

Pagan Holidays—or God's Holy Days—Which?

by **Herbert W. Armstrong 1976**

Does it make any difference which days we observe—or whether we keep them? Does the Bible establish whether we are to keep certain days holy to God? Were these days given to ancient Israel only? Are they binding today only on the Jewish people, while Christians are commanded to keep holidays such as Christmas?

CHAPTER ONE Which Days Should We Keep?

In the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel is an amazing prophecy picturing for twenty-five hundred years into future, from the day it was written, the course of the Gentile kingdoms. Starting with the ancient Chaldean Empire of Nebuchadnezzar, this prophecy foretells the successive world rule of the Persian Empire, Alexander's Greco-Macedonian kingdom with its four divisions, and finally, of the mighty Roman Empire. Out of the original Roman Empire, symbolized by "horns" growing out of the head of a "beast," are pictured the ten resurrections of the Roman Empire that have continued since its fall to the present, and are scheduled to continue until the coming of Christ.

Among these ten kingdoms which have ruled in the Western world since the fall of Rome to the present, appeared another "little horn," whose "look was more stout than fellows." In other words, another government, actually smaller, yet dominating over all the others. Student of prophecy recognize this "little horn" as a great religious hierarchy. And in the 25th verse of this prophecy, it is stated that this hierarchy shall "think to change *times* and *laws*."

How Time Was Changed

This same power is mentioned again in the 17th chapter of Revelation, here pictured as ruling over the kings and kingdoms of the earth, persecuting the true saints. In every possible manner, this power has *changed* TIME!

God begins the days at sunset, but "the little horn" has changed it so the world now begins the day in the middle of the night by a man-made watch.

God begins the week with the ending of the true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, but the world begins the working week in the middle of the night, the second day of the week.

God begins the months with the new moons, but this "little horn" has induced the world to begin the months according to a clumsy man-made calendar of heathen origin.

God begins the year in the early spring, when new life is budding in nature everywhere, but ancient heathen Rome caused the world to begin the year in the middle of dead winter.

God gave His children a true rest day, designed to keep them continually in the knowledge and true worship of the true God—a memorial of God's Creation—the seventh day of the week. But the "little horn" has fastened upon a deluded world the observance of the days on which the pagans worshipped the Sun, the first day of the week, called SUNDAY.

Pagan Origins

Ancient Rome's pagan holidays have been chained upon a heedless and deceived world. These include certain annual holidays—Christmas, New Year's, Easter, as well as many more, every one a pagan day—every one used to stimulate the sale of merchandise in the commercial markets. Upon honest investigation, the earnest seeker after truth learns that these days are all of heathen origin and pagan significance. He learns that he can have no part in them. But is the Christian of today left without any annual holy days? Did God never give to His people annual holy days, as well as the weekly Sabbath? Are not ancient Rome's annual holidays mere counterfeits of God's true holy days, exactly as Sunday is a counterfeit of the true Sabbath?

Banishing Prejudice

Let us honestly open our Bibles, and prayerfully investigate. We are told to study—not argue, not to refute, but—to show ourselves approved unto God—to learn God's will. We are commanded, as Christians, to grow in knowledge as well as in grace (II Peter 3:18). All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable to correct and to reprove us, where we have, through assumption, false teaching, or prejudice, been in error. Most people have supposed that all the annual Sabbaths and feast days of Israel were done away. And yet Church history shows that the early true Church did, for more than four hundred long years at least—perhaps much longer—after Christ's resurrection, continue to keep and observe these annual holy days given by God!

And just as the Sunday observer is inclined to look, at first, upon any argument for the weekly Sabbath with prejudice—as a heresy—and to examine every argument only in an attitude of attempting to refute it, so it will be only human—only natural for us, if we are not on our guard against it, to look upon any presentation of these annual Sabbaths in the same spirit of prejudice.

But remember that "he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Proverbs 18:13).

