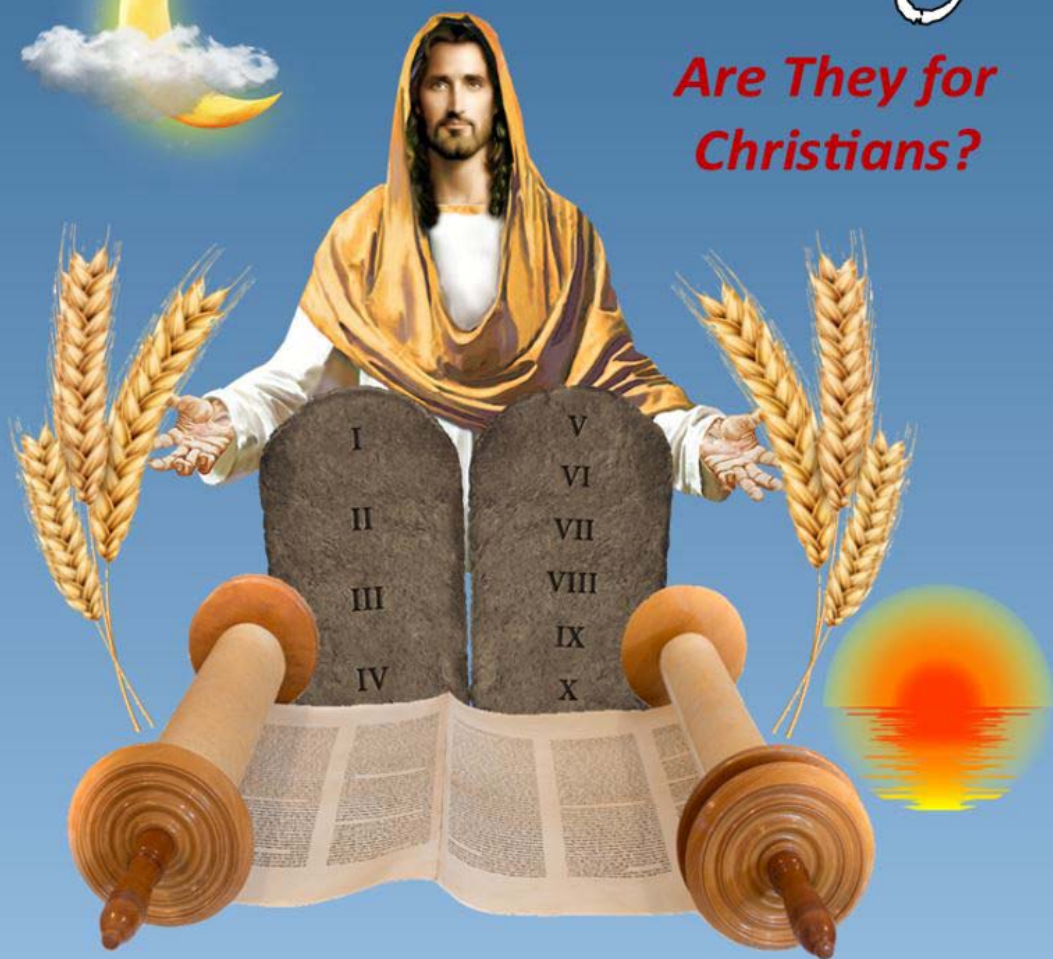


The Times of Refreshing

*Are They for
Christians?*



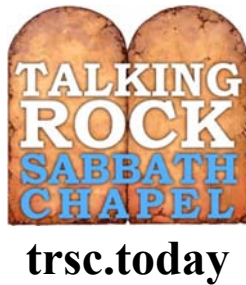
Gary Hullquist & Kevin J. Mullins

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Abstract Summary

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

Some call Saturday the Jewish Sabbath but it was blessed and sanctified at creation and is for all men (Gen 2:1-3). Should we keep it? If God says it is His Sabbath and has blessed it, then I want that blessing and I want to be in harmony with Him and His time. We know that this weekly feast will be kept on the new earth, for Isaiah tells us that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come before the Lord to worship Him (Isaiah 66:23).

*"**These are the feasts of the LORD**, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S **passover**. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is **the feast of unleavened bread** unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." Leviticus 23:4-8*

The first annual holy convocation given to Israel coincided with their deliverance from Egypt at the 10th plague. The Passover Lamb prefigured Christ, the Lamb of God, the true sacrifice and thus the need for any further sacrifices or oblations has ceased. We continue to remember the sacrifice of Christ with the new symbols of unfermented (unleavened) grape juice and the original unleavened bread, both symbols of His sinless life—but no roasted lamb—"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" 1 Corinthians 5:7. And while Passover anciently occurred only once a year, many today celebrate the Lord's Supper more frequently, but it should not be objectionable to at least observe it on the originally specified appointed time. Anciently, Jehovah was worshiped with at least morning and evening sacrifices. Today, these are replaced with morning and evening worship—at least they should be. Must we keep these times as morning and evening sacred appointments? We miss an important blessing if we don't.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the **firstfruits** of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before*

*the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it ... And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths shall be complete**: Even unto **the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days**; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” Leviticus 23:9-11,15,16*

Jesus rose from the tomb on the day of Firstfruits: “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept ... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the *firstfruits*; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming” 1 Corinthians 15:20,23. After His resurrection He spent 40 days preparing His disciples for the time “not many days hence” when they would be “endued with power from on high” Acts 1:5; Luke 24:49. Ten days later on the day of Pentecost (the 50th day), Peter recognized that prophecy was being fulfilled, and quoted the prophet Joel, “It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain” Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28,23. Today, we look forward to a final fulfillment of the Pentecost experience at the latter rain. Will it actually be at the time of the annual Pentecost? Can't say for sure, but it could be. Wouldn't want to miss it.

This pattern of important events in salvation history occurring exactly on these important springtime feast days was recognized by many Christians, Reformers, and numerous Bible Commentators. Attention was then focused on the next feasts, those that all occurred in the seventh Jewish month, the Fall Festivals of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of **blowing of trumpets**, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.” Leviticus 23:23-25*

Trumpets was recognized as a potential harbinger of the Second Coming of Christ who would descend from heaven “with the trump of God” 1Thess 4:16. It has traditionally been called by the idiom, “the day in which no one knows” because its observance is calculated by the New Moon and they were all to watch for its appearing. We remember the words of Jesus, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man [Jesus Himself] cometh” Matthew 25:13.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, “Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a **day of atonement**: it shall be an holy*

convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.” Leviticus 23:26-28

Ten days later the Day of Atonement marked the final judgment when the high priest enters the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary to cleanse it from the sins accumulated there through the year. When he exits at the end of the day, not only is the sanctuary cleansed, but the people are cleansed “that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” Leviticus 16:30.

When Jesus, our High Priest, our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1), finishes His intercessory work in the heavenly sanctuary where He is now (Hebrews 8:1,2), He will make a solemn pronouncement, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still” and “he that is righteous, let him be righteous still” Revelation 22:11. Those who want to be cleansed will all be clean, and those who don’t will remain as they are. The very next verse continues, “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...” Like the king in the parable of Jesus recorded in Matthew 22, who furnished all the guests invited to the wedding supper of his son with wedding garments and then “came in to see the guests, [and] saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment”, so Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is to review those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb when the bride “has made herself ready” Revelation 19:7. He too will conduct an inspection, make a final diagnosis, before the final Day of Atonement. Writing in Day of Atonement language, Daniel tells us that after “2300 evenings and mornings, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” Daniel 8:14.

Recognizing that the 70 Week prophecy of Daniel 9 was given so that Daniel might understand the vision of Daniel 8, and that a day in Bible prophecy equals one full year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), a flood of Bible students beginning in the Reformation and late 1700s began to realize that the date of the Persian king’s decree to “restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah” (Daniel 9:24,25) was made in 457 BC (see, Ezra 7:11-26) and, therefore, was the starting point of, not only the 70 Week prophecy, but also the 2300 evenings and mornings (days/years), thus reaching to the mid-1800s as the time of cleansing. Intense interest in determining the 10th day of the 7th month (the Day of Atonement) erupted on a global scale in what became known as the Great Advent Awakening. Preachers in England, Italy, Scandinavia, America, sounded the trumpet for a decade that judgement day was coming.

Of course, the Day of Atonement is not completed yet. Jesus is still waiting for final decisions to be made by everyone on planet Earth. Will He lay off his High

Priestly robes and put on His kingly garments on an annual Day of Atonement? Could be. Wouldn't be surprised.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be **the feast of tabernacles** for seven days unto the LORD ... Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths." Leviticus 23:33,34,39-42*

But of all the festivals, Tabernacles is the one I'm paying most attention to. It's the only one not yet begun to be fulfilled, and the last one on the list. I look forward to the day when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" Revelation 21:3. These appointed times all deal with an important aspect of the Father and Son in Their work to save us. They alone save us. Even "keeping" the Sabbath each week does not "save us."

There are folk who get caught up in a lot of minutiae and nitpicky details, endless debate about how to calculate the timing, and all that. We can make such efforts a burden if we're not careful. But for me the greatest blessing in watching for these holy convocations is the gathering together, to fellowship, study, share, and encourage one another while receiving a special gift of the Spirit of Christ. Why have just one camp meeting a year when you can have three?

The spring appointments focus on the sacrifice of the Father, the death and resurrection of His Son, which feature the Lord's Supper with unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice, and the ordinance of foot washing (John 13:1-17)—all symbols of His victory over sin. While the ones in the fall emphasize Christ's cleansing intercession in the Most Holy Place, the promise of the latter rain, and His return to harvest this earth in the glory of His Father, at least twice a year, six months apart is really quite a nice arrangement.

Are the Feasts necessary for us to keep today?

The answer to that question depends on how we answer a number of other related questions:

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1. Are the Statutes required for us to keep today?

The same prophet we appeal to in every sermon on stewardship and tithing also wrote these words from Jehovah:

*“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the **statutes and judgments**. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” Malachi 4:4,5*

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. One more thing to remember. Moses didn’t command Israel to keep it, the LORD did. And so we remember the Sabbath every seventh day as God instructed Moses (not only in Exodus 20:8-11, but in 16:26; 31:15; 35:2; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14; and Ezekiel 46:1).

We are now living “before the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” John the Baptist was “Elias [Elijah] which was for to come” Matthew 11:14. But his day was not the great and dreadful day of the LORD. Are we not yet to remember the law of Moses, the statutes and judgments? It would appear so.

Statutes, precepts, and ordinances are never-ceasing principles of God’s design for life and therefore are still an important part of Jehovah’s law and

His truth today. That would make them present truth and part of God's covenant with His people.

The covenant God proposed to make with Israel was backed by His promise to carry them and help them. Israel turned this around and promised God to do all these things in their own strength. Yet God's everlasting covenant promise has always been "I will bless you" and as He repeated later, "I will put my spirit within you, and **cause you to walk in my statutes**, and ye shall **keep my judgments, and do them.**" Ezekiel 36:27.

The next question is, "Are the yearly assemblies, the 'feasts of the LORD,' included in the statutes?"

Jesus told a parable about a feast, a great supper, that was offered to many but ignored for a number of interesting reasons:

*When you make a **feast**, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind ... A certain man made a **great supper**, and bade many; and sent his servant **at supper time** to say to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready." And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, "I have bought a piece of **ground**, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused." And another said, "I have bought five yoke of **oxen**, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused." And another said, "I have married a **wife**, and therefore I cannot come." Luke 14:13,16-20*

Too busy with my work, or I'm married to a woman, a church, whose creed forbids me. To excuse ourselves from God's invitation to gather together at His appointed times was happening even in Paul's day.

