us understand this: *ben ha arbayim* and *ba erev*. *Ben ha arbayim* is the time between *sundown* (when the sun's top edge goes below the horizon) and *dark* (when the stars first appear). *Ba erev* is the three to five minutes it takes the *setting sun* to disappear below the horizon. *Ba erev* effectively *ends the previous day; ben ha arbayim begins the next day*. According to the *Jewish Publication Society of America's* translation of Leviticus 23:27-32, the Day of Atonement is to be observed on the *10th day* of the seventh month – between the *ba erev* of the ninth day and the *ba erev* of the 10th day. So, at the *end* of the 9th day of the seventh month at *ba erev*, *Atonement* begins. It is over at the *ba erev* of the 10th day. That is consistent with the *evening/morning* pattern set in Genesis 1.

The "two lights" is the time between *sunset* and the *appearance of the stars*. *Twilight* could also be used to describe the disappearance of the stars and sunrise (*boqer*). Since each day has only one *evening*, the *twilight* of Exodus 12:6 *begins* the 14th day of Abib. When applied to future observances

of Passover, it means that Passover *begins* at the *ba erev* of the 13th day and ends at the *ba erev* of the 14th day. The lambs were slaughtered between sundown and the appearance of the stars that *began* the 14th day. As time passed, the Israelites developed factions that went astray from the original instructions in Exodus 12 – some of the later Jews even combined the Passover with the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread...slaughtering the lambs on the *afternoon* of the 14th day.

Many have concluded that the death of Jesus Christ about 3:00 p.m. is *proof* that Passover is to be observed on the night of the 15th. Because of that assumption, they have assumed also that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is more properly called the *Feast of Passover*. While that *seems* to be a legitimate argument, it does not follow the pattern of Exodus 12. A more legitimate question would be to ask why the Lord God would inspire scripture so that Leviticus 23:4-8 and Numbers 28:16, 17 would strike a difference between *Passover* on the 14th day and the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* on days 15-21.

Note the following quotes from the Jewish historian Josephus:

When the *fourteenth day* was come...they offered the sacrifice....Whence it is that we still offer this sacrifice in like manner...and call this festival *Pascha*...because *on that day* God passed us over. (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, Ch. XIV, Para. 6; underlined italics added)

We keep a feast for *eight days*, which is called *the feast of unleavened bread*....*They left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the lunar month*. (Ibid., Ch. XV, Para. 1, 2; emphases added)

...On the *fourteenth day* of the lunar month [of Abib]...the law ordained that we should slay that sacrifice...which was called the *Passover*....The feast of unleavened bread succeeds [that is, *comes after*] that of the passover, and falls on the *fifteenth day* of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread. (Ibid., Book III, Ch. X, Para. 5; emphases added)

Please follow the ideas presented here: (a) “on that day [that is, the 14th day]”; (b) “a feast for eight days”; and (c) the distinction between *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread*. *Both* are feasts.

I know that it can be argued that the 14th day was merely for the *sacrifice*. It can be argued that the actual meal was eaten on the evening of the 15th. However, it is difficult to argue about Josephus saying: “...on *that day* [the 14th] God passed us over.” How does the *sacrifice* occur at *twilight* of the *15th day* with the meal being eaten during the *night* of the *15th day*, and the Death Angel beginning his rounds at midnight of the *15th day*, qualify for the *Passover* (the *entire* observance, including the passing over of the Death Angel) being on the *14th day*? How does a sacrifice, in later

years, beginning at 3:00 p.m. on the 14th day, qualify as the *entire* 14th day being a *feast* day? How can you derive from that a single feast that lasts *eight days* when Unleavened Bread is only *seven days*? What did *Jesus* do?

In order to justify the error some have made in this observance, it has been stipulated that Jesus and His disciples had a *pre-Passover* meal because He had to fulfill the symbolism in the sacrifices offered at 3:00 p.m. on the *afternoon* of the 14th day! Such thinking is ludicrous because it considers the 14th day merely as a *preparation day* for Passover on the 15th – like Friday afternoon is a *preparation day* for the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath.

The *NIV* posits such an idea in its footnote to Matthew 26:17 regarding the translation that says “On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread...”:

The 14th of Nisan (March-April), it was also called the preparation of the Passover. The Passover meal was eaten the evening of the 14th after sunset—and *therefore technically on the 15th*, since the Jewish day ended at sundown. (emphasis added)

I will demonstrate below how Matthew’s comment should be understood.

Consider the language used by Jesus Christ in Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12, and Luke 22:7 when instructing His disciples about their *Passover* observance. They asked about where He wanted to observe *Passover* – not an *anticipatory meal*. He

told them to go and make preparations for *Passover observance* – not an *substitute, pre-Passover meal*. Note John 19:14 as translated by the *NIV*: “It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.” What is significant about this information? Read the context in which this statement is made.

This demonstrates the point I have been making about the afternoon of the 14th day being the *preparation day* for the Feast of Unleavened Bread – mistakenly assumed by many to be merely the time of the *Passover sacrifice*. Notice that this is the *daytime* portion of the 14th day *after* Jesus and His disciples have observed what they called *Passover* the previous *evening* of the 14th. John 18:28 shows that the Jews present at Pilate’s residence *had not yet eaten the Passover meal*...because they observed it on the night of the 15th day.

Jesus Christ was the Lord God of the Old Testament who had originally given Moses the directions about observing Passover and Unleavened Bread. *Was He ignorant of the correct time?* Based on Matthew 15:1-9, He did not compromise with or observe man-made, religious traditions. John 2:13; 6:4; and 11:55 call it “the *Jewish Passover*.” John is not, thereby, pronouncing God’s stamp of approval on it. He is identifying the practice that was extant in those days. Peter says that Jesus did not *sin* (1 Peter 2:22), so His observance on the night of the 14th was not a transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4).

Matthew 26:17 in the *KJV* italicizes the words

day and *feast of*. This indicates that these words were not in the original Greek text. Italicized words were inserted by the translators in an effort to clarify the meaning of what might otherwise be a confusing text. Sometimes they are helpful; sometimes they cloud the meaning even further. Think about what has been given as the Exodus pattern. If this was the *first day of Unleavened Bread*, then Jesus and His disciples would have been eating the Passover meal on the night of the 15th day. Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 say that this first day of unleavened bread was “when they killed the passover.” If the *Jews* observed it the following night, that would have been the 16th day of the month and, therefore, out of sync with their holy day calendar.