Let us, therefore, in willing submission to God, to His will, with yielded hearts free from prejudice, with open minds desiring truth more than our own way, trembling before the sacred and holy Word of God, ask God humbly for the direction of His Holy Spirit. And in this prayerful, submissive, willing, yet careful and cautious attitude, study this question—proving all things.

Study This Twice

Let us warn, too, that certain objections will be sure to come to the mind—all of which, will be dealt with and explained later on. But unless the reader is careful to guard against it, the mere presence of this objection in his mind will, to him, overthrow each point as it's presented—and then, when the objections are later explained, the points made will not come back to the mind, unless the whole exposition of the subject is carefully studied again from the first.

And in each case, the objection will be one of the very arguments used by Sunday preachers in attempting to overthrow the truth of the weekly Sabbath! For the weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths stand or fall together. The arguments used against the annual Sabbaths will be the identical arguments used to overthrow the Sabbath—and if these arguments could hold, then they would abolish the weekly Sabbath!

Such arguments as "the annual Sabbaths are part of the law of Moses," or "they offered sacrifices on the annual Sabbaths," or "Colossians 2:16 does away with the annual Sabbaths," are not scriptural.

For the annual Sabbaths were not part of the law of Moses, but were observed before the ritualistic ordinances contained in the law of Moses were given. Sacrifices were offered on the weekly Sabbath, but this does not do away with the Sabbath. In fact, sacrifices were offered on every day of the year (Numbers 28:3).

Colossians 2:16 refers, not alone to the annual Sabbaths, but to the annual days, the monthly new moons, *and* the weekly Sabbath. Whenever the Bible uses the expression "sabbath days" with new moons and holy days, it is referring to the weekly Sabbath days, the new moons and the annual holy days or feast days. The "Sabbath days" of Colossians 2:16 refers to the *weekly* Sabbath. Compare I Chronicles 23:31 with II Chronicles 2:4; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:33; Ezekiel 46:3. If Colossians does away with the one, it also abolishes the other.

The Old Testament Church

When did the true Church begin? In Acts 7:38 we learn that the congregation of Israel was called the church in the wilderness, in the days of Moses. The English word "congregation" used throughout the Old Testament is only another rendering, having the same identical meaning, as the word "church" in the New Testament. The word translated "congregation" in the Old Testament is *ekklesia* in the Septuagint—the same identical Greek word that is always translated CHURCH in the New Testament.

Israel was both church and state. As a kingdom, it was for years ruled by a system of judges, over 50s, 100s, thousands, etc., later having a king. But as a congregation, or church, Israel was organized with a leader—Moses, Joshua, etc.—and the priests of the tribe of Levi. The law of Moses contained those ritualistic or ceremonial laws which were ADDED, because of transgressions, to the Old Covenant—added until Christ—to teach and instill into them the habit of obedience. These consisted of meat and drink offerings, various washings, physical ordinances. Also they had the sacrifices, as a substitute for the sacrifice of Christ.

Prior to the Law of Moses

In the 12th chapter of Exodus, when the Children of Israel were still in Egypt—long before any of the Law of Moses had been given—prior to the time when God revealed to Moses and the Israelites He would make the Old Covenant with them—we find God's annual holy days being observed. And in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus we find a summary of these annual holy days or set feasts.

Now when God made the Sabbath for man, He gave man a rest day carrying great significance and purpose. To His Church in the wilderness, God said that the Sabbath was a covenant sign between Him and His people. A sign is a supernatural proof of identity. It is the sign by which we know that He is God. How does it prove that to us? "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested." It is a memorial of creation.

And creation is the proof of the existence of God. Creation identifies God. The Sabbath is a weekly memorial of creation. A weekly reminder of God's power to create. Therefore it identifies God to us—keeps us in the true memory and true worship of the true God. No other day but the seventh day of the week could have that great significance and meaning. It was designed to keep us in the true worship of God.

The Purpose of Holy Days

Now in like manner, when God gave His Church seven annual Sabbaths, God, in His wisdom, had a great purpose. These days, too, were given to keep God's children in the true memory and worship of God by keeping us constantly in the understanding of God's great plan of redemption. For these annual days picture the different epochs in the plan of spiritual creation—mark the dispensations, and picture their meaning. The whole story of spiritual regeneration was, in these feast days, to be reenacted year after year continually. They have vitally important symbolism and meaning.