*And let us consider one another **to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the **more, as ye see the day approaching**. Hebrews 10:24,25*

The manner of some 30 years after the cross was to forsake the times of assembling together. These gatherings were opportunities to encourage one another to love, good works, and to offer the sacrifice of praise!

*By him therefore let us **offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually**, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with **such sacrifices** God is well pleased. Hebrews 13:15,16*

*And to stand **every morning to thank and praise the LORD**, and likewise **at even**; And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the*

*new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, **continually** before the LORD. 1 Chronicles 23:30,31*

Morning and evening worship is our time for coming before our Father in praise and thanksgiving for “His wonderful works to the children of men” Psalm 107:8. Moses was instructed to call the people to assemble at specific times.

*Make thee two **trumpets** of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the **calling of the assembly**, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, **all the assembly shall assemble themselves** to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Also **in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months**, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for **a memorial** before your God: I [am] the LORD your God. Numbers 10:2,3,10*

Passover was a solemn day; **Pentecost** was a day of gladness.

Atonement was a solemn day; **Tabernacles** was a day of gladness.

Specified times, the beginning and ending of your day, the beginning of your months, the beginning of your year, the end of your year—these were important appointed times for worship and communing with God. Not spasmodic, haphazard times when it is convenient, but regular morning and evening worship, weekly worship, monthly worship, yearly worship, pray, thanksgiving and praise will maintain our hold on God.

*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe [and] to do all his command-ments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the city, and blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the **field**. Blessed [shall be] the **fruit of thy body**, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy **cattle**, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed [shall be] thy **basket and thy store**. And the LORD shall **make thee plenteous in goods**, in the fruit of **thy body**, and in the fruit of **thy cattle**, and in the fruit of **thy ground**, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD **shall open unto thee his good treasure**, the heaven to give the **rain** unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. Deuteronomy 28:1-5,11,12*

The three areas that were the source of excuse for those not accepting the

invitation to come to the feast, the great supper, are the very things God will bless if we come.

*And it shall come to pass, [that] every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up **from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.** And it shall be, [that] whoso will not come up of [all] the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them **shall be no rain.** And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, **that [have] no [rain];** there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up **to keep the feast of tabernacles.** This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up **to keep the feast of tabernacles.** Zechariah 14:16-19*

While the feast of tabernacles is the occasion for gathering “year to year” to worship the LORD and the promise of rain for those who do, this passage in Zechariah can be confusing as to exactly when this takes place. Since the chapter begins with an attack on Jerusalem, the descent of Christ on the Mount of Olives, and the consumption of tongues and eyes and legs of the wicked, this would suggest the setting is after the millennium (Revelation 20). A post millennium call to the feast of Tabernacles certainly means the feast is meant, not only for Christians before the cross, but for Christians after the cross.

*Ye shall **keep my sabbaths,** and reverence my sanctuary: I [am] the LORD. **If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;** Then I **will give you rain in due season,** and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. **But** if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; **And if ye shall despise my statutes,** or if your soul **abhor my judgments,** so that ye will **not do all my commandments,** [but] that ye **break my covenant:** I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that **shall consume the eyes,** Then shall **the land enjoy her sabbaths,** as long as it lieth desolate, and ye [be] in your enemies' land; [even] then shall **the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.** As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. Leviticus 26:2-4,14-16, 34,35*

Notice the definite relationship here between the commandments and the statutes. The commandments were first spoken by the Lord from Mount Sinai and then the statutes were given to Moses to teach and instruct the people. While the judgments and testimonies are also mentioned along with these two, the commandments and statutes are frequently listed alone together.

“keep all his **statutes** and his **commandments**” Deuteronomy 6:2.

“keep the **commandments** of the LORD, and his **statutes**” Deut 10:13
 “do his **commandments** and his **statutes**” Deuteronomy 27:10.
 “do all his **commandments** and his **statutes**” Deuteronomy 28:15.
 “keep his **commandments** and his **statutes**” Deuteronomy 28:45.
 “keep his **commandments** and his **statutes**” Deuteronomy 30:10.
 “keep my **statutes** and my **commandments**” 1 Kings 3:14.
 “keep my **commandments** *and* my **statutes**” 1 Kings 9:6.
 “he kept my **commandments** and my **statutes**” 1 Kings 11:34.
 “keep my **statutes** and my **commandments**” 1 Kings 11:38.
 “keep my **commandments** *and* my **statutes**” 2 Kings 17:13.
 “my **statutes** and my **commandments**” 2 Chronicles 7:19.
 See also Exodus 15:26; Leviticus 26:3; Deuteronomy 4:40; 1Kings 8:61;
 Ezra 7:11; Psalm 89:31; 119:48.

The commandments written on stone were placed in the ark of the covenant. They were not accessible to the people, not even the priests, only the high priest was allowed in the Most Holy Place where the ark was placed, and even then it was beneath the covering of the mercy seat. Thus, the commandments were invisible to the people. But the statutes and judgments were written in the book of the law which was placed in the side of the ark and a copy of which was given to the priests to teach the people, reading it to them at the feast of Tabernacles every seven years. Deut. 31:10,11.

The commandments were first invisible; the statutes were given next and were a visible copy or image of the commandments. The statutes explained and magnified the commandments.

This relationship between the commandments and statutes is mirrored in the Source-Channel relationship between other Father-Son types: the Father of lights who is the Source of “every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17), the “invisible, the only wise God” (1Timothy 1:17), “whom no man has seen, nor can see” (1Timothy 6:16), and “His dear Son...the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:13,15), “the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3).

Invisible Source

God, the Father

Commandments

the greater light (sun) (Genesis 1:14)

hidden at night

Visible Manifestation

Jesus, the Son

Statutes

the lesser light (moon)

dependent on the sun

Just as “all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father” (John 5:23), so also we should honor the statutes even as we honor the commandments.

2. What are included in the Statutes?

The statutes guard the Ten Commandments, express the principles of the law of God's kingdom, are enforced by the power of the moral law, clearly and definitely explain that law and state plainly the blessings of obedience. They are directions which the Lord gave His people.

The statutes are subordinate to the Ten Commandments but receive authority and power from that moral law. The statutes represent, explain, and magnify the ten precepts. The relationship between the statutes and the Law of God is parallel to that between the Son of God and His Father, "the Ancient of days" (Daniel 7:13). We find the statutes detailed in the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 26 instructs the people to ...

1. Offer their **first fruits** to the Lord, worship Him, and remember how God led Jacob from the land of Laban to Egypt to Canaan. Rejoice in every good thing the Lord has given us.
2. **Tithe of the third year** is for the priests, strangers, fatherless and widows.

Deuteronomy 27 instructs them to ...

1. Set up great plastered **stones in mount Ebal** and write on them the words of the law.
2. Not make any **graven image**
3. Not dishonor your **parents**
(sounds like the Ten Commandments)
4. Not remove your **neighbor's landmark**
5. Not make **the blind** to wander out of the way
6. Not pervert the judgment of the **stranger, fatherless, or widow**
7. Not **lie with** your father's wife
8. Not **lie with** any animal
9. Not **lie with** your sister, aunt, or mother-in-law
10. Not **smite** your neighbor secretly
11. Not take a **reward to slay** an innocent person (no hit men).

Chapter 28 simply lists all the **blessings** for keeping these statutes and all the **curses** for ignoring them. But these are not the only statues. Beginning with chapter 12 there in another list:

1. **Destroy all the idols** and heathen gods of the land when you enter it.
2. Do not **eat the blood**.
3. Do not **eat the tithe** of your crops at home, but with your family and the minister where he serves.

Chapter 13 continues:

1. Stone to death any prophet or family member that tries to get you to serve **other gods**.
2. Completely destroy any city that tries to get you to serve **other gods**.

Chapter 14 has more statutes:

1. Don't **cut yourself, or shave your head** when mourning for the dead.
2. Don't **eat abominable things** such as camels, rabbits, pigs, eagles, vultures, hawks, crows, owls, pelicans, stork, and all flying insects.

Chapter 15 also:

1. Release your slaves and all debts **every seven years**.
2. **Be generous with the poor** and lend them what they need.
3. Don't work the **firstborn cows** or shear the **firstborn sheep**.

Chapter 16 continues with more:

1. Observe the first month and keep the **Passover**.
2. Eat **unleavened bread seven days** and the seventh is a solemn no work day.
3. Count **seven weeks** and give to the Lord according to His blessings.
4. **Rejoice** before the Lord with your family, stranger, minister, fatherless, and widow.
5. Observe the **feast of tabernacles** seven days after harvesting your crops.
6. **Three times a year** all males shall appear before the Lord:
a. Feast of unleavened bread b. Feast of weeks c. Feast of tabernacles
7. Judges must not receive **bribes**.
8. Don't plant **groves** near your altars or set up any **images**.

Chapter 17:

1. Don't sacrifice **animals with blemishes**.
2. Stone to death anyone who **worships another god**, sun, moon, or the hosts of heaven.
3. Accept the **verdict of the judge**;
Stone those who refuse to accept his judgment.
4. Only set **kings over you** from among your own people.
5. The king must **read from the law** and follow it all the days of his life.

Chapter 18:

1. Priests are supported by the **offerings and first fruits**.
2. Do not pass your **children through the fire**, use **divination**, or **observe times**.
3. Do not allow any **enchanter, witches, charmer**, consulter of familiar spirits, **wizards, or necromancers** in the land.

We should have no problem with almost all of these stipulations. Stoning people and sacrificing animals are the two glaring exceptions. Christ caused sacrifice and oblation to cease when He died on the cross. Daniel 9:27. Stoning was part of the statutes that were not good. They were annexed to the law because this was a practice Israel had brought with them from Egypt. Ezekiel 20:25, Exodus 8:26; 17:4.

Notice right there in chapter 16 the extensive details provided for the observance of the three times a year when the people would gather to worship God and rejoice before Him. The feasts appear to be very much a part of the statutes. They must not, however, be included in the “observing of times” prohibited in chapter 18.

3. Do the feasts contain moral principles?

The Sabbath is a moral law. The yearly feasts were appointed to remind Israel of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath. The yearly feasts are a reminder of the moral principle in the Sabbath. The yearly feasts provided for the expression of gratitude and thankfulness for the goodness of God. These are moral principles. The yearly feasts were not an exercise in arbitrary sovereignty, meaning that God did not decide to make them do this because He simply wished it. These are not arbitrary rules to follow. These feasts were designed for their **good**. Good is a moral principle. It is how God designed life to operate.

The calling of all Israel together to worship created an expanded opportunity for fellowship and praise. This makes the annual Sabbaths an expansion and magnification of the principles of the weekly Sabbath. The suggestion that an annual Sabbath was only ceremonial casts a shadow on the weekly Sabbath itself, and downgrades the meaning of the Sabbath. But in order for the yearly feasts to be a reminder of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath it had to include an expansion of that very moral principle, otherwise it could not be a reminder of the Sabbath in spirit and in truth.

4. Must we keep the statutes to be saved?

Take this question a step further:

Must we keep the Ten Commandments to be saved?

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20

To keep the 10 Commandments as a *means* of salvation will never justify a person. Salvation is obtained only through Christ's sacrifice. But once we obtain this salvation by faith in Jesus, God keeps His promise and writes His law upon our heart.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Hebrews 8:10

This fact is the same for the statutes as well as the 10 Commandments. Neither are a *means* of salvation yet both will be revealed in the life of the saved because the *principles* of the law will be written on our hearts. Justification by faith leads to obedience (a natural submission) to all the commandments of God and His commandments are not grievous.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 1 John 5:3

5. Why do we keep some of the Statutes but not all?

The statutes are a mix of some rather reasonable and also some utterly impractical regulations—especially those advocating death by stoning. These were given because of the people's own judgment principles and the hardness of their hearts. But if tithing and discriminating between clean and unclean foods is accepted, what do we do with the rules regarding kings, animals with blemishes, firstlings from the flock?