That would indicate that there is something wrong in the translation of the Greek text. I think that the *Living Bible* expresses it more in the sense in which it was intended: “On the first day of the Passover ceremonies...”. Some have suggested that it should be translated: “At the beginning of the unleavened bread observances...”. Since the Passover meal included *unleavened bread*, it would be part of the “unleavened bread observances” and the “first day of the Passover ceremonies” – if you also want to call the Feast of Unleavened Bread the “Passover Feast.” Together, they constitute *eight* days of holy day observance.

Let’s go back to 1 Corinthians 11:17-33 and understand Paul’s instruction. The first thing Paul does is to separate the Passover meal (the “Lord’s

Supper”) from the *New Testament* observance of Passover (vv. 20-22). He indicates that their Passover *meal* should be eaten at home. There are differences in the translations of this text – the *KJV* and *Modern Language* indicating the above understanding, while *Moffatt* and *Luther* indicate the *impossibility* of eating the “Lord’s supper” when acting like Paul shows them acting. The context of this scripture, I think, gives the meaning intended in the *KJV* and *Modern Language* texts.

Notice Paul’s further instruction in vv. 23-32. He indicates that this Passover observance should take place consistent with “the night on which [Jesus] was betrayed.” That would be Abib 14. The observance will involve taking the unleavened bread and wine as symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ – symbols of the *New Covenant* He established with His Church. Verse 26 is not giving permission to observe this as often as you want to do so *outside of the Passover instructions*; it is an indication that, every time you do it consistent with the Passover instructions, you are proclaiming the death of our Passover sacrifice until He returns. So, the oft observed *Eucharist*, *communion*, and *Lord’s Supper* are not consistent even with New Testament instructions for Passover.

Conclusion

The conclusion to this matter is, to a large degree, somewhat the *opposite* of what traditional Christianity would expect to practice. First, Paul’s

instructions demonstrate that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the *fulfillment* of the Passover symbolism. That is consistent with Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:17-19 that He did not come to *do away with* the Law, but to *fulfill* it. Hebrews 10:5-9 shows that He did this by causing the *manner of sacrifice* to be indicative of its true meaning: *His body*, not the bodies of dead animals. So, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ does not *do away with* the observance of the Passover holy day – which traditional Christianity tacitly admits when they observe the Eucharist, communion, and Lord's Supper, which are the ill-advised traditions of men, not God's commandment (see Romans 1:25).

Second, Jesus Christ changed the *symbols* of Passover so they will be consistent with its *fulfillment* relative to the *New Covenant*. As a matter of fact, His statement in Matthew 26:29 shows an expectation of the new symbolism being used in the future when He sets up God's Kingdom on the earth at His return. Far from *doing away* with this observance, He has *magnified* its meaning and perpetuated it into the future for His people as a reminder of His role in the salvation of repentant mankind.

Third, consistent with the law regarding the 14th

day of Abib, Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 show that it is to be observed "...on the night He was betrayed..." – the 14th of Abib each year. That makes it a once-a-year observance. In saying that, there is no allowance made for well-meaning people to use the symbols in any manner they choose at any time they choose – in that sense, *unworthily*.

Finally, the discussion above has demonstrated the symbolic difference between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. While it constitutes an *eight-day* celebration, Passover is a declaration that our *Passover Lamb*, Jesus Christ, has been once-and-for-all sacrificed. The expectation of that was established with Adam and Eve, but made more clearly in the Exodus 12 pattern that took place *in Egypt* (see Romans 5:6-11). Jesus Christ *perpetuated* the observance of Passover, but changed the symbols so they signal the *fulfillment* through His stripes and blood. The Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrates something different (Exodus 12:17). Coming out of *Egypt* is symbolic of *coming out of sin*. We will discuss that in the next article. Why do away with such powerful testimony of God's plan of salvation and link God's glory with paganism (read Exodus 20:1-7)?

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”

(Matthew 5:17, 18; NIV)

Has the symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread Been Fulfilled?

In Luke 24:44, Jesus Christ told His disciples that: “Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the *Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms*” (emphases added). In John 5:39, He told the Jews who persecuted Him: “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures [the *Old Testament*] that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (emphases added). This is the irony embedded in traditional Christian doctrine regarding God’s Law as they refuse to accept the testimony of God’s word from the Law, Prophets, and Psalms that there are vital parts of the *symbolism* that **have not yet been fulfilled!**

The objective of this study, therefore, is to demonstrate that vitally important *symbolism* in God’s holy days has not yet been fulfilled. That being the case, one might rightly wonder why there was such a rush to abolish God’s Law from traditional Christianity. Would Jesus Christ show Himself to be duplicitous by saying one thing.....then either personally *causing* or *allowing* men to execute the drastic changes by which the voice of God in the Law, Prophets, and Psalms has been silenced (see Daniel 7:25)?

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Let’s “clear the air” here about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Acts 26:23, the Apostle Paul says that He was the *first* to rise from the dead (see also 1 Corinthians 15:20). In Hebrews 2:10, Paul calls

Him the *captain/author* of our salvation (KJV; NIV). The English term *captain* is translated from the Greek term *archegos*, which means that Jesus Christ was the *originator* or *founder* of our salvation. It also means that He was a *pioneer* – someone who goes in advance of others to prepare

the way for others to follow. In this case, Jesus experienced *death* in the truest, strictest sense of the word: *the total absence of life of any kind*. He was not *spiritually alive* while His body was in the grave, as many claim. If He was, then He did not truly ***die*** for our sins.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23, 35-57. If the *physical body* came first, and the *spiritual body* has not yet come, then there should be no expectation of Jesus having been *spiritually alive* while His *human* body was dead (read v. 46). If the *corruptible* and *mortal* must put on incorruption and *immortality*, then the *human* does not presently have them in any shape, form, or fashion. Jesus Christ was truly *human* (see John 1:14 and Hebrews 2:9, 14-18).

This is in conformity with Jesus' statement in John 3:13 that no human, except Himself, has ascended to heaven because, in the context of vv. 3-8 and 1 Corinthians 15:50, you have to undergo a *new birth* (an actual change in body composition) in order to enter the Kingdom of God (read also Genesis 1:26-28, 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10, and John 5:24-29). The *resurrection of the dead in Christ* is the point at which they will be *born again*. Jesus Christ is the only *human* who has undergone that process of the

new birth – that is, a resurrection from the dead as described above – thus, paving the way by which we, too, can be *born again*. He was the *pioneer of the process*.