It is an historic fact that any nation which ever profaned God's holy Sabbath (weekly), has lost contact with and knowledge of the true God, and gone into idolatry. The only nation which ever did keep God's Sabbath is the only one that was kept in the true memory and worship of the true God—and only when they kept the Sabbath. When ancient Israel began to profane God's Sabbath, they began to worship idols! And in the same way, when in these New Testament times we have failed to observe God's annual Sabbaths we, as a nation and people, are without knowledge of God's true plan of reproducing Himself.

The so-called Christian churches today do not understand or teach what sin is—they do not teach that sin must be put away—they do not understand what man is, the purpose of life, the meaning of being born again, and of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit—they do not understand that God's Church, today, is not to convert the world, but to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness, to live a life of overcoming sin, enduring unto the end, and that the overcomers shall reign with Christ, being kings, and priests, in His Kingdom.

They do not understand that Christ is coming again, and those who preach the second coming fail to understand its meaning and purpose. They have no knowledge or conception of the good news of the coming Kingdom of God—the only true New Testament Bible gospel. Not understanding these vital steps in the true plan of regeneration, the Christian churches teach that the Law is abolished. They teach the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul, going immediately to heaven or hell at death—and they teach that death is only life.

And all is confusion! God's feasts, or holy days, or Sabbaths, were commanded to be kept year after year, and *forever!* We ask the reader to retain an open mind, for we shall prove that forever, in this case, means forever! Thus God purposed to impress the truths these "high" Sabbaths picture upon all the minds of His children through all time, keeping His Church in the true understanding of plan!

The Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread

Most churches teach that Christ finished the Plan of Redemption when He was crucified. But the very *first* event in God's great plan for man's regeneration was the death of Christ. We find the operation of this great Sacrifice beginning in Eden, when God killed a lamb or goat, in order to cover the nakedness (type of sin) of Adam and Eve with skins. We find it operating when Abel sacrificed a substitute lamb. And so the Passover is the first of these events picturing to God's children year by year His great plan. Let us understand it.

Egypt is a type of sin. As God's people are today in "Babylon," and soon are to be delivered after God pours out His plagues upon Babylon, so they once were in Egypt, and were delivered after the pouring out of the plagues. Just as professing Christians have been deceived and have no knowledge of true time and God's days, as well as the true worship of God, so it was with the children of Israel in Egypt. For over two centuries they had been in severe bondage in Egypt—forced to work with taskmasters over them. There was no Bible—no written Word of God. They were not permitted to worship God as He had ordained. They were forced to work seven days a week. They had lost sight even of the true Sabbath—that is why God revealed to them the Sabbath in the wilderness of Sin (Exodus 16).

Passover Only the Start

At that time in Egypt they had also changed the proper time for commencing the year. And so, on delivering His people from Egypt (sin), God straightened them out as to time. And, as the beginning of our salvation was wrought by Christ's death on the cross, so God said, "*This month [in the spring] shall be unto you the beginning of months . . .*" (Exodus 12:2).

Some few keep the beginning of God's feasts of salvation by observing Passover, but never go on to know the "depth of the riches" of God's grace pictured by the following feasts! Christ is not only the author, or beginner, but the finisher of our salvation!

On the tenth day of this first month the Israelites were instructed to take a lamb without blemish. They kept it until—not after—the 14th day of the same first month. At even, at dusk as the Jewish translation has it—between the two evenings, or between sunset and dark—the Passover lamb was killed. This was in, not after, the 14th day. They shed the blood of the lamb, picturing Christ's sacrifice to come. They ate the flesh in that night. At midnight the death angel came, but passed over every house where the blood had been sprinkled.

There are some very important details it is vital that we notice at this point; perhaps we have not seen them before. It proves that the Passover should be observed the 14th, not the 15th.