Some argue that we can't just pick and choose which statutes we should observe—it's either all or none, they say. But there is at least this one principle we can follow: those that deal with the sacrificial system are no longer applicable. Meat and drink offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, thank offerings, red heifer purification rites, leprosy cleansing rites—anything that involved a sacrifice of blood or fire—can be discarded (Daniel 9:27; Hebrews 10:1-10). The only sacrifice we are told to make today is a living sacrifice of ourselves and the sacrifice of praise. Romans 12:2; Jeremiah 33:11; Hebrews 13:15.

The Sabbath commandment of the 10 Commandments tells us to allow our servants and our cattle to rest. This does not mean that every Sabbath keeper must have servants and cattle. It was included for the context in which it applied. The same is true of all the statutes. Statutes prohibiting “seething a kid in its mother’s milk” or prohibition from “putting marks in your beard” to honor the dead have no application in our society today. The key is to discern the principle and then apply it.

The epistle to the Hebrews makes a scriptural allusion to the sacrifice of praise associated with the daily, weekly, monthly and annual appointed times described in 1 Chronicles and Hosea.

*By him therefore let us offer the **sacrifice of praise** to God **continually**, that is, the fruit of our lips giving **thanks** to his name. Hebrews 13:15*

*Return to the Lord and repent! Say to him: “Completely forgive our iniquity; accept our penitential prayer, that we may offer **the praise of our lips as sacrificial bulls.**” Hosea 14:2*

*And to stand every **morning** to **thank** and **praise** the LORD, and likewise at **even**; And to offer all burnt **sacrifices** unto the LORD in the **sabbaths**, in the **new moons**, and on the **set feasts**, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, **continually** before the LORD. 1 Chronicles 23:30, 31.*

The burnt sacrifice of innocent animals ceased with the death of the Lamb of God. However, we continue to offer the sacrifice of praise. Both before and after the cross these were offered “continually” especially at the appointed times.

There is also the problem with applying certain judgments today. We don’t stone people that gather sticks on the Sabbath, worship other gods, or commit adultery, because we do not live under the nation of Israel. The practice of stoning was added because of the hardness of their hearts. It reflected their own thinking. Israel brought the practice of stoning from Egypt.

*And Moses said [to Pharaoh], It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and **will they not stone us?** Exodus 8:26*

*And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? **they be almost ready to stone me.** Exodus 17:4*

*Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, **as ye have spoken** in mine ears, **so will I do** to you: Numbers 14:28*

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Matthew 7:2

Today we are subject to the laws of the land we are living in. Romans 13:1,2. This concept may be confusing at first, but for a more detailed explanation see chapter 8 of *Agape* and chapter 6 of *Father of Love*. Both available for free download at fatheroflove.info.

6. Are the Feasts part of the sacrificial system?

The sacrificial system included all the detailed provisions for which kind of animal was required for different kinds of offerings. A lamb of the first year for a sin offering; a bullock for a trespass offering, a pair of turtle doves if one was poor, etc. There were specific procedures to be performed in preparing the sacrifice, arranging it on the altar, what to do with the blood and the ashes, what could be eaten and whether there were meal or drink offerings included, etc. And nearly everything was done with a sacrifice—everything.

The feasts, all the feasts of the Lord, had certain sacrifices associated with them. From Numbers 28 we learn the following:

- Sabbath:** 2 lambs with meal and drink offerings
plus morning and evening offerings
- Passover:** 2 bullocks, 1 ram, 7 lambs, 1 kid, and a Passover Lamb
- Unleavened:** 2 bullocks, 1 ram, 7 lambs, 1 kid,
plus morning offering for 7 days
- Pentecost:** 2 bullocks, 1 ram, 7 lambs, 1 kid, plus morning offering
- Trumpets:** 1 bullock, 1 ram, 7 lambs, 1 kid, plus morning offering
and monthly offering
- Atonement:** 1 bullock, 1 ram, 7 lambs, 1 kid, plus 2 kids
- Tabernacles:** 13 bullocks, 2 rams, 14 lambs, 1 kid,
plus morning offering for 7 days
with one less bullock each successive day

All the feasts had burnt sacrifices, even the weekly seventh day Sabbath.

7. Is the seventh-day Sabbath a statute or a feast?

The very first feast mentioned in both Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 is the feast of the weekly Sabbath.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning **the feasts of the LORD**, which ye shall*

*proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are **my feasts**. Six days shall work be done: but **the seventh day is the sabbath of rest**, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the **sabbath of the LORD** in all your dwellings. These are **the feasts of the LORD**, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.” Leviticus 23:2-4*

*And on the sabbath day **two lambs** of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour [for] **a meat offering**, mingled with oil, and **the drink offering** thereof: This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, **beside the continual burnt offering**, and his **drink offering**. Numbers 28:9,10*

Four animal sacrifices and two additional offerings were made every Sabbath. But even though the sacrifices ended at the cross, the Sabbath was not affected because it is both commemorative and typical. The Sabbath of creation is the foundation of an entire system of its own, a system of cascading Sabbaths, all having the weekly Sabbath as their foundation or source. The seventh week, seventh month, seventh year Sabbaths are derived from and have their origin in the weekly seventh day Sabbath. It is a fountain of blessing that bring seasons of spiritual refreshing. For more info on this see the book *Fountain of Blessing*.

8. How many Sabbaths are there?

- At the end of six working days is the seventh day Sabbath of the Lord.
- First month 15th day is the first Unleavened Bread annual Sabbath.
- After seven days there is the second Unleavened Bread annual Sabbath.
- At the end of seven weeks each year is the Pentecost annual Sabbath.
- In the seventh month and first day is the annual Sabbath of Trumpets.
- On the tenth day that month is the annual Day of Atonement Sabbath.
- On the 15th day that month is the first annual Tabernacles Sabbath.
- After eight days there is the second annual Tabernacles Sabbath.
- At the end of six planting seasons the land keeps a Sabbath of rest.
- After seven land Sabbaths the land keeps another Jubilee land Sabbath. This occurs in the 50th year resulting in two consecutive land Sabbaths.
- At the end of six thousand years of sin the earth will keep a seventh millennium, 1000 years of Sabbath rest for the entire world.

That's a lot of Sabbaths!

Every seven years and every 50th year the land kept Sabbath in which no planting was performed, farmers took a vacation, and the land rested. This was the sacrifice, not of livestock, but a sacrifice of work while trusting wholly in the promised blessing of Jehovah to work a miracle on the sixth year, just as He did on the sixth day when there was a double portion of manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). And on the sixth year of the seventh land Sabbath a triple blessing to sustain them through the seventh (and now 49th) year and also through the 50th Jubilee year as well!

Should we let the land rest every seven years and year of Jubilee? Modern organic gardeners recognize the wisdom of letting the land rest, rotating crops and letting the soil and its delicate ecosystem rejuvenate.

9. What is the Sabbath Blessing?

*And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from the works which he had made. And God **blessed** the seventh day, and **sanctified** it. Genesis 2:2,3*

*For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD **blessed** the Sabbath day, and **hallowed** it. Exodus 20:11*

The seventh day weekly Sabbath was blessed by God and sanctified. However, the Sabbath blessing extends to all the additional Sabbath principles—the seventh week, the seventh month, the seventh year, the seventh-seventh year, the jubilee. This is why we are told to learn to number by sevens.

Every seventh year the land was to rest, “a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the LORD” Leviticus 25:4.

*Then I will command my **blessing** upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. Leviticus 25:21.*

Like the manna blessing on the sixth day in Exodus 16, the sixth year before the 49th year would receive a triple blessing, enough to sustain the people for three years (the 7th year land Sabbath, and the 8th year Jubilee land Sabbath) until a harvest could be reaped again.

The blessing also was provided for those who would be coming three times a year to gather for the appointed holy convocations.

*Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days...Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: **because** the LORD thy God shall **bless thee** in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the **blessing** of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee. Deuteronomy 16:13-17.*

Not only the seventh day and the seventh year, but the seventh month is distinguished as a special time for rest. Leviticus 23:24 introduces the seventh month with an interesting expression in the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the *Septuagint (LXX)*:

λάλησον τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ λέγων τοῦ μηνὸς τοῦ ἑβδόμου μιᾶ
Speak unto sons Israel saying in-the month of seventh first
τοῦ μηνὸς ἔσται ὑμῖν **ἀνάπαυσις** μνημόσυνον σαλπίγγων κλητῆ
of-the month it-is your **high-rest** memorial trumpets assembly
ἀγία ἔσται ὑμῖν
holy it-is yours

The first day of the seventh month is the feast of Trumpets, the only new moon festival that has a sabbath rest, in Greek it's the word ἀνάπαυσις (*anapausis*).

ana- a prefix indicating increase, elevate, build up.

-pausis meaning pause, rest. Together a “high Sabbath.”

Ten days later is the Day of Atonement. Notice *anapausis* as it appears again in Leviticus 16:31:

σάββατα σαββάτων **ἀνάπαυσις** αὕτη ἔσται ὑμῖν καὶ ταπεινώσετε
Sabbath of sabbaths **high-rest** it it-is yours and you-afflict
τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν νόμιμον αἰώνιον
the psyche yours a-law forever

The Day of Atonement is the only annual holy convocation that is a *shabbat* sabbath. Like the weekly Sabbath, it is also a day in which no work at all is to be done. That's why it is called "the Sabbath of the sabbaths." It is also the only place in scripture where direction is explicitly given as to the time to begin and end observance of the Sabbath.

σάββατα σαββάτων ἔσται ὑμῖν καὶ ταπεινώσετε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἀπὸ
Sabbath of-sabbaths it-is yours and you-afflict the psyche yours at
ἐνάτης τοῦ μηνὸς ἀπὸ ἑσπέρας ἕως ἑσπέρας σαββατιεῖτε τὰ σάββατα
ninth of-the month at **evening to evening** you-sabbath the Sabbath

For ancient Israel it was the most holy day of the entire year. From sunset to sunset the people were to "afflict" their souls. Failure to do so that day would result in permanent separation. For spiritual Israel today the antitypical "day" is a time of sober preparation and soul cleansing because at the end of this time our High Priest will leave the Most Holy place to make the solemn pronouncement, "He that is holy let him be holy still...he that is filthy let him be filthy still" Revelation 22:11.

Five days later the seven-day festival of Tabernacles begins. The first and last days are Sabbaths for *anapausis*, increased rest as in Leviticus 23:39:

καὶ ἐν τῇ πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ μηνὸς τοῦ ἑβδόμου τούτου
and in the fifteenth day of-the month of-the seventh when
ὅταν συντελέσητε τὰ γενήματα τῆς γῆς ἑορτάσετε τῷ κυρίῳ
you-gather the fruit of-the land you-will-keep master
ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πρώτῃ **ἀνάπαυσις** καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ
seven days the day the first **high-rest** and the day the
ὀγδόῃ **ἀνάπαυσις**
eighth **high-rest**

An intensification of rest occurs in the seventh month with four of the seven annual Sabbaths occurring at that time.

1st Month

7th Month



The 8th day of Tabernacles, called the Great Day (the blue G) positioned after the 7-day fall feast, mirrors Passover (black P) located before the 7-day feast of Unleavened Bread in the spring.