He was put into the grave just before sundown ending the 14th day of Abib, A.D. 31 – it was a late Wednesday afternoon. The Jews wanted Him taken from the cross to be buried before the *yearly Sabbath* began after *ba erev*. We know that it was a *yearly Sabbath* as opposed to a *weekly Sabbath* because John calls it “...an high day...” (John 19:31). Abib 15, that year, was on Thursday – the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread that began at sundown.

He was raised from the dead three days and three nights later just before *ba erev* late Saturday afternoon. Compare Matthew 12:38-40 to Matthew 28:1-7. The women came to the grave before sunrise on Sunday morning and were told that Jesus had already left the grave. There is no indication how long before sunrise He was resurrected, or how long He remained in the grave after being resurrected. The angel was there to tell them that He had been resurrected and had left the grave site. Count from just before sundown on Friday to just before sunrise on Sunday and see if you can get three days and three nights. If you can-

not, it's because of traditional Christianity's syncretization of this event with the pagan Easter and their misunderstanding of John 19:31. They insist on a *Good Friday* crucifixion and a *Sunday sunrise* resurrection because they misunderstand the difference between a *weekly Sabbath* and a *yearly Sabbath* – and they can't count correctly.

In Ezekiel 8:14-16, the Lord God is showing Ezekiel women who were “weeping for Tammuz” and men who were worshipping the sun in sunrise ceremonies. This was the pagan Sun God whose rising and setting symbolized to them the “resurrection” of the original, Nimrod, who was slain by Noah's son, Shem. Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, claimed that he became the Sun God after his death and subsequently impregnated her with a single beam of sunlight. The immaculate conception of their son produced Horus, born on the night of December 24 – who was known also under the name *Tammuz*. She became the *Queen of Heaven* (read Jeremiah 7:17-19; 44:15-19) and the mother of gods. *Sunday* was their day of worship.

Easter was their yearly celebration of the resurrection of the Sun God. As Barbara Mor puts it in her book *The Great Cosmic Mother...whom she worships*:

Easter is the pagan festival of spring, the year's rebirth or resurrection. The name comes from the Saxon Goddess of spring, Oestre [a Germanic rendering of the name], who also gives her name to the female estrus-cycle. (Her name is cognate [that is, from a common, original form] with Neolithic Near Eastern Goddess Ostarte, Astarte, Ishtar, Ashtoreth.) The Easter rabbits, the colored eggs hidden around in the grass or rolled down the lawn, are fertility symbols of the Goddess. (HarperSanFrancisco, 1987; pp. 321, 322)

There are numerous sources in which you can find information that verifies what I am saying about this subject. (You can request a hard copy of our free book “...*And God Remembered Babylon...*”.)

Now, what does all of this have to do with the symbolism of 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*? What message are we to derive from enduring seven days without eating *leavened* bread? If this is a *shadow of a good thing to come*, what is it? Is God

really serious about something that sounds so silly? (If you don't believe that it sounds silly to people, begin *seriously* practicing this belief and try to explain it to your traditional Christian family and friends – or anybody else you might know.) We're going to investigate this so you can understand the basic whys and wherefores of the matter.

The Symbolism Involved

Look again at 1 Corinthians 5. The Apostle Paul makes a direct connection between the symbolism of *Passover, Unleavened Bread*, and the goal of the Christian life. In his discussion about a scandalous, sexually-immoral problem among the Corinthian Christians, he focuses their attention on two of God's holy days: *Passover* and the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*. Read very carefully vv. 5-8 in order to get the full impact of Paul's instruction. Read this without the bias involved in anti-Semitic rhetoric that is vented against "that old *Jewish law*."

Paul's points are simple to follow:

1. The *sinful nature* must be destroyed (v. 5).
2. *Leavening* permeates the whole

batch of dough (v. 6).

3. Because of the sacrifice of our *Passover Lamb*, Jesus Christ, we are able to be rid of the old *leavening* in order to become a *new unleavened batch, which we are supposed to be*.

4. We are to celebrate the Feast with the goal of developing the *unleavened nature of sincerity and truth*.

In this discussion, Paul demonstrates the continued observance of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread by *New Testament Christians*. He demonstrates to them the meaning of the symbolism by admonishing them to become *unleavened* – as they are expected by God to be.

Ephesians 1:4 is Paul's discussion of God's expectations of human behavior before He even created the orderly universe: *holy, blameless, and loving*. If you claim to be any measure of a Christian, surely you know the scriptural meanings of those terms. If *leavening* is equated with *sin* and *wickedness*, then it should be apparent that the observance of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the true Christian's desire and expectation of becoming *sinless* through Jesus Christ. The *KJV* translates v. 6 to read that we are *made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*.

Paul's instruction to the Romans is that we should not go on sinning after we have accepted God's grace through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1, 2). The symbolism involved in our full immersion baptism shouts out that we have agreed to *die* to our sinful nature and become a *new person* (vv. 4-14; see also 8:5-17).

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul explains that Christ died for all of mankind to afford them the opportunity to become "...a new creation..." (5:14-19). In other words, at the moment of our sincere repentance, confession of faith in the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb, baptism, and receipt of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), God regards us in Christ as though we have never sinned before – and we must shoulder our share of the responsibility to remain *unleavened*.

In His discussion in John 6:48-58 about His being the "...living bread come down from heaven..." (v. 51), Jesus is using the *manna* provided to the Israelites when they were delivered from Egypt (read Exodus 16) as a *symbolic model*. *Manna* was the purest form of *unleavened bread*. It is obvious in this discussion that even up to Jesus' time the symbolic meaning attached to it was not understood by the people who

claimed a long-held solidarity with God and His thoughts and ways. That is still true among so-called *New Testament* Christians.

Jesus' point in vv. 48-58 is that **He** is also our unleavened bread – our *sinless* example which we must be willing to *consume*. Both the *blood* (wine) and the *body* (unleavened bread) **must be consumed** by the true believer (vv. 53-57). Exodus 12:15-20 is the historical record from which the *symbolism* of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is derived.

The exodus from Egypt is symbolic of our *coming out of the hardship of the slavery to sin* (Romans 6:15-23; 12:1, 2). Slavery to *sin* is a death sentence. In our efforts to come out of our own personal "Egypt," we must intentionally take into our hearts and minds the *sinless nature* of Jesus Christ. So, we must observe that which symbolizes the death of Jesus Christ for our sins and the means by which He provides for us the *spiritual sustenance* to overcome sin as it hounds us beyond our release through Him (the model is in Exodus 14).