Passover 14th, Not 15th

Notice Exodus 12. Verse 6, they shall kill the lamb at dusk (Jewish official translation). Verse 8, they shall eat the flesh in that night—still the 14th. Verses 9-11 continue to describe how it shall be roasted and eaten—the time is still the same night—the 14th. Verse 12: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn . . ."—still same night—the 14th.

Now notice carefully the paragraph beginning verse 21. Here are more detailed directions for striking the blood on the door posts—the time this was done, as proved above, was the night part of the 14th. Notice carefully verse 22: ". . . Strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason: and *none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.*" Notice that carefully! None were permitted to leave their houses that night. They remained in their houses until morning! They remained there all night!

Now read on in verse 29. At midnight (the 14th) the Lord smote the firstborn of Egypt. Verse 30, Pharaoh rose up in the night. This was of course after the death angel passed at midnight, and therefore after midnight. He called for Moses and Aaron. This must have taken some time, but still the same night. Verse 33, the Egyptian people were urgent to get rid of the Israelites. Verse 35, the Israelites borrowed (demanded) of the Egyptians silver and gold and clothing, and spoiled the Egyptians. When? Surely this borrowing and spoiling of the Egyptians took several hours. The Israelites lived in the land of Goshen, apart from the Egyptians. The Israelites were forbidden to leave their houses until morning—so this spoiling and borrowing took place through the *day time* of the 14th day.

Exodus 24 Hours After Passover

But—notice this highly important point—the Israelites did not go out from the land of Egypt until that night—the 15th of Abib! Notice the section composed of verses 40-42: ". . . even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: *this is that night of the Lord to be observed. . .*" Which is the night to be observed? The night they came out of Egypt. They went out of Egypt, not during the daytime the 14th, but after that day had ended—after the sun had set—the following night—on the 15th of Abib! And that night, the 15th, is to be observed!

The following verses, beginning verse 43, form a new paragraph, and refer again to Passover—the 14th day.

Now, notice Deuteronomy 16:1. "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt *by night.*" Notice it, they did not go out of Egypt, until night. And this night was the 15th, not the 14th. Further proof?

Notice now Numbers 33:3. "And they departed from Rameses in the first month, *on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover* the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians."

There it is in plain language. Now some believe that they killed the lamb between noon and sunset the 14th—about 3 p.m., near the end of the day; ate it that night—the 15th (claiming that is when the Passover was eaten, and when we should take it today) and then went on out of Egypt that same night. But this theory will not hold water, in view of all these scriptures, and those following through Exodus 12.

The Israelites were not permitted to leave their houses that night after eating the lamb. They remained in their own houses—in the land of Goshen—until daylight. Then they went to their Egyptian neighbors, and borrowed from them and spoiled them. There were millions of them. It took time to notify them. It took time to do all this. It could not have been done after midnight, when Pharaoh rose up, and still have gotten out of Egypt the same night. The Israelites were in their own houses in Goshen all that night. Exodus 12:10 further proves this. Whatever remained of their roasted lamb uneaten until morning they were to burn with fire. That shows they stayed in their homes until morning. They did not leave Egypt until after that day ended—after nightfall again, during the night part of the fifteenth.

IN the 14th, Not After

Now to connect one other vital point, turn to Numbers 28:16-17. "IN the fourteenth day [not AFTER IT] . . . is the passover of the Lord. And *in the fifteenth day* [not before it] of this month *is the feast*: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten."

Leviticus 23:5-6 says the same thing. Notice the Passover is not the 15th, but the 14th. "In it" is not after it is past. And notice, too, the feast mentioned here is not the 14th (though the Passover is elsewhere called a feast), but the feast day is the 15th. The seven-day period begins the 15th. The 15th is the first of the seven days of unleavened bread.

However, since leaven was put out of the houses during the 14th day, it came to be called one of the days of unleavened bread by New Testament times, but when this is done, eight days are included in the term "days of unleavened bread." The entire eight-day period is, in New Testament usage, sometimes called by the name "Passover."