The Septuagint Greek translation (*LXX*) of the Old Testament scriptures only uses the word *anapausis* for the three fall festivals.

Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand ... Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught ... In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:2,14,37,38

When Jesus stood up on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, on the Great Day, and said “He that is thirsty, come unto me and drink!” He was repeating the invitation He gave in Matthew 11:28, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*.” The Greek word for “rest” here is ἀναπαύσω— I will give you *anapausis*—I will increase your *rest*. This increased rest received through the Sabbath appointments makes a difference between the wise and the foolish virgins Jesus spoke about in a parable found in Matthew 25:1-13. The wise had extra oil, representing the God’s Holy Spirit (His selfless presence), in their vessels. In biblical imagery and prophetic visions a woman represents God’s church/people (Jeremiah 4:31; 6:2; Isaiah 51:16; 2 Corinthians 11:2).

We see a picture of God’s people, again represented by a comely woman, in Revelation 12 who is “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.” They know that the Lord has appointed the moon for seasons (the appointed times).

He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Psalm 104:19

*And God said, Let there be **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for **seasons**, and for days, and years. Genesis 1:14*

The Hebrew word for “seasons” here is *moédim* which literally means “Appointed Times”, or “Sacred Festivals.” Notice how the popular *Strong’s Concordance* defines *moédim*:

Strong’s Concordance H4150 From H3259; properly an appointment, that is, a fixed time or season; **specifically a festival**.

In the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* it is translated like this: “They will serve as signs for **festivals** and for days and years.” In the footnote it says, “Or for the appointed times.”

Christ is “the Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28) and it is His Spirit that comes into the hearts of those who wait for Him at every seven. Each seven is a preparation for the final seven when the millennium of rest begins. As we take hold of each seven we receive more oil in our vessels to be prepared for the cry at midnight, “Go ye out to meet Him!” (Matthew 25:6). Those who have been watching and waiting at each seven will be those who are prepared for the final crisis. They will be ready for the final Jubilee.

God’s people will keep that Jubilee just at the Second Coming of Christ. The Jubilee (which occurred every 50 years) would always begin during the Day of Atonement:

*Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the **jubilee** to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in **the day of atonement** shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. Leviticus 25:9*

During the time of Noah God’s Spirit pleaded with the people for 120 years (Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:18-20). Jesus foretold that the last days will be just like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39). Do you think it’s a coincidence that one Jubilee/50 x 120 years = 6000 years? So, giving the people 120 years to repent during the time of Noah, represents God giving mankind a total of 120 Jubilees to repent (6000 years) thus the millennium will be the 7000th year - a Sabbath of sabbaths!

Does this not suggest that this Sabbath-Seven-Principle will be still applicable in these last days as we approach the final phase of the heavenly Day of Atonement?

10. Why keep the weekly Sabbath but not the others?

The weekly Sabbath was commanded (in the sense of *instructed*) to be kept in the Old Testament; it is not commanded *per se* in the New Testament, meaning there is no “Thou shalt keep the Sabbath day holy” command. However, the example of Jesus and the apostles testifies to its continued importance and validity. In the New Testament the debates over the Sabbath question were never about “if” or “when” we should keep it, but “how” we should keep it. Everyone knew we were to still keep it. Likewise, the annual Sabbaths were commanded to be kept in the Old Testament; but again are not commanded *per se* in the New Testament, but the example of Jesus and the apostles testifies to their continued importance and validity.

This is the inheritance principle. As Christ inherited the authority of His Father, so the annual Sabbaths inherit the reality of the weekly Sabbath. There are some who deny the inheritance of the Son of God; others deny the inheritance of the annual Sabbaths. Both miss a great blessing.

As many seek to prove the Divinity and Authority of Christ as independent from His Father so many seek to prove and disprove the annual Sabbaths independent from the weekly Sabbath. When we hold the key of inheritance in the Sonship of Christ then we can unlock the blessed inheritance found in the annual Sabbaths from the weekly Sabbath. The seventh-day Sabbath is both commemorative and typical. Every seven days we worship the Creator for His great creative power, and the weekly Sabbath has its antitypes in the seventh week, the seventh month, the seventh year, the seventh land Sabbath, and the seventh millennium. So, too, the annual Sabbaths are both commemorative and typical. Though they also had sacrifices associated with them, when the sacrificial system ended at the cross, their relevance continued because they are both memorials and types.

The Feasts as Memorials

In time the feasts began to commemorate events in the experience of ancient Israel. So,

- **Passover** commemorated the last night in Egypt and deliverance from Pharaoh.
- **Unleavened Bread** commemorated the simple food they had as they left Egypt.
- **Pentecost** commemorated the descent of God and His Son on Mount Sinai as they arrived at Sinai 50 days after leaving Egypt.

The fall festivals are less obviously associated with a known event that year of the Exodus. Now that they were free from Egypt, was the first Day of Atonement for them conducted that fall? Were trumpets blown ten days prior? The wilderness Sanctuary would have to have been constructed first. Could that have been accomplished in time? Moses was in the mount 80 days and there is only about 130 days (give or take) between Pentecost and Atonement. Moses would certainly need to oversee the work. There is just no detailed timing of when it might have occurred that year. We must also consider the apostasy with the golden calf and the removal of the Sanctuary from Israel which impaired their forward advance. Did this have any effect on their worship of Jehovah? It most likely did. Does casting off these fall feasts as insignificant effect our worship today? It most likely does.

From that point on Tabernacles commemorated living in tents for 40 years in the wilderness. But that started as soon as they left Egypt, or at least when they reached Elim, their first extended encampment. Later it was tied to the fall wheat harvest, but that did not begin until they were settled in Canaan. And the spring wave sheaf also required an established barley harvest—something that did not occur during their time in the wilderness. The fall types just do not have convenient events to which commemorative events can be tied.

The Feasts as Types

The feasts were not only commemorative but also typical. Besides being memorials of past historical events, they were preludes to future fulfillments. The spring festivals presaged the death, burial, and resurrection, and inauguration of the coming Messiah as High Priest in the Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary (Hebrews 8:1,2). This first apartment of the Sanctuary contained the seven-branched Menorah, the Table of Showbread, and the Altar of Incense. You can follow the path of our High Priest through this apartment starting at the Menorah when you read Revelation 1:12,13. This Menorah is near the Table of Showbread (which represents the throne of God; cf. Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30) Revelation 4:1,5. This Table had two golden crown moldings representing the Father and His Son (Exodus 25:23-25; Revelation 22:1,3). And then onto the Altar of Incense in Revelation 8:3,4. The incense represents the merits of Christ being mingled with the prayers of His people as we become more and more like Him.

The fall feasts were in anticipation of Christ's final work in the Most Holy Place and His return to harvest the earth. In the Most Holy Place was the Ark of the

Covenant. You can see our High Priest as He entered that apartment to perform a work of judgment in Revelation 11:18,19.

Passover

When the Passover type met the antitype at the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, there was no further need for animal sacrifices. By His death He would cause “sacrifice and oblation to cease” from our appeasement-based mindset. Daniel 9:27. To continue the sacrifices, which God *never* required for forgiveness (Psalm 40:6), would despise the sacrifice of Christ. But a commemoration of His sacrifice remains in the ceremonies of the Lord’s Supper, baptism, and the ordinance of foot washing. The Communion Service also has ritual and ceremony, and if performed without regard to its true significance, can become meaningless and empty. Merely “eating” the *unleavened* bread, “drinking” the *unfermented* grape juice without “receiving His Word and doing His will” would also be an insult to Jehovah (John 6:47-56; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

The Passover also commemorates the covenant that God made with Abraham in Genesis 15. Israel came out of Egypt on the self-same day. This clearly reveals that although the national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever in the release from Egypt, the commemoration of the everlasting covenant with Abraham still remained. The same is true of the Seventh day Sabbath. In Deuteronomy 5:15 Israel was to remember the Sabbath as a release from their national slavery. This specific application ceased at the cross but the previous memorial of creation remained (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 8:11; Hebrews 4:1-11); for creation and redemption are both the creative works of God (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Unleavened Bread

The unleavened bread continued to be a symbol in the Lord’s Supper. This part of the Passover ceremonial service persisted in both a **commemorative and typical** way. It points back to the sinless life that Christ lived and it points forward to the victory over sin that He promises to give to those who walk after the Spirit, when they will sit down with him at the marriage supper of the Lamb and Christ fulfills His promise that He would not eat of the unleavened bread or drink of the fruit of the vine until He does so new in His Father’s kingdom when Passover would be “fulfilled” Luke 22:16,18; 26-29.

Pentecost

So too, we look forward still to the final outpouring of the Spirit at the time of the Latter Rain when the day of Pentecost will then be really “fully come.” It

was *after* the day of Pentecost that Peter said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when **the times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ” Acts 3:19,20. He was expecting a future time when the presence of the Lord would be manifested by the sending of Jesus as a great time of refreshing rain, the Latter Rain.

So far five events have been fulfilled exactly on one of the appointed times.

1. Christ died on Passover;
2. He rested in the tomb without seeing corruption as the true Bread from heaven on the first day of unleavened Bread;
3. He rose from the grave on the day of the Wave Sheaf; (not a feast but an appointed time)
4. He poured out the gift of His Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and
5. He entered into the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest “to make intercession for [us]” (Hebrews 7:25).

Trumpets & Atonement

Now we come to the fall feasts and their antitypical fulfillment. If the spring festivals were fulfilled right on time with the feast days, then we should expect the same for the fall feasts. Earlier we briefly mentioned that Christians worldwide during the mid-1800s were expecting the fulfillment of Trumpets and Atonement. They had followed and studied the accuracy of the seven trumpets recorded in the book of Revelation as they were fulfilled throughout history with the last of these trumpets sounding during a time of judgment and the opening of the Most Holy Place in heaven (Revelation 11:15-19). They had realized the connection between Daniel chapters 8 and 9 and how the time prophecy in chapter 9 is an explanation of the time prophecy of the 2300 evenings and mornings in chapter 8 which would not be fulfilled, or even understood until “the time of the end” (cf. Daniel 8:14,26,27; 9:21-24; 12:4,9).

They rejected the modern teaching that the mention of “evenings and mornings” referred to the morning and evening sacrifices. The term “evenings and mornings” always refers to a 24-hour *day* because, as Genesis chapter 1 tells us, a biblical day begins at the evening. Flipping the phrase around to “mornings and evenings” would reflect the biblical concept of the morning and evening sacrifices. Those who teach that the 2300 days (or evenings and mornings) refer to the two daily sacrifices claim the cleansing of the sanctuary came at the time when the Maccabees recaptured the temple and cleansed it from all the pagan idols set up by Antiochus Epiphanes and his army in 165 BC.

This desecration of the temple was known as “the abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:1). Although we can draw some historical parallels to this event, since the 2300 evenings and mornings were not to end until “the time of the end”, they could not have been fulfilled in 165 BC. Even Jesus spoke of it as being in the future from His day (Mark 13:14), near 200 years later.

Seeing a clear connection to the cleansing of the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14 with the cleansing of the sanctuary which took place upon the Day of Atonement outlined in Leviticus chapter 16, these 19th century believers gave a “midnight cry” saying, “Behold the bridegroom [Jesus] cometh; go out to meet him” (Matthew 25:6).

Now knowing that the 70 week prophecy in Daniel 9 is explaining the 2300 evenings and mornings of chapter 8, they recognized this time period beginning at the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC by king Artaxerxes (Daniel 9:25; Ezra 7:11-26). This calculation thus brought them to the year AD 1844. But believing that Jesus was to return and cleanse the earth by fire, they misunderstood the meaning of “the sanctuary” thinking that it applied to the earth.