The Full Deliverance From Sin

There is no way that we humans can or will become fully *sinless in the flesh*. In Romans 4:4-8, Paul explains two important

things to remember in this regard: (1) *In Christ*, God credits us as being righteous (which is called *justification* and *grace*), and (2) God *covers our sins* with the blood of Jesus Christ and *forgives* them (see Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 103:7-18; and 1 John 2:1-6). Both of these points are evidence that God does this despite our continued *human* inability to completely overcome sin. It is evidence that we are on a spiritual journey to *come out of sin*. We have not completed that journey. That notwithstanding, God's word points us to the time when the symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread will be fully realized.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 is a great place to explain how this will be done. In effect, Paul ties together the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the resurrection from the dead in this eye-opening passage. Paul declares that the gift of God's Holy Spirit is: (a) only a down payment of what is to come and (b) it is a guarantee of our inheritance with Jesus Christ until our *redemption occurs*. That word *redemption* is the key to the ultimate fulfillment of the symbolism of Unleavened Bread and the completion of the spiritual journey we have undertaken in Christ.

The Greek term from which the English

term *redemption* is translated is *apolutrosis*. In Hebrews 11:35, it is translated as being *deliverance* (KJV) and *released* (NIV). In Luke 21:28, it is translated as being *redemption*. Both Luke 21:28 and Ephesians 1:14 have the same meaning: "the freeing of our bodies from sin and earthly limitations." Paul discusses this *release* in Romans 8:22-25 by connecting this release from sin and earthly limitations with our *adoption into the God Family*....the subject of Ephesians 1:1-14. That is Jesus Christ's point in Luke 21:28: The return of Jesus Christ will be the point at which all who are in Christ will be changed from the earthy body to the spirit body (1 Corinthians 15:46-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 14:14-16). This is the point at which the *firstfruits* will never again have to deal with sin and death – the things that enslave humans and limit them to mere carnal abilities.

What else should we expect in this regard? As Paul points out in Romans 8:18-21, we should expect the ultimate deliverance of all of creation! Peter speaks of this in Acts 3:17-26. Notice how he ties this together with *Moses and the Prophets!* Two key expressions should be seriously noted here: (1) the blotting out of sins during the

times of refreshing, and (2) the *times of restitution of all things* by Jesus Christ upon His return (vv. 19-21). It is as if Jesus Christ is to return to restore the creation to the condition that God originally intended it to have – in effect, ***deleavening all things*** by destroying *sin and death* (see Revelation 20:14, 15).

As a matter of scriptural fact, this is exactly Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 15:22-28. The entire 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth with His firstfruit saints will be a time of *refreshing, restitution, and reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth* to God (see also Ephesians 1:9, 10 and Colossians 1:15-20). Notice especially vv. 25, 26 where Paul says that Christ *must reign* until all of God's enemies are conquered, including *death* – which presup-

poses that ***sin*** will have to disappear *forever* thereafter (Romans 6:23). Now, read again 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and comprehend what Paul was teaching his *New Testament Christian* audience. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-22 with this in mind. May God bless you with eyes to see and ears to hear (read Isaiah 6:8-13 and Matthew 13:10-17). Finally, read 1 Corinthians 5:5-8 with new eyes and ears and obey what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. Understand this very deeply: ***Jesus Christ is still in the process of fulfilling the symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread***. Who, in his right spiritual mind, would ever believe that God *caused* or *allowed* this wonderful holy day period to be *abolished* in favor of the *pagan trash* that has been adopted in its place?

Passover and Unleavened Bread Defined

You can get a better understanding of the difference between Passover and Unleavened Bread by understanding that Passover includes (a) the killing of the sacrifice, (b) the eating of the sacrificial meal, and (c) the passing over of the Angel of Death. *All of this* was to take place *during the 14th of Abib*, beginning at sundown.

Exodus 12:18 should be understood as follows: "In the first month you are to eat bread made without leavening from the *ba erev* ending the 14th day until the *ba erev* ending the 21st day" – which consists of seven days for Unleavened Bread. Adding Passover (the 14th day) to Unleavened Bread (the 15th to 21st days) joins two feasts together for an eight-day festival observance. Yes, it is that simple.

THE HARVEST OF FIRSTFRUITS

The Israelites were commanded to observe three festival *seasons*: (1) Feast of Unleavened Bread, (2) Feast of Harvest, and (3) Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:14-16). By no means is this a contradiction to Leviticus 23 where *seven* commanded holy day observances with *seven* commanded *yearly Sabbaths* are named: (1) Passover (no yearly Sabbath); (2) Unleavened Bread (2 commanded yearly Sabbaths); (3) Feast of Harvest (also known as *Pentecost* and *Feast of Firstfruits* – yearly Sabbath); (4) Feast of Trumpets (yearly Sabbath); (5) Atonement (yearly Sabbath); (6) Feast of Tabernacles (1 yearly Sabbath); and (7) the Last Great Day (yearly Sabbath). They are all included in these three festival *seasons*. Each of these holy day observances has very special meaning in relationship to God’s *plan of salvation* – an astounding *prophetic* revelation by God that there is more than one time during which *salvation through Jesus Christ* is to be offered to human beings. It is also a revelation by God that the propagation of *human beings* will continue well past the return of Jesus Christ!

The objective of this study is to explain the symbolism involved in the *Feast of Harvest*. This symbolism includes applications to *God’s Law*, the gift of His *Holy Spirit*, and the *first* group to be “harvested” by Jesus Christ at His return. The biblical revelation of this knowledge is astounding! What you are about to be made privy to was *lost* to traditional Christianity when it severed its vital connection to *Moses and the Prophets*. You have here a rare opportunity to re-connect to it.

From Unleavened Bread to Harvest

In preface to the following discussion, it must be said that Luke 24:44 is a statement by Jesus Christ *after* His resurrection from the dead: “...All things that were written *about me* in the *Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms* must be *fulfilled*” (emphases added). It is diffi-

cult for New Covenanters and Dispensationists to say that these things yet to be fulfilled were *abolished* by being “nailed to the cross.” Jesus was telling His disciples that there are more things for Him to do before His job is brought to its intended conclusion. If they were “nailed to the cross,” then Jesus obviously did not get the memo. With that in mind, we will pursue the

following discussion.