But the seven-day period begins the 15th, after the 14th, or Passover, has ended. The 14th day is the Passover. It is the first of God's festivals. It is not the feast day mentioned here. In the fifteenth day is the feast. Let us get that distinction clearly in mind. It is the FIFTEENTH that is the FEAST—the 14th is the Passover. This feast day begins after Passover has ended.

Now with these facts well in mind, let us turn back to Exodus 12. Notice beginning verse 14. "And this day shall be unto you for a *memorial*; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance *for ever*. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread . . . and in the first day there shall be an holy convocation . . ." (verses 14-16).

What day is established as a memorial—not a shadow, a memorial—a feast—to be kept forever? Notice, it is the day that is the feast—"Ye shall keep it a feast." It is the day that is the feast day—the 15th Abib, not the 14th—not the Passover!

This day is the feast day—a memorial, to be kept a Sabbath, or holy convocation, forever! Seven days are included, and we have shown that the seven-day period begins the 15th, after Passover has passed. "In the fourteenth is the Passover, but in the fifteenth day is the feast—seven days." Many have always believed the day here spoken of, and ordained forever, was the Passover, or 14th. But it is not—it is the 15th day. Now this day—the 15th—is established a holy convocation. Look in the dictionary. A "convocation" is an assembly of the people where their presence is commanded, under power and authority. A "holy convocation" is a religious assembly, for purposes of worship. The weekly Sabbath is a holy convocation. So is Abib 15th. Our presence is commanded, under God's power and authority. But let us continue.

Notice now, beginning verse 16: "And in the first day [of the seven, 15th of Abib], there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day [21st of Abib] there shall be an holy convocation to you...And ye shall observe the *feast of unleavened bread*; for in this selfsame day [the *fifteenth* Abib] have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe *this day* [the fifteenth, not the 14th] in your generations by an ordinance *for ever*" (Exodus 12:16-17).

There it is! *Before* the ceremonial law of Moses! The day established as a Sabbath, or holy convocation forever, is the feast day, the selfsame day on which they went out of Egypt, and they went out on the 15th, not the 14th (Numbers 33:3).

This day is a memorial, not a shadow of the cross. A memorial of deliverance from Egypt, which pictures to us deliverance from sin!

To keep us constantly in the memory of the great fact that, having had our sins forgiven by Christ's blood (pictured by the 14th) we are not to stop there, and remain in sin, but to go out away from sin! Why should we observe the 14th, picturing remission of past sins, and then refuse to continue the Feast of Unleavened Bread, picturing the coming out from sin—seven days of unleavened bread symbolizing and picturing complete putting away of sin, or, in other words, the keeping of the Commandments?

Not Abolished With Old Covenant

Observe that the days of unleavened bread are a period, having two high-day Sabbaths. And this period is established forever—while the Israelites were still in Egypt—before one word of the ceremonial law of Moses had been given or written—before God even proposed the Old Covenant! What the law of Moses, or the Old Covenant, did not bring or institute, they cannot take away! And in Fenton's translation, we find the 17th verse translated thus: ". . . Consequently keep this period as an everlasting institution." The whole period is included.

This alone ought to prove that the holy days—and the seven days of unleavened bread—are binding today, and forever!

Now, if these texts apply to the 15th, not the 14th, as they assuredly do, and is here conclusively proved, then is the Passover forever? Indeed it is! But these texts above refer to the feast, and not the Passover. In the paragraph beginning Exodus 12:21 the Passover is again referred to, and verse 24 establishes it forever!

Purpose of Festival

But let us learn the full significance of this. Why did God ordain these feast days? What was His great purpose? Turn now to Exodus 13, verse 3: "And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt. . . ." This was the 15th of Abib. Verses 6, 8-10: "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day shall be a feast unto the Lord . . . This is done because of that which the Eternal did"—(a MEMORIAL)—"and it shall be for a sign"—that is, having also a future meaning—"unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes"—having to do with both works and will—why?—"that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth. . . . Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance. . . ."

Can you see the wonderful meaning? Do you grasp the true significance of it all? Do you see God's purpose? The Passover