The year 1844 marked the 37th Jubilee from the ascension of Christ into heaven 40 days after His resurrection in AD 31. The convergence of exactly 49-year Jubilee intervals between the ascension of Christ to **begin** His Holy Place ministry on Pentecost and when He **began** his work in the Most Holy Place exactly 37 Jubilees later ($37 \times 49 = 1813 + 31 \text{ AD} = 1844$) is a powerful confirmation that at least the year which terminates the 2300 year prophecy of Daniel 8 is certain and sure. Some are looking for a 3rd temple in Jerusalem to fulfill this prophecy, however this would actually be the 4th temple. The truth is, God’s true sanctuary is His people: “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ...?” 1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:17.

Should not the final judgment and cleansing of the heavenly and earthly sanctuaries (our body temples) begin on an annual Day of Atonement? It would surely be consistent with the pattern established by the Spring festivals. But is the Day of Atonement to be fulfilled in a single day? Passover and Christ’s death coincided on a single day; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Peter’s sermon occurred on *the* day of Pentecost. Why shouldn’t the antitype fulfillments at the time of His second advent not also be fulfilled “in real time” just like those at His first advent?

But were the spring feasts *completely* fulfilled in AD 31? Was the day of Pentecost as described in Acts 2 the early or latter rain? There are two rains; that is certain: Deuteronomy 11:14; Joel 2:23; Zechariah 10:1; James 5:7. This latter rain is especially connected with the blotting out of sins (Day of Atonement language) and the coming final millennium and new earth (Tabernacles). “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ” Acts 3:19,20. This suggests that there will be a repeat fulfillment of the feasts at the very end of time. Even a final Passover event (mentioned by Jesus in Luke 22:16,18) may take place on an actual annual Passover when there will be another sentence of death pronounced upon those who refuse to worship anyone but “Him that made heaven and earth and fountains of water” (Revelation 14:7) and refuse to accept a mark in their hand or forehead (Revelation 13:15).

Perhaps 1844 marked the *beginning* of the heavenly Day of Atonement and some future Day of Atonement will mark the *end* of services in the Most Holy Place and the pronouncement of Revelation 22:11. Could the final Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles all transpire within 15 days? Something to consider. Keep an eye on the feast days!

Tabernacles

The Feast of Ingathering is the final and only festival that has not yet met antitype. This will be fulfilled at the second coming. It certainly was not made of no effect at the cross. Will it be the final appointed time to mark the events that transpire after the return of Christ in the clouds with His reaping sickle? It would seem so (cf. Zechariah 14:1-5,9,12-16; Revelation 20; 21:1-3). Jesus said, “Watch and be ready.” Watching for the new moons to know when the 7th month arrives could be part of that watching. It’s possible. I think I’ll pay attention just in case.

11. Did God Cause the Feasts to Cease?

Yes and no. When the northern tribes of Israel split away from Judah and Benjamin, Jeroboam changed the timing of the fall feasts from the seventh to the eighth month and established alternative centers of worship in Dan and Bethel festooned with a pair of golden calves.

*And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the **eighth month**, on the **fifteenth day of the month**, like unto the feast that [is] in Judah, and he offered upon the*

altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of **the eighth month**, [even] in the month **which he had devised of his own heart**; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel. 1 Kings 12:32

For northern Israel the “feasts of the LORD” most certainly came to an end as prophesied by the prophet Hosea.

“I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.” Hosea 2:11

In no uncertain terms, Jehovah would end ...

“her feast days” (הַגָּתִּים hag-gath, ἑορτὰς *heortas* in the LXX)
annual

“her new moons” (הַשָּׂבָטִים ἡδὲ-δᾶ-šhāh, νομηνίας noumenias LXX)
monthly

“her sabbaths” (שַׁבָּתֵי הַשָּׁבֹּטִים šhab-bat-t, σάββατα sabbata LXX) and
weekly

“all her solemn feasts” (מוֹעֲדֵי הַשָּׁבֹּטִים mo’ed, πανηγύρεις panegureis LXX) **daily and all the above**

Hosea lived in the northern kingdom of Israel and was instructed by God to enact a prophecy to the wayward tribes.

*So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. And the LORD said unto him, “Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will **cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.**” Hosea 1:3,4.*

In 722 BC the northern tribes were taken into captivity by Assyria, never to return. 130 years later Babylon hauled off the southern kingdom of Judah for 70 years of captivity. But Judah returned under Ezra and Nehemiah and restored the feasts, especially the feast of Tabernacles.

*And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made **booths**, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. Nehemiah 8:17*

Even the Hebrews, the Jews, the children of Israel, didn’t keep the feasts for many centuries. And then they were restored. Even as the old paths are being restored today (Isaiah 58:12-14).

12. How many Laws are There?

One of the first indications that there are a number of laws is what the Lord said concerning Abraham, over 400 years before the law (the Torah) was spoken at Mt. Sinai. "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my **laws** [Torah]." Genesis 26:5. Along with His laws there were also commandments and statutes. Abraham kept the ten commandment principles in worshipping only the true God Creator of heaven and earth, respecting the life and property of others in his rescue of Lot and all his goods, faithful to Sarah till death did they part—even obeying her offer of Hagar, and not coveting the fertile cities of the plain.

But did Abraham keep the Sabbath? Some say no because there's no specific mention of it. However, in Exodus 16 God reintroduces Israel, who had just left Egypt, to His weekly Sabbath. Some observed it while others refused. As a result God says, "How long refuse ye to keep **my commandments** and **my laws**?" Verse 28. He said this because they refused to keep the Sabbath. But in referring to Abraham He said that Abraham *kept* His commandments and laws, therefore Abraham must have been keeping the Sabbath.

What statutes did Abraham keep? He paid tithe to Melchisedec and offered sacrifices to the Lord. He circumcised himself, his sons, and all the males in his household. He even washed the feet of visiting strangers and served them a meal of clean meat and unleavened bread.

Commandments, statutes, and laws. This is similar to another combination which appears frequently in the Pentateuch: commandments, statutes, and judgments.

*And he declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. And **the LORD commanded** me at that time to teach you **statutes and judgments**. Deuteronomy 4:13,14*

*Now these are the **commandments, the statutes, and the judgments**, which **the LORD your God commanded** to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it. Deuteronomy 6:1*

*Deut 7:11-12 Thou shalt therefore keep the **commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments**. Deuteronomy 7:11,12*

And besides the close association of these three, notice the commandments, statutes and judgments, all three are God's, they are His, they belong to Him.

*Ye shall diligently keep the **commandments of the LORD your God, and His***

testimonies, and His statutes, which He hath commanded thee. Deuteronomy 6:17

Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and **keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments,** alway. Deuteronomy 11:1

Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in **His ways,** and to keep **His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments.** Deuteronomy 26:17

In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in **His ways,** and to keep **His commandments and His statutes and His judgments** Deuteronomy 30:16

Ye shall do **My judgments,** and keep **Mine ordinances,** to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep **My statutes, and My judgments:** which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD. Leviticus 18:4,5

But these statutes, judgments and laws are also called the law of Moses because it was given to Moses to give to Israel:

*These are the **statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.*** Leviticus 26:46

*And this is the law which **Moses** set before the children of Israel: These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which **Moses** spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt.* Deuteronomy 4:44,45

The book of Nehemiah says plainly that the “book of the law”, “the law of Moses”, and the “the law of God” are one and the same:

*And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring **the book of the law of Moses,** which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month [feast of Trumpets] ... and the ears of all the people were attentive unto **the book of the law** ... So they read in **the book in the law of God** distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* Nehemiah 8:1-3,8

Moses was the channel, the agent through whom, by whom the law was given. The statutes and judgments are detailed examples, amplification, magnification of the general principles expressed in the Ten Commandments.

So also Christ came to magnify the law (Isaiah 42:21) and He too went up into the mount and taught the people the law in greater detail (Matthew 5).

The Father's law was spoken from Mount Sinai by the Son of God (Exodus 20:1); He is the Word of God (John 1:1-3,14; Revelation 19:13). Jesus said in John 12:49: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Paul says the "law was added because of transgressions" and "it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" Galatians 3:19. This mediator is non-other than Jesus; "for there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" 1 Timothy 2:5. The angels Paul refers to are the "ten thousands of saints" that God came with upon Mt. Sinai when "from his right hand went a fiery law for them" Deuteronomy 33:2. Also, take note that the word "added" in Galatians 3:19 can also be translated as "spoken"—"the law was *spoken* because of transgressions." It is the same Greek word used in Hebrews 12:19 translated as "spoken" which refers to the same event. It is also the same Greek word used in the Septuagint (LXX) of Deuteronomy 5:22 where it says, "These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added [or spoke] no more."

The commandments and statutes are closely associated.

*Thou shalt keep therefore **His statutes, and His commandments.***
Deuteronomy 4:40

*That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all **His statutes and His commandments,** which I command thee. Deuteronomy 6:2*

*Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do **His commandments and His statutes,** which I command thee this day.*
Deuteronomy 27:10 See also Deuteronomy 28:15; 30:9,10

The book of the law contained both the Ten Commandments and the statutes. When David turned the kingdom over to his son Solomon, he advised him to "keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in **His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses**" 1 Kings 2:3.

*And it shall be, when he [the king] sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall **write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:** And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to **keep all the words of this law and these statutes,** to do them.*
Deuteronomy 17:18,19

The copy of the law in the book contained “this law” and “these statutes.” Thus the ten commandment law was included in the book of the law for access and reference by the priests and the king. The original law was inside the ark. It was not placed on public display. No one would know what the Ten Commandments said if they remained inside the ark. A copy was included in the book of the law.

Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses ... And it came to pass, when the king [Josiah] had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes ... because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. 2 Chronicles 34:14,19,21

In 2 Chronicles 17:9 Jehoshaphat sent Levites with “the book of the law of the LORD” throughout the country to teach the people. This book was much more than simply the law of Moses. It included Exodus 20-23 which contains the Ten Commandments, the statutes, and judgments.

A Sign in the Hand and Forehead

*Therefore shall ye lay up these **my words in your heart and in your soul**, and bind them for a **sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes [forehead]**. Deuteronomy 11:18*

What words were these? A sign on your hand and in your forehead. In Revelation 7:1-3 “the seal of the living God” is placed in the forehead. In Isaiah 8:16 this seal is said to be God’s law. Hebrews 8:10 repeats the New Covenant promise of Jeremiah 33 where God promises to write His law in our hearts and minds. In Revelation 14:1 this seal appears as the “name” (meaning, “character”) of the Father, again in the forehead. God has said, “Hearken unto me, ye that know [intimately experience] **righteousness**, the people in whose **heart is my law** ...” Isaiah 51:7. Here we see that the law is a transcript of the Father’s own character of righteousness. In verse 6 He says “my righteousness shall not be abolished.” To abolish God’s law is to abolish God Himself. After Revelation 14:1 reveals the Father’s name (character) being written in our foreheads, verses 9-12 reveal something truly amazing:

*... If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive **his mark in his forehead, or in his hand**, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God ... Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep **the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus**.*

These verses clearly reveal that “the mark of the beast” has something to do with NOT keeping “the commandments of God” nor keeping “the faith of

Jesus.” The contrast is God’s character of love and freedom or Satan’s character of force and coercion. We cannot manifest God’s character without having the unfailing faith of Jesus in us.

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **BY the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (see also, Romans 3:31).***

David prayed: “Thy words have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” Psalm 119:11. These words of the law were read to the people by the priest every seven years on the feast of Tabernacles:

*And **Moses wrote this law**, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, **At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Deuteronomy 31:9-12***

In the days of the apostles portions of this law were read every Sabbath, “For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day” Acts 15:21. Jesus also read from “the law and the prophets” on Sabbath (Luke 4:16-21).