The Feast of Harvest is more familiarly known as *Pentecost*. *Pentecost* simply means “count fifty.” That action is part of the instruction about how to get from the observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Harvest. Along the way, we encounter another ritual that has very special meaning in the context of the prophetic nature of these holy days – a prophetic symbol relative to Jesus Christ. It is called the *wave sheaf offering*. We’ll find all of this information in Leviticus 23:9-16. It is to be carried out relative to the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

In vv. 9-12, we find instruction about the *wave sheaf offering*. You will notice that it is to be conducted on the “day after the *Sabbath*.” We have seen in the articles above that there are *weekly* and *yearly Sabbaths*. Which kind of *Sabbath* is this? The Pharisees said *yearly*; the Sadducees said *weekly*. This is why it is poor understanding that says “The Jews did this, that, or the other.” It is patently clear that the Jews did not agree with one another about religious matters any more than modern Christianity does. How can one figure out this problem?

It hinges on the term *Sabbath*. There are two Hebrew terms that are translated into the English word *Sabbath*: *shabbath* and *shabbathown*. While there is a basic similarity between them as far as their *purpose* is concerned, there is a *technical* difference. *Shabbath* generally refers to the *weekly, seventh-day Sabbath*, while *shabbathown* is a *special Sabbath* – like a yearly high

day (see John 19:31). Leviticus 23:3, 11, and 15 use *shabbath*, while vv. 24, 32, and 39 use *shabbathown*.

It is for that reason that The Seventh Day Christian Assembly pursues the “count fifty” instructions from the day after the *weekly, seventh-day Sabbath*. In effect, this will amount to a count of seven *weekly shabbaths* plus one day (v. 15). *Pentecost* – the Feast of Harvest – will always be on the first day of the week. Indeed, most Christian and Jewish groups who observe Pentecost, Whit Sunday, or Orthodox Pentecost do so on a *Sunday*. It is amazing that traditional Christians observe *Pentecost* because of the giving of the Holy Spirit but do not know much about it beyond what took place in Acts 2:1-41 – yet they consider all of the other holy days *abolished*.

So, the *wave sheaf offering* was to be made on the day after the weekly Sabbath *during the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. The sheaf was identified and tied into a bundle prior to this offering being made. It was symbolically known as the *first of the firstfruits*. The *Feast of Harvest* was related to the *first* harvest season of the year – from which we get the term *firstfruits*. It was a smaller harvest than the one associated with the *Feast of Tabernacles* in the fall of the year. The *wave sheaf* was to be cut after the *ba erev* that ended the weekly Sabbath and began the first day of the week. The priest in charge asked three times if the sun had gone down. When he got “yes” for an answer, he cut the wave sheaf and took it to the

Temple.

Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, April 28, A.D. 31. He died about 3:00 p.m. (Matthew 27:46-50) and was put into the grave before sundown (John 19:31, 38-42). The wave sheaf would not have been offered until the following first day of the week. If you pay attention to Jesus' comment about His coming death in Matthew 12:40, you will now be able to count the three days and three nights: Wednesday at *ben ha arbayim* to Thursday at *ben ha arabyim* = 1st day and night; Thursday at *ben ha arbayim* to Friday at *ben ha arbayim* = 2nd day and night; Friday at *ben ha arbayim* to Saturday at *ben ha arbayim* = 3rd day and night. Good Friday to Easter Sunday morning does not pass this math test.

What about the *wave sheaf offering* in Leviticus 23:9-13? It was *harvested* on the *evening* that began the first day of the week following the weekly Sabbath that occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was *waved* in the Temple during the daytime portion of the first day of the week. A sacrificial lamb was also offered – accompanied with an offering of unleavened bread and wine. All of this was symbolic of *Jesus Christ*. It is interesting that you find all of these elements relative to His Passover meal, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Congruent with Paul's statement in Acts 26:22, 23 that, *according to Moses and the Prophets*, Christ would be the ***first*** to be raised from the dead [with a *spirit* body (1 Corinthians 15:42-58)], Jesus' resurrection occurred just be-

fore sundown on the weekly Sabbath. When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb *before* sunrise on the first day of the week (John 20:1), she met someone who she supposed was the caretaker (v. 15) and asked if he knew where they had taken Jesus' body. When Jesus revealed Himself to her, she apparently attempted to touch Him in some manner – to which He said: “*Do not touch me because I have not yet ascended to the Father*” (vv. 16, 17; emphasis added). She was told to give that message to His disciples. Toward sundown of that same day, Jesus appeared to His disciples behind closed doors (v. 19). In Matthew's account, they *grabbed Him by His feet* (Matthew 28:9). Why the difference? By that evening event, He had already come back from His visit with the Father – *He was the wave sheaf offering*.

The instruction in Leviticus 23:11 says that the *wave sheaf* would be waved before the Lord “...to be accepted *for you*...”. Paul says in Ephesians 1:6 that God “...has *made us acceptable* in the Beloved [Son]” (emphases added). This is the idea in Hebrews 2:10 where Paul calls Him the *archegos of our salvation* – that is, He is the *pioneer* – and in 6:20 where Paul calls Him the *forerunner* (Greek = *prodromos*) – that is, a *scout* or *one who goes ahead of others*. Note especially that Paul's discussion in Hebrews 6:13-20 is to *New Testament Christians* about the *unchangeable nature* of God's promises to *Abraham* (see also Genesis 15 and Galatians 3:26-29). That is the symbolism of the *wave sheaf offering* as it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ (see also He-

brews 9:24-28). Christ entered the actual holy of holies in heaven to fulfill this symbolism.

Counting “Fifty”

Pentecost is not determined by a *moon cycle*; it is determined by counting days from Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Harvest. Counting fifty days from Unleavened Bread to Harvest is not difficult to understand. During that count, the *symbolism* involved in the time between the *wave sheaf offering* and the Feast of Harvest should not be lost on us. It is indicative of the interval of time between Christ’s resurrection and His return for His firstfruit “harvest” (see James 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23).

The count is described in Leviticus 23:15, 16. In TSDCA Holy Day Calendar for 2014, we determined that March 31st is the first day of the first month this year. We counted to find the 14th day for Passover – to be observed after sundown on the evening of Saturday, April 12. This means that the first day of Unleavened Bread begins at sundown April 13. The weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on Friday at sundown, April 18, and ends at sundown on Saturday, April 19. Now we can count seven weekly Sabbaths after April 19 – *beginning with the first day of the week after that weekly Sabbath* – to Saturday, June 7. The *day after that Sabbath* – beginning at sundown – is the fiftieth day: Sunday, June 8, 2014. The seven weeks plus one day is the reason that the Feast of Harvest is also referred to as the *Feast of Weeks* (see Exodus

34:22 and Deuteronomy 16:10).

Pentecost, as it is more popularly known, is shown to be a *yearly Sabbath* in Leviticus 23:21 – a *sabbathown* (special day). It will always be on the first day of the week, but there is no significance in that fact that lends to the validation of moving the weekly Sabbath to the first day of the week. This law was given to Israel long before the “Christian” argument about the Sabbath -vs- Sunday controversy arose. And...since Jesus was raised from the dead just before sundown on the *seventh day of the week*, there is no justification for changing the weekly Sabbath to Sunday because of the resurrection.

The *special days* (Sabbaths) listed in Leviticus 23 also highlight the significance of the plural form (Sabbaths) used in Exodus 31:13. If these *special Sabbaths* are ignored by those who claim to be Sabbath keepers, then it is indicative of the fact that they *do not fully understand* the *sign of the Sabbath* that identifies the people whom God sanctifies. How much less do *Sunday keepers* understand that sign?

The Early, First Harvest

Pay attention in all of scripture to the significance of the terms firstborn and firstfruits. Paul calls Jesus Christ the “...*firstborn* of every creature...” and the “...*firstborn* from the dead...” in Colossians 1:15, 18. Why? The use of the *ordinal number* first presupposes that there are to be others who will be born to God...and others who will be retrieved from the dead in the same fa-

shion as Jesus Christ (read Romans 6:3-11). The *first harvest* of those to be born to God through a resurrection from the dead is pictured in this early, first harvest. This concept is generally missed in the theology of mainstream Christianity. Let's see what scripture reveals about this most important concept.

The *first harvest* occurs at the return of Jesus Christ to set up the Kingdom of God. Most in traditional Christianity teach that His return is the point at which the door to salvation is closed, and those who have not made a profession of faith are sent to hell for eternal punishing. If they had not rejected *Moses and the Prophets*, they would have been able to see and understand the significance of the *symbolism* in those scriptures relative to God's plan of salvation. I am giving you a brief sketch of this in this article, but I will explain it more fully in the July – September issue.

Leviticus 23:16, 17 describe *two wave loaves* of leavened bread that are to be waved before God on this 50th day. These loaves are indicative of the saints of God in the Old **and** New Testament periods of history. If *Christ* fulfilled the symbolism of the *wave sheaf offering* and unleavened bread, then someone else will fulfill the symbolism of the leavened loaves. Notice that v. 17 calls them *the firstfruits unto the Lord*. That is significant for understanding this.

Daniel's prophecy in 2:44, 45 shows Jesus Christ conquering the human governments of the world in the future and setting up the Kingdom of God in their places *on the earth*. In 7:13-28, Dan-

iel is shown the point at which Christ assumes the kingship over that Kingdom. This, in a strange twist of *symbolic* fulfillment, will also make Him the *Lord* over the 1,000-year *Sabbath* that is yet to be entered by God's saints. Daniel 7:18, 27 reveal that the saints of God will take possession of the earth for ever and ever. The Apostle John alludes to this in Revelation 5:10 and 11:15. The prophet Zechariah alludes to this in 14:1-9.

Hebrews 11 demonstrates the *two leavened loaves* aspect of this symbolism in Leviticus 23:16, 17. *All of the saints* that Paul references in this account are *Old Testament* saints. This is important to understand: Testament is the covenant, not the *books of the Bible* (read *KJV* Hebrews 8:6-13 to understand that statement). The books of the Bible describe and explain the two covenants. *Yes, there were true believers in the coming Christ under the Old Covenant and before!* Paul shows that in Hebrews 11. What Paul says in Hebrews 11:39, 40 is, therefore, singularly significant to the symbolism of the *two leavened loaves*.

Read these verses carefully:

All of these, *having obtained a good report **through faith***, received not the promise [made to Abraham (see vv. 8-16)]; God *having provided some better thing for us* [under the New Covenant], *that they **apart from us** should not be made perfect.* (emphases added)

What is Paul saying here? He is saying that these

Old Covenant saints (beginning with Abel – v. 4) will enter that Kingdom *with the New Covenant saints* when Jesus Christ returns. Why? Because they believed (Paul calls it ***faith***) in the promises of God that included the Lamb of God who will eradicate the sins of mankind. How? By including them under the *New Covenant* in which the power of the Holy Spirit is a significant factor (read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-13; 10:12-17). Even *sanctified* saints have been *leavened humans* at one time or another because *all have sinned* (Romans 3:10-24).

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 is congruent with this idea that God's saints from the time of Abel to the return of Jesus Christ will receive *together* the *redemption* guaranteed by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:14). Some will counter with the argument that the people of the Old Testament were not given the Holy Spirit. If that is true, was David *delusional* when he asked God to not cast him away for his sin with Bathsheba – and...not *take His Holy Spirit from him* (Psalm 51:9-12)? Were men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets named in the Old Testament *devoid* of the Holy Spirit? You have to remember that the Old Covenant was a *righteous agreement* between God and His saints – that agreement is chronicled in the *books* of law, history, and prophecy that make up the Old Testament of the Bible...*God's testimony about that relationship* (see Romans 3:1-4). Those who kept covenant with God are those righteous saints.

The failure of *Israel* (both Houses – see Eze-

kiel 37) to keep covenant with God caused that righteous agreement to be passed on to a *remnant of Israel* called the *election of grace* (see Isaiah 1:5-9 and Romans 11:1-15). That *remnant* (of Israel) *according to the election of grace* is the *Church* Jesus Christ founded with His *Jewish* disciples (see John 4:22). They were the *first-fruits* of the *holy root* into which repentant *Israelites* (not just the *Jews*) and the *Gentiles* are to be grafted (see Romans 11:16-36 and Revelation 7:1-9). These are participants in the *New Covenant*.

Because traditional Christianity has elected to throw away *Moses and the Prophets*, they have chosen to be like the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 and “...*worship you know not what*...” (v. 22; emphases added) while they claim worshipful kinship with the God who created the entire system of salvation (see vv. 12, 19, 20, 25). The Samaritans were Gentile transplants in the place of the ten northern tribes of the House of Israel (read 2 Kings 17). Even though this woman thought she had a common history with the Jews, Jesus said that she did not understand the God about whom she had been taught. So, this explains those who will make up the *early, firstfruit harvest* of those who repent of their sins and accept the sacrifice and lordship of Jesus Christ – yes, the Savior who was a *Jew* in the flesh.