13. Were any laws abolished at the cross?

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians might give that impression.

*“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, **having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances**, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.” Ephesians 2:14,15*

It sounds like the law of commandments contained in ordinances was abolished in His flesh. Let’s look at some other translations of this verse:

NIV: “setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations”

New Living Translation: “ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations”

ESV: “abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances”

Holman: “made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations”

Aramaic: “canceled the hatred by his flesh and the law of commands in

his commandments”

God’s Word Translation: “brought an end to the commandments and demands found in Moses’ teachings”

Douay-Rheims: “making void the law of commandments contained in decrees”

Young’s Literal Translation: “the enmity in his flesh, the law of the commands in ordinances”

This law, whatever it was, caused enmity and separation (Isaiah 59:2). When man first sinned in Eden there was an immediate separation from God: Adam and Eve hid themselves in fear. But Christ promised to put enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Enmity is hostility, animosity, opposition, antagonism, ill will. This was the feeling between Jews and Gentiles; they too were separated by an enmity that was as a “middle wall of separation” between them.

Part of the hostility that existed between them was the result of certain commandments contained in ordinances. Whose ordinances? This word in the Greek is *dogma* and means decree or regulation. Dogmas can be religious or civil, God-ordained or man-made. Jesus referred to the Jewish laws saying, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” Matthew 15:9. The Jews added many, many additional rules and regulations to all of God’s laws, statutes and judgments, making them a burden and discriminating against the so-called filthy, unclean, uncircumcised Gentiles who reacted with feelings of prejudice, hostility and animosity.

The Jews called Gentiles uncircumcised dogs. David directed this epitaph to Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:26, 43. Uncircumcised males could not partake of Passover (Exodus 12:48) nor enter the sanctuary (Ezekiel 44:9). Joshua had the people circumcised before entering Canaan because no one had been circumcised during the wilderness wanderings (Joshua 5:7). Peter referred to this at the Jerusalem Council which was convened because “certain men which came down from Judaea [a certain sect of Pharisees] taught the brethren, ‘Except ye be circumcised after the manner of [the law of] Moses, ye cannot be saved’” Acts 15:1, 5, 9. They were recommending this to uncircumcised Gentile brethren. Then Peter “rose up” and defended the Gentiles, saying that God “put no difference between us and them.” No difference between the Jews and Gentiles? What was the difference? Circumcision.

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Peter asked in

verse 10. The fathers didn't bear the yoke of circumcision during their years in the wilderness.

So, James concluded that "we trouble not them" (to be circumcised), but only that they abstain from idols, fornication, and eating blood; which are all part of the law. Some say these were the only laws for Gentiles to observe, but keep in mind they are preliminary instructions for the time being and they would grow in knowledge and grace as they read and studied the law of Moses because it was read in the synagogues every Sabbath (verse 21). Yes, Jews and Gentiles reading from the same law every Sabbath (Numbers 15:16).

"The primitive Christians did keep the Sabbath of the Jews; ... therefore the Christians, for a long time together, did keep their conventions upon the Sabbath, in which some portions of the law were read ..." (The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor, Vol. IX, p. 416, R. Heber's Edition, Vol. XII, p. 416).

It was not only this enmity of circumcision that was abolished at the cross, but also the enmity between all men and God. "Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God" Romans 8:7. When Christ, the Lamb of God, died He abolished the enmity in His flesh, the final ultimate sacrifice; He ended the sacrificial system, the earthly temple services, and all rituals, rites and regulations related to the sacrifices, even circumcision—which was a blood sacrifice.

Nailed to the Cross

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. Colossians 2:13-17

Most of Christendom interprets the "handwriting of ordinances" as the law of God which was nailed to the Cross and thus, they believe, there is now no New Testament obligation to keep the Sabbath nor the rest of the Ten Commandments, no "continuing moral imperative" to keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord.

On the other hand, Sabbath-keeping Christians have traditionally held that there is a difference between the moral and ceremonial laws, and it was this other law, the "law of Moses" that was nailed to the cross. Thus it is the

“ceremonial Sabbaths” in the law of Moses and not the Seventh-day Sabbath of the Ten Commandments that ended with Christ’s death because, they believe, it is not the law of God but the law of Moses that is against us.

Against Us

What exactly is against us? Some contend it is the “book of the law.” They assume it is only the law of Moses that is against us because of the following text of scripture:

*... Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, “**Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.**” Deuteronomy 31:25,26*

This is one of the most famous passages used to say the law of Moses was against the people and then connect it with Colossians 2:14. But reading the context we find that this book of the law is not against the people but is simply a “witness” against them. Notice verse 28:

*“Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call **heaven and earth to record against them.**” Deuteronomy 31:28*

The book of the law is no more against the people than “heaven and earth” are. If I go shopping with you but warn you not to steal anything before we go, yet you do anyway (and right while I’m watching you!), does this mean I was against you? No, I am simply a witness to your breaking the law and my witness will stand as evidence in court in the case against you. Notice this same idea in Deuteronomy 4:25,26:

*“When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: **I call heaven and earth to witness against you** this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.” (See also, Deuteronomy 30:19).*

Heaven is not against us, but does watch our decisions. So, if their interpretation were correct, and the law of Moses has been abolished at the cross because it is “a witness against thee”, then heaven and earth must have also been abolished for the same reason. Obviously such an interpretation is flawed.

Handwriting of Ordinances

A third understanding of this passage is that “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances” is simply restating the immediately preceding phrase “having forgiven all your trespasses” in verse 13 which establishes the important context: “you, being dead in your **sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having **forgiven you all trespasses**”, your iniquity, your sins. How did Christ demonstrate His everlasting forgiveness for our sins? By blotting them out, “bearing them in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). The “handwriting of ordinances” is thus the debt of sin and the enmity that results from the carnal mind that were nailed to the cross in Jesus.

Besides the KJV’s “handwriting of ordinances”, other translations relate “the charge of our legal indebtedness” NIV, “the record of debt” ESV, “the certificate of debt” NASB, “the bill of our debts” Aramaic Bible in Plain English. These are all expressing the Greek *cheirographon tois dogmasin* phrase found here in Colossians 2:14.

“The context begins with 2:12, where Paul speaks of being ‘buried with Him in baptism’ The result of that ‘burial baptism’ is resurrection to a new life and cleansing from sin. Paul refers to that cleansing with two participle phrases that are parallel, the second repeating the thought of the first. The first of those two phrases is ‘having forgiven us all our trespasses’ (verse 13, RSV). The parallel and repetitive phrase is ‘having canceled the bond [*cheirographon tois dogmasin*] which stood against us’ (verse 14, RSV). Both phrases mean essentially the same thing, the second simply repeating in different terms what it meant for him to forgive our sins. Thus forgiveness of our sins has resulted in the canceling of the bond that was against us.” (William E. Richardson, Andrews University, “Sabbath nailed to the cross?” *Ministry* magazine, May, 1997)

Dogmasin, from which we get the word “dogma”, law, decree, ordinance, statute, is easy to understand. Cities have ordinances, local laws regulating parking, littering, loitering, soliciting, etc. And associated with each ordinance is a penalty for its infraction. *Cheirographon* in this epistle is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament. It is literally translated “handwriting” as the KJV provides. But handwriting of what? In other Greek literature this word is found in legal, courtroom settings, where the document listing the charges against the accused is called the *cheirographon* which is displayed by the plaintiff in the middle (*tou mesou*) of the courtroom. Paul also uses this second legal term when he says that Christ took the *cheirographon* “out of the way” *tou mesou*, out of the middle, removing the middle wall of separation.

Satan, the Accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:9,10), points to the certificate of our debt, but our Advocate with the Father simply says, “The Lord rebuke you!” Zechariah 3:2. Christ simply forgives the debt and silences the accusation. “Take away the filthy garments from him” (verse 4^a). He takes it out of the way. “I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with change of raiment” (verse 4^b).

This is why the very next verse says that Christ “spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” Colossians 2:15. Christ *spoiled* them by *robbing* the “principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12) of their accusations. The evidence is removed from the case, and our accuser, Satan, stands empty-handed with nothing to condemn us. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!” Romans 8:1.

Blotting Out

Jesus blotted out our sins by his death on the Cross where He earned the right to “forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). This is when the Son of God had “mercy upon me ... according to [his] loving kindness” and did “**blot out** my transgressions” to “**blot out** all mine iniquities” Psalm 51:1,9. This is when he “**blotted out**, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions” Isaiah 44:22. This is the first blotting out (or, daily atonement) of our sins (Exodus 29:36; Romans 5:11). But there is a final blotting out (represented by the yearly Atonement) when our “sins may be **blotted out**, when the times of refreshing *shall come* from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ” Acts 3:19,20. This is a time that is still yet to come in the future during the final atonement in the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary going on now. This aspect of the Day of Atonement is still a shadow of good things to come. Cleansing our record isn’t simply removing pages from the record book and replacing them with new pages. He cleanses *US* from the act of sinning by His indwelling Spirit causing us to “walk in newness of life” Romans 6:4. Thus we will have a clean bill (record) of health.

So, Christ did not take the *dogmasin*, the dogma, the ordinance, the law, out of the way; He removed the *cheirographon*, the **record** of the charges out of the way, by taking the **debt** upon Himself. He was “made to be sin, who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He takes the record of our sins with all the details—places, dates and times, testimony of witnesses—and blots it out, wiping out our debt, and takes it out of the way. How? By taking our debt, our

sins, upon himself. No law was nailed to a tree, but Jesus was. The only law that ended at the cross was the law of sacrifices. Paul expressed this in a letter to Philemon, when he said, "I Paul have written with mine own hand, I will repay [it]" Philemon 18,19. Philemon was a member of the Colossae church. Paul would not blot out the handwriting that promised payment, but he would blot out the debt by paying it.

Ended at the Cross

The sacrifices and all the rites, regulations, and ceremonies associated with them, as we have already noted, indeed ended at the cross. No more earthly priesthood; no more temple services; no more temple! But did *all* the laws of Moses end at the cross? No. We continue to recognize and appeal to the Levitical laws of health, tithing, sunset-to-sunset Sabbath observance, etc. Furthermore, to accept that it was the statutes, judgments, and commandments which were given by Christ Himself to Moses which were nailed to the cross, means that they are what is "against us" and "contrary to us" and that the Son of God provided His people with a curse and not a blessing.

The context of Colossians 2 is in regards to the imposing of *man-made* rules and regulations. Six times the words *man* or *men* appear in this chapter.

2:4 "And this I say, lest any **man** should beguile you"

2:8 "Beware lest any **man** spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of **men**"

2:16 "Let no **man** therefore judge you"

2:18 "Let no **man** beguile you"

2:20-22 "why...are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of **men**?"

The feasts of the Lord are not the commandments and doctrines of men. The dietary laws, the statutes on tithing, are not the commandments of men. Then why does Paul list meat and drink, festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths as the subject of condemnation? Let's look at Paul's list.

Meat and Drink

First, the Greek words translated "food and drink" are *brosis* and *posis*. It's tempting to think that they have something to do with Mosaic food and drink offerings that ended with Christ's death. But these Greek words are never used with reference to meal and drink offerings in the Septuagint or the New Testament. Actually, *thusia* is the technical word for meat sacrifice, and *spendo* was the term meaning "to offer a libation or drink offering." Paul

would have used these if his intention was to indicate the meat and drink offerings.

Also, **these two words have action endings**, and should be translated as simply **“eating and drinking.”** Accordingly, they refer not to Mosaic rituals, but to the **prohibitions being advocated by some false teachers** to abstain from various worldly pleasures. They were advocating “self-abasement” to the Colossian believers, saying, **“Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”** (Verses 18, 20, 21, and 23.) Depriving one’s self of food and water may appear devotional, but really has no spiritual value. Let no one condemn you for your social fellowship on festivals, new moons, or the Sabbath.

Festivals, New Moons, Sabbaths

The phrase “festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths” (*heortes, noumenias, sabbaton*) in verse 16 is found **nowhere else in the New Testament**, but occurs **five times in the Septuagint** (2 Chronicles 2:4; 31:3; Nehemiah 10:33; Ezekiel 45:17; Hosea 2:11). Each time the reference is to the Sabbaths (weekly), new moons (monthly), and appointed feasts (yearly). Sometimes the order is reversed, but in each case, “new moon” is in the middle, thus making a **logical sequence** from weekly to yearly or yearly to weekly. The implication is that this does include the weekly Sabbath.

To plead that these are ceremonial Sabbaths (part of the annual feasts) makes Paul needlessly repeating himself: “‘Let no one pass judgment on you in regard to a feast day/ceremonial sabbath, or in regard to a new moon, or in regard to a ceremonial sabbath,’ a statement **neither logical nor likely.**” (William E. Richardson, *Ministry* magazine, May, 1997).

Some argue that the plural form of the word “sabbath” here (*sabbaton*) indicates something other than the weekly Sabbath. But the plural form is used many times for the weekly Sabbath, and only in a secondary sense meaning seven days, a week.

For example, the plural nature of *sabbaton* can be seen in Mark 15:42 “it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath [*sabbaton*]” i.e., the day before every Sabbath. Luke 4:16 “as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day [*sabbaton*]” i.e., on every Sabbath. These plurals indicate the recurring nature of the weekly Sabbath.

But there is an interesting use of the plural in Matthew 28:1 “After the sabbath [*sabbaton*] as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week [*sabbaton*]” i.e., the first day after every Sabbath. The second occurrence demonstrates the

typical “every Sabbath” connotation, but the first sabbaton should pertain to that particular Sabbath yet it, too, is plural. Why? Because there were two Sabbaths that particular Sabbath that occurred on the same day: the weekly seventh-day Sabbath and the first day of Unleavened bread, one of the seven annual Sabbaths associated with the feasts. John 19:31 refers to that Sabbath as a “high day.”

Acts 13:14 says, “when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day [*sabbaton*], and sat down.” Why plural here? This is describing one particular Sabbath when the apostles visited the synagogue in Antioch and were invited to speak. Either this was the first of several Sabbaths that they attended the synagogue there or perhaps this was another high Sabbath conjunction of a weekly and annual Sabbath.

So, while it is clear that the weekly seventh-day Sabbath is included in Paul’s list of things for which we should not let any man condemn us, it is also true that these were not what was nailed to the cross or blotted out or abolished or taken out of the way.

Let No Man Judge You

Who was doing the judging anyway? Jews or Gentiles? Those inside the church or outside? Paul’s great concern in this letter is about false, Christ-less teachings. The single repeated theme that dominates his message is the impoverished view of Jesus that prevailed in “the Colossian heresy.” The strongest statements regarding the deity of Christ in the entire New Testament are found here.

The dear Son of God (1:13) is the image of the invisible God (15) who created all things in heaven and earth (16). He is the firstborn of every creature (15) because He is before all things and by Him all things consist (17). He is the head of the body, the church, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, and has preeminence over all things (18) because it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell (19). For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9) because He is the head of all principality and power (10) and sits on the right hand of God (3:1).

There were indeed Judaizers who “were of the circumcision” and sought to impose their customs on the Gentiles. They did the same to Jesus, accusing Him of breaking *their* Sabbath ordinances and ignoring *their* ceremonial handwashing requirements. But there were also others who used “enticing

words of man's wisdom" 1 Corinthians 2:4; Colossians 2:4; "philosophy and vain deceit," promoting "the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:8). Paul then gave some examples of these enticing, philosophical words, traditions, and rudiments in verses 21-23. "Touch not; taste not; handle not," "will worship", "neglecting of the body" and not "satisfying the flesh."

This describes very well the asceticism that characterized Gnosticism, the teaching that exalted human wisdom over the inherently evil human body. Paul opposed this vain philosophy by pointing to the Father and Christ, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (verse 3), not the mind of man, for "we have the mind of Christ" 1Corinthians 2:16. But didn't these types and shadows and ceremonies end at the cross?

For the Jews who rejected the Son of God, the types and ceremonies had indeed become useless traditions. But for those who believe on His name and see in Him the fulfillment and substance of all these shadows, what was once glorious becomes even more glorious! Fulfillment does not mean abolition, but to *fill full* with meaning and significance. That's why Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:19), to give it richer meaning, to magnify the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21).

The earthly priesthood and ceremonial sacrifices will ultimately come to an end when the "sacrifice and oblation" mindset ceases from our appeasement-based pagan theology (Daniel 9:27). God has never required a bloody sacrifice of an animal nor human in order to forgive us. The rites and ceremonies that pertained to all the sacrificial offerings were given as a means for us to understand our own depraved thinking. By accommodating our own justice system, God gave up His Son in order for us to finally believe He *freely* forgives. Christ did not die because God was holding a grudge or that He needed some form of retribution. Christ demonstrated God's unconditional love and forgiveness by dying on the cross "while we were yet sinners" Romans 5:8. The death of the Son of God brought an end to the sacrificial system but not to the work of Christ in pouring out His Pentecostal Spirit, in cleansing our temples, and dwelling in us.

The killing of Passover lambs ceased with the crucifixion of Christ, **virtually** the last Passover, for the Lamb of God yet appears before the Father's throne "as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6) offering, not the blood of lambs or goats, but His own blood (perfect life) for us. The typical system has ceased. Now the Real Lamb, who was dead but is now alive forevermore,

is our Passover; “therefore, let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” 1 Corinthians 5:7,8. We no longer keep the Passover of the Jews, but follow the example of Jesus in partaking of the Lord’s Supper symbols and practices at the appointed time of this Spring holy convocation – the 14th day of the first biblical month.

In place of the typical Passover lamb, we now have the antitypical Lamb. Yet the significance of the Passover deliverance from Egypt lives on in the commemoration of Christ’s death (at the same time) in our deliverance from sin by His death on the cross as the Lamb of God. It also lives on in the commemoration of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15.

14. Are feasts shadows that end with the antitype?

Shadow and Body

The solution to Colossians 2:16 is not in attempting to defend a plural interpretation of *sabbaton* in order to exclude the weekly seventh-day Sabbath from Paul’s list. The problem is in a wrong assumption about the body of Christ. Not only is the word “days” supplied in the KJV but also the word “is”. Rather than “the body *is* of Christ” the actual Greek wording is simply, and much more clearly, “the body of Christ.”

Colossians 2:16 is commonly read as “holy days, new moons, and the Sabbaths which are shadows of things to come **but** the substance is Christ.” Reading just this portion of the passage makes it appear that the Greek conjunction “*de*” is contrasting the shadows with the substance. However, the usage of Greek *de* is predominately rendered “moreover” which indicates expansion, amplification, magnification.

Let no man therefore judge you

(how?)

in eating and drinking, in respect (or, when partaking) of an Holyday, or the New Moon, or the Sabbaths:

(what kind?)

which are a shadow of things to come;

moreover the body of Christ.

Let’s examine these two dependent clauses.

1. *The adverbial clause.* How are they not to be judged? In regards to holy days, new moon days, and “sabbaths” all of which (except for the Day of Atonement) were known for their “eating and drinking.”

These were commemorative festivals of past events and typical celebrations of future fulfillments.

2. *The adjective clause.* What kind of days were these? They **are** a shadow of things to come. Rather than having ended their significance, they still **are** a foretaste of even better things to come which proves the shadow is not in contrast with reality.

When we worship from the 7th day Sabbath all the way to the Last Great Day, it shows the world Whom we serve. Every moment we take to focus on Christ the solid Rock and His movements through the sanctuary is a moment that the gates of hell cannot prevail against us.

“Through faith [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of Blood” Hebrews 11:28. He and all the children of Israel that night did what they did by faith. They didn’t put the blood on the door posts because they were “under the law” but because they had faith in the God of Israel who had miraculously sheltered them from the plagues of Egypt. It was the Egyptians who did not have faith in the instructions of Jehovah that were under His law and experienced its deadly consequence.

The ascetic Gnostics condemned the Christians for enjoying fellowship meals, breaking bread, eating and drinking together, assembling weekly, monthly, and annually because they believed in isolation, solitude, and deprivation.

Paul said, Let no one condemn you for eating and drinking. Let no one condemn you for enjoying feasts and Sabbaths together. These things *are* a shadow connecting us to the body of Christ now and the future reality when the saints will meet each month at the tree of life for the fruit and worship of God and the Lamb (Revelation 22:2).

Paul did not say, nearly 30 years after the cross, that they *were* a shadow, but they *are still* a shadow of things to come. The Greek is present tense. The shadow is not opposed to the reality but dependent on the source. They all speak of Him who is the fullness of all things, who is the “head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18; 2:10,19). Every item in the sanctuary is a symbol of the Son of God. Every feast is a reminder of what He has done, is doing, and will accomplish soon!

The Old and the New Testament

One of the underlying problems concerning an understanding of the law stems from an understanding of how the Old and New Testament relate to each other. Many Christians contrast the Old and the New Testament as law versus

grace or even works versus faith. In this framework Christ is placed in opposition to Moses as to suggest that Christ replaces Moses. Yet the Bible clearly states that Christ came to fulfill the law and magnify it. Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 42:21.

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” John 5:46,47

Jesus is saying that He is the expression of what Moses wrote. To Moses was given the *root* to which Christ would come and magnify and bear the *fruit* in its fullness. So Christ is not in contrast to Moses but rather the complete expression of all that is written in the law and the prophets. This change in understanding can be reflected in the words of John:

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John 1:17

The relation between Moses and Christ is expressed by the translators’ supplied word *but*. This suggests a contrast in opposition. Yet the contrast is truly in magnification of what Moses had written. We could use the word *and* just as easily to create a multiplication of thought:

“For the law was given by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

With a correct understanding of how the law relates to the gospel, many supposed difficulties are removed. For more info concerning this topic download the free book *Faith Journey* at fatheroflove.info.

Thy Way is in the Sanctuary

One simple way to know what was retained and what ceased at the cross is to look at the sanctuary

*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. **But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not;** for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” Revelation 11:1,2*

God’s people are to measure the temple and the altar and them that worship there. But the court was to be left out. This means the sacrifices and offerings and washings of the court are left out but the things contained in the temple of the Holy and Most Holy Place were kept. Where was the law of Moses kept? It was not in the court but in the Most Holy Place. Knowing that the Most Holy Place ministry has application especially to 1844 and onwards, and that the

Law of Moses was residing in the Most Holy Place, does this not suggest that the statutes and Judgments would also be written on the heart during the ministry of the Most Holy Place? For a more detailed study of the year 1844 see lessons 16 and 16^a of *Truth for These Times* at fatheroflove.info.

15. Should Christians keep the feasts today?

Many Christians already do keep feasts. They keep Christmas, Easter, Saint Valentine's Day, All Hallows' Eve a.k.a. Halloween followed by All Saints Day. Some observe 40 days of Lent, the Ascension, Assumption, and Advent. Then there are the Twelve Days of Christmas, the Adoration of the Magi, Saint Patrick's Day, Mary Mother of God day a.k.a. New Year's Day, Immaculate Conception Day, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Corpus Christi. But these are not mentioned at all in the Bible and come from questionable origins. Daniel spoke of a religious-political power that would rise and "think to change [God's] appointed times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). Or as the *New Living Translation* says:

He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.