Revelation 20:15 says that those whose names are not “...written in the book of life...” will be ultimately cast into the lake of fire to be totally destroyed. Is it wise to assume that this *book of life*

contains only the names of those who have believed *after* the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Let's take a couple of examples to make our next point.

What is the focus of Moses' conversation with the Lord God (the one who came in the flesh as Jesus Christ) in Exodus 32:32, 33? How about Psalm 56:8; 69:28; and 139:16? Was Daniel referring to the same *book* in Daniel 12:1? In Daniel's account, who gets *raised from the dead at the end of the "time of trouble that has never been before* (see Matthew 24:21-31)? Do you yet get the point that the resurrection of the *first-fruits* from the dead involves the saints from Abel to the return of Jesus Christ? What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23? Do not hew the party line of denominational doctrine! Read God's revealed truth and believe it! Answer according to God's revealed truth! Man has a sordid history of following the denominational party line and going astray from God's revealed truth (see Matthew 7:21-23; 15:1-9).

How Do We Know There Will Be *Secondfruits* and More?

This concept is very easily understood if you allow God's word to speak its truth without the intrusion of denominational party lines. Let's take a look at two scriptures that clearly reveal God's revelation of this truth: Zechariah 14:16-19 and Isaiah 2:1-5. As you read these scriptures, I want you to notice the *human population* with whom Jesus Christ and His resurrected saints

work during this 1,000-year Kingdom period. I also want you to ask yourself ***why they will do so***.

Let's put the puzzle together, starting with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. In this prophecy, Paul shows that Jesus Christ will return to resurrect the dead saints and to instantaneously change the living saints from flesh to spirit (see also 1 Corinthians 15:50-58). He takes them up to a cloud upon which He is seated (see Matthew 24:30, 31 and Revelation 11:15; 14:14-16). That completed, the marriage supper with His Church (the resurrected saints) will take place...followed by His invasion of the earth to fulfill Daniel 2:44, 45 (see Revelation 19:6-21). That brief account brings us to Zechariah 14.

Zechariah 14:1 places this event during the same period of time as John's prophecy in Revelation 6:12 through 20:6: *the day of the Lord*. Zechariah 14:4 says that they will begin this invasion at Jerusalem. Notice that v. 5 says that *all of His saints* will be with Him (Hebrews 11:39, 40). Verse 9 says that He will become the *King of the earth* (see Revelation 5:10; 11:15; 20:4-6). What does He do thereafter (remember that this is the *beginning* of a 1,000-year reign for the purpose of reconciling all things in heaven and on earth to the Father)? This is where you must pay close attention to vv. 16-19.

Note that v. 16 says that there will be *human survivors* of this battle – which means that the survivors will include *the Jews who were attacked* by the nations of the world. It is not just

the Jews who survive. Note that *all human survivors* will be expected to obey the instructions given by Jesus Christ, the King. There will be consequences for non-compliance. This reveals to the observant reader that the Kingdom is not simply a Jewish kingdom that Christ sets up because of *earthly promises* He made to the Old Testament *Jews*, as is taught in New Covenant and Dispensation theology. This takes us to Isaiah 2:1-5.

Verse two says that Jesus' government will be established in Jerusalem and all nations will be governed by it (see Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 11:15). Again, this demonstrates that this Kingdom is not merely a Jewish kingdom. Daniel 7:14 and Revelation 11:15 says that He will reign over this Kingdom of God *for ever and ever*. Notice that Revelation 11:15 says that "The *kingdoms of the world* are become the *kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ*" (emphasis added). So, it is not merely 1,000 years that we should focus on as far as the duration of His reign is concerned. It is the objective of this 1,000-year period of His reign to which we should pay attention.

I make the above comment because of the following quote:

Jesus sought to guard against the idea of an earthly territorial kingdom....Evidently the thought is that the kingdom of God is not an observable political unit; it is the reign of God among/within men [in the context: in their hearts]. Some Baptists

and others see Jesus at his return reigning on earth for a thousand years. *One's position at this point is not a test of orthodoxy among Baptists.* (Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*; Nashville: Convention Press; 1971; p. 99; emphases added)

I must greatly disagree with Mr. Hobbs's conclusion here. First, the focus of Jesus Christ's ministry was to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14 and elsewhere in the gospels). Second, He revealed that the Kingdom was something that was to be given to God's people – a plan God had from the conception of creating the earth before the orderly universe was even created (Matthew 25:31-34). Third, Jesus Christ made it abundantly clear that His Kingdom is not going to be another in a long line of *human governments* or a product of this present age (compare Daniel 2:44, 45 to John 18:33-37). Finally, you should understand that Jesus Christ is going to reign for ever and ever. The first 1,000 years of that reign will serve a very special purpose relative to God's plan of salvation. You also should know that *God's truth* is the *orthodoxy* with which you should be concerned (remember Revelation 11:15). Let's understand God's revelation.

Isaiah 2:3, 4 show that Jesus and His saints will begin to re-educate the survivors. For the New Covenanters and Dispensationists, they miss two important points in v. 3: both the *Law* and the *Word will be taught to these human surviv-*

ors. Why? Using God's Law and His Word, Christ and His saints will settle international disputes and teach the way of God's peace. This is what Paul so eloquently describes in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: *the defeat of all of God's enemies – even **death!*** This is the culmination of the *ministry of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 1:20). It is the *times of refreshing* and *times of restitution of all things* of which Peter spoke in Acts 3:19-21. It will take Jesus Christ and His saints **1,000 years** to accomplish that gargantuan feat (see Revelation 20:4-6). This will be a time during which ***salvation in Christ*** will be brought to those *survivors and their descendants*.

Again: *How do we know?* Revelation 20 provides vital information to substantiate what I have said above. Verses 4-6 show a group of saints who have gone through the resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Notice that they are set upon *thrones* in order to make *judgments* as they *reign* with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years. That is stated in vv. 4, 6. Verse 6 also states that they will be *priests of God and of Christ*.

This is the point made in the two parables about *talents* in Matthew 25:14-31 and Luke 19:11-27. In both parables, the nobleman *went away and returned* – in Luke, He went away to receive a *kingdom*. In neither parable did he return to take his servants back to the place where he received the kingdom; he granted them *rulership* in the place where he left them. In Luke 22:24-30 at His last Passover, Jesus Christ ap-

pointed His disciples as kings over the 12 tribes of Israel when His Kingdom is established – which is further proof that Mr. Hobbs is wrong in his assertion above.

It should be patently obvious that the saints are not going to ***heaven*** to live in ease and contentment forever. It should be patently obvious that there is work to be done during an important 1,000-year period of time upon the return of Jesus Christ. As co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26-29; James 2:5; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; 2 Peter 1:11), the saints will shoulder their share of the burden to assist Jesus Christ in the reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth to the Father (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20).

That will involve proper government and the enforcement of appropriate law and the education of the survivors and their descendants in God's unvarnished truth. Satan will be put out of the way into a dark, distant hole during that time (Revelation 20:1-3). The salvation in Christ that will result from this continued ministry of reconciliation will greatly benefit those survivors. They will be the ***secondfruits*** who will be brought into the God family. Only the *firstfruits* will reign with Jesus Christ as His Bride. Anything beyond that (see Revelation 20:7-15) will be explained in the July – September issue.

The Role of God's Law and the Holy Spirit

There are two seemingly unrelated discussions recorded in the New Testament that have

direct bearing on this part of the symbolism of the Feast of Harvest. In speaking of *the Lord's Servant* – a prophecy about Jesus Christ – Isaiah said that He would “...magnify the Law, and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). This is in concord with His Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Law and Prophets...but to cause them to achieve the purpose for which they were intended (compare Matthew 5:17-19 to Isaiah 8:16, 20; 55:10, 11). Then, He set about to explain the difference between the mere letter of the Law and its *spiritual intent* – thus, beginning to fulfill Isaiah 42:21 (see examples in vv. 21-48 and compare that to Romans 3:31). That *spiritual intent* of the Law is the root and core of what is embodied in *holy spirit* (compare Matthew 22:36-40 to Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 5:22-25). How does “nailing it to the cross” *magnify the law and make it honorable*?

The next discussion is found in Romans 8:1-4 where Paul proclaims that there is a *righteousness of the Law* that must be fulfilled within the lives of those guided by the Holy Spirit. Many assume that the Holy Spirit is a third member of the godhead – a *personage* like the Father and Son. It is not. It is the thoughts and ways of God working in the repentant, converted person's mind and heart *transforming* it (Romans 12:1, 2) to produce a *new person* in whom sin (1 John 3:4) is being *put out like leavening*. In the rest of Romans 8, Paul explains the difference between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul discusses how

one acquires the *spiritual mind* – the power to be a holy and righteous person. God reveals His mysterious thoughts and ways through the *Spirit of God* (v. 11). This is when God puts *into the mind of man* that *earnest/downpayment* of Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). Paul says that the *natural man* – that is, the man with the *carnal mind* – is not capable of understanding the things of God because he believes them to be *foolishness*.

Law and Spirit work together in the salvation process (Romans 7:7, 12, 13; Galatians 3:19). We know, of course, that Joel 2:28 was fulfilled *in part* in Acts 2. When the Lord God revealed to Joel that particular part of the larger prophecy, He said that His spirit will be poured out upon *all flesh*. In v. 32, he shows that the *terrible day of the Lord*, when Jesus Christ intervenes in world events with His saints, will begin a time of *salvation* in Christ. We have seen already that this will be a period of 1,000 years (see Romans 9:8-17 and Acts 16:25-34). What does this have to do with *Law and Spirit*?

This is where the New Covenant comes into play. I have already shown how Jesus Christ spoke of the New Covenant at His last Passover observance before His crucifixion and how He changed the symbols from roasted lamb and bitter herbs to unleavened bread and wine. In Hebrews 8 and 10, Paul cites a very important Old Testament scripture that speaks of the New Covenant and its future part in God's relationship with humans. Let's look at this in Jeremiah 31:27-34.

Notice that the Lord God speaks specifically of a *new covenant* with the *House of Israel* and the *House of Judah*. Many who accept New Covenant and Dispensation theology do not understand the difference between them because they have been taught about that old *Jewish* law as if all of Israel were *Jews*. They are not (read 1 Kings 11 and 12). Moses, for instance, was from the Israelite tribe of *Levi* (Exodus 2:1-10). Paul was from the Israelite tribe of *Benjamin* (Romans 9:3-5; 11:1). Not all Israelites are Jews; but all Jews are Israelites. If *all of Israel* is so loved of God, why do the New Covenanters and Dispensationists follow Justin Martyr and others in declaring that God used the Law and circumcision to *mark* them as terribly sinful people? Why did God inspire the prophecies in Hosea and Amos and Romans 11:25-36 – to which Peter alludes in 1 Peter 2:1-10?

Jeremiah 31:27-30 shows the Lord God's determination to punish Israel for her sins – "...to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy, and to afflict..." (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) – and to restore her at a time of His choosing. *But* ...He is going to enter into a *new covenant* with her as part of that restoration. What many do not understand is this: *Jesus Christ set into motion the **fulfillment** of this prophecy at His last Passover with His disciples when He set forth the New Covenant.* What will He do to change her mind set?

Here is what He says: "I will put *my **Law*** in her *inward parts*, and write it in their *hearts*..."

(v. 33; emphases added). This is the same action about which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 and Galatians 3:21-29. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, they will have their minds transformed. They will now understand the *magnified, spiritual intent of the Law* to the point that no one will ever need again to teach them to know the Lord. Why will He do this? Because God does not change His mind about His gifts and calling (Romans 11:26-29). Why would anyone ever think that Jesus Christ came to abolish God's Law? Can we attribute it to carnal mindedness?

Conclusion

So, we see that the *Feast of Harvest* plays an important part in God's plan of salvation. It is a vital link to the importance of *Moses* and the *Prophets* and the role of the *Holy Spirit*. It is God's *witness* that He truly is not willing that any should perish – that He is ultimately desirous of their repentance and eventual salvation (see 2 Peter 3:9). His prophecies – like those embedded in the symbolism of the seventh-day Sabbath and the Holy Days – are His *testimony* that such pronouncements are as good as *fulfilled*, even though that has not yet come to pass. It is also His *testimony* that His Law has *eternal value* – it was not used to mark the *Jews* as being despicably sinful.

We encourage you to think about these articles. It is sad that traditional Christianity has chosen to *abolish* the Law and Prophets from their doctrinal positions. Maybe they didn't get the memos: Spiritual eyes and ears are necessary.