And this is just what happened:

"Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the seventh day of the week, Saturday. **Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the church outside the Bible.**" (*Catholic Virginian*, Oct. 3, 1947).

"The festival of Sunday, like all other [non-biblical] festivals, was always only a human ordinance." (Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, p. 186).

"... The Catholic Church abolished not only the Sabbath, but all the other [so-called] Jewish Festivals." (Bishop T. Enright, *Letter*, April 26, 1902).

Are the feasts which *are* mentioned in the Bible part of the statutes, precepts and requirements or included in the shadowy types? It appears they were ordinances included among the statutes.

*So you shall observe the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance."*
Exodus 12:17

The perpetuity of keeping this everlasting ordinance “throughout your generations” applies to both the seventh-day Sabbath and the annual feasts of the Lord. Both are enjoined with the same perpetual throughout-your-generations language

Sabbaths of the Lord

*“Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you **throughout your generations** ... Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD ... keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath **throughout their generations**, for a **perpetual covenant**.” Ex 31:13, 15, 16.*

God’s Sabbaths are to be a sign on the hand and on the forehead.

*“And it shall serve as **a sign to you on your hand**, and as a reminder **on your forehead**, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. Therefore, you shall **keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year**.” Exodus 13:9,10.*

This ordinance is the feast of Unleavened Bread. The three verses immediately before these two confirm this:

*“Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a **feast to the LORD**. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. Exodus 13:6-8*

Those who worship the beast and his image will receive a mark in their forehead or in their hand (Revelation 14:9); those who worship the Father and His Image will be sealed with a sign on their forehead and on their hand—they will have the Father’s name (character) in their forehead (Revelation 14:1); and the name of Jesus, His “new name” written on them (Revelation 3:12); perhaps on their hand, even as He has engraved us on the palms of His own hands (Isaiah 49:16).

Feasts of the Lord

Like the weekly Sabbath, the feasts with their annual Sabbaths were commanded to be kept “throughout your generations” and were called ordinances and statutes.

Ex 12:14 **Passover:** “a feast to the LORD throughout your

generations...an ordinance for ever.”

Ex 12:17 **Feast of Unleavened Bread:** “in your generations by an ordinance for ever.”

Lev 23:14 and “a **statute** for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings [or, wherever you live].”

Lev 23:21 **Pentecost:** “a **statute** for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.”

Lev 23:31 **Day of Atonement:** “a **statute** for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

Though we understand that “forever” can mean “only as long as something lasts” (cf. 1 Samuel 1:22, 28), we must be careful in how we selectively apply this to those things which belong to God. The feasts of the LORD, the Sabbaths of the LORD, the LORD ’s Passover are described with the same enduring language as His Sabbaths, His statutes, and His judgments (Leviticus 23:2-5 37,38; Ezekiel 20:11-13, 18-20).

Sure enough, the unleavened bread has continued to be taken in our observance of the Lord’s Supper even today. At least we have perpetuated the symbol as Christ instructed.

Jesus kept them

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. John 5:1.

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. John 7:10.

Paul kept them

“Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” 1 Corinthians 5:7,8.

In Acts 18 Paul stayed for a year and a half in Corinth where he “reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath” persuading the Jews and the Greeks that Jesus was the Christ. Sabbath-keepers use this passage as important evidence that Paul continued to worship on the seventh-day years after Christ died on the cross thus demonstrating the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments and the observance of the Sabbath by the apostles in the New Testament. This same chapter is also cited as evidence that Paul did not at times keep the annual feasts, since he remained in Corinth for more than an entire year with no mention of him observing any of the appointed festivals, and the fact that he was not in Jerusalem where all the feasts were kept by the Jews.

But Paul did not always keep the feasts in Jerusalem. Upon leaving Corinth he said, "I must by all means keep this feast that comes in Jerusalem" Acts 18:21. Yet since he learned of a plot by the Jews for his assassination (Acts 20:3,16) he altered his course and went through Macedonia, and in Philippi he kept the Passover and "the days of unleavened bread" with his *Gentile* converts (Acts 20:6). From there he "hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (verse 16). Not only did Paul *want* to be in Jerusalem for Passover that he might meet with his Jewish countrymen, but his enemies *wanted* him to be there so that they might take his life. Thus he changed his route and planned instead to be at Pentecost. But he still kept Passover even though he wasn't in Jerusalem. This in fact complies with the word of Scripture:

*And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified **from [beyond] the border of Israel** ... or from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great **among the Gentiles**; and **in every place** incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 1:5,11.*

*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, **nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship the Father ... But the hour cometh, **and now is**, when **the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:21,23,24.*

Paul diverted his course through Macedonia and tarried at Philippi for Passover. The Philippians were Paul's *Gentile converts*. If he had been teaching that the feasts were now abolished he had no reason to keep Passover with *Gentile* converts; they were not his Jewish countrymen and they were already Christians. Why would he observe Passover if it was among the rites that he was telling Jews they were now released from keeping? He spent all eight days of the feast with them. Why not just a couple days and press on? It certainly appears that he was honoring the full extent of the proscribed feast including the final Sabbath on the eighth day.

The early Christians kept them

During the 2nd through 4th centuries AD there arose a dispute on when to celebrate Passover. In AD 195 Polycrates reveals he and others before him, including the apostles John and Phillip, continued to keep Passover on the 14th day of the first Hebrew month long after Jesus died and ascended back to heaven:

“Therefore we keep the day undeviatingly, neither adding nor taking away, for in Asia [Minor] great luminaries sleep, and they will rise on the day of the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and seek out all the saints. Such were **Phillip**... and two of his daughters... There is also **John** who lay on the Lord’s breast... And there is also Polycarp at Smyrna, both bishop and martyr, and Thraseas, both bishop and martyr, from Eumeneae...[Also] Sagaris,... Papius,...and Melito...**all of these kept the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel**, never swerving, but **following according to the rule of the faith**. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, live according to the tradition of my kinsmen, and some of them have I followed. For seven of my family were bishops and I am the eighth, and **my kinsmen ever kept the day when the people put away the leaven**. Therefore, brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and conversed with brethren from every country, and have studied all holy Scripture am not afraid of threats, for they have said, who were greater than I, ‘It is better to obey God rather than men.’” (Eusebius, *Church History*, Book V, Chapter 24; *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series Two, Volume 1).

Although he does mention “the tradition of my kinsmen”, notice he does not say that tradition was the reason for keeping the 14th but that they “kept the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel.”

“Everywhere, especially in the East of the Roman Empire, there would be Jewish Christians whose outward way of life would not be markedly different from that of the Jews ... **They still observed the feast of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles ... to keep the weekly Sabbath and the Mosaic regulations concerning food**. According to some scholars, they must have been so strong that right up to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 they were the dominant element in the Christian movement.” (W.D. Davies, *Paul and Jewish Christianity*, p. 72).

The 1st Christian denomination - The Waldenses kept them

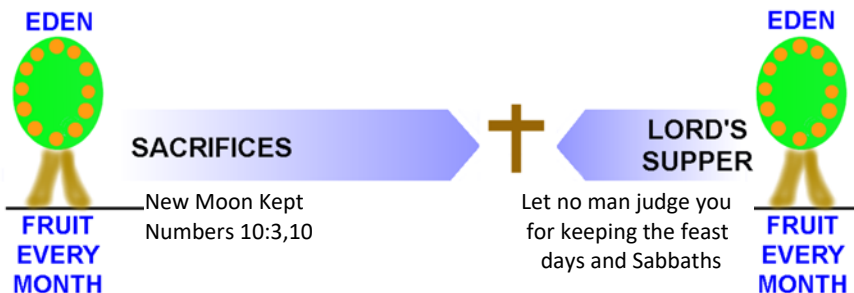
“Catholics had also spent a very long time trying to pretend that these people [Sabbath keepers] had no continuous history and that they were local aberrations in time and space of a peculiar and heretical Judaizing mind bent.... Jews and Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants have all tried to pretend that there was no continuous or even long extant Sabbatarian church. [But the fact that the Waldenses were] A non-Trinitarian **Sabbath-keeping** church keeping the **festivals** and the food laws and the other **non-sacrificial laws** of the Old Testament and the teachings of the Christ and the New Testament since the time of the apostles and the NT Church is an

embarrassment [to their false claims].” (Editor’s Forward, *The Sabbatarians in Transylvania*, by Samuel Kohn, 1998 p. 3)

16. Will we keep feasts in heaven or the new earth?

Every month we will eat of the fruit of the tree of life when from one new moon to another we will all come to worship before our Creator:

*“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me,” saith the LORD, “so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that **from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another**, shall all flesh come to worship before me,” saith the LORD.” Isaiah 66:22,23*



The tree of life in the new earth will yield “her fruit every month” and would have done so in Eden before the fall. The new moons, like the weekly Sabbath were always kept and will continue to be kept.

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of **the throne of God and of the Lamb**. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there **the tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit **every month [new moon]**: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:1,2*

After describing the destruction of the wicked who “come up against Jerusalem” corresponding to the gathering of Gog and Magog to encompass the Holy City in Revelation 20. Zechariah 14:16 says:

*And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and **to keep the feast of tabernacles**.*

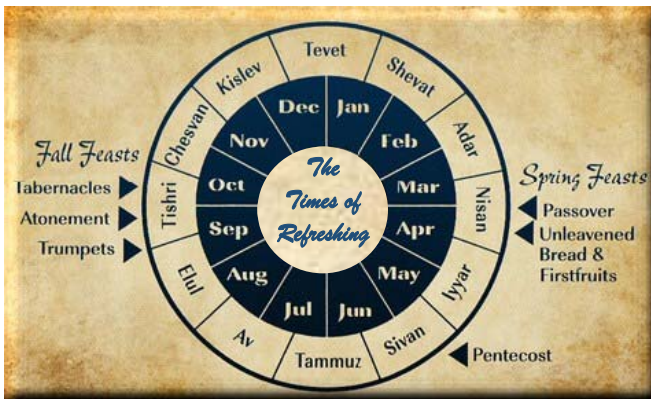
Finally, the promise of Jesus Himself to His disciples as, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, **until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God**. For I say

unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.” Luke 22:14-18.

Thus, besides the weekly Sabbath, at least two other festivals, the first and the last of the seven annual holy convocations, Passover and Tabernacles, are described in the context of the new earth.

Everyone all over the world attend various gatherings; from birthday parties, funerals, graduations, weddings and anniversaries. Even religious groups across the earth attend gatherings such as weekly church services, baptisms, communions, and yearly Christmas and Easter services etc. The list goes on and on.

But have you ever considered that God has outlined specific gatherings in His word? In the Old Testament these sacred gatherings were called *moédim*, which simply means “The Appointed Times”, “Festivals”, or, “Feasts” (Leviticus 23). In the New Testament these same gatherings are called “The Times of Refreshing” (Acts 3:19).



Over the course of history various questions have arisen concerning these gatherings. During the days of Jesus and His Apostles the question was “How” do we rightfully observe them? During the early centuries AD the question was “When” do we observe these? However, in these modern days the question is “If” we should observe them. And since we are questioning “if”, then we need to also question “how” and “when.” But none of the answers to these questions will matter if we do not know “who” we are worshipping or “why.”

*“Let us consider how to motivate one another to love and good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the custom of some is, but encouraging one another even more as you see the Day approaching.”*

~ Hebrews 10:24,25 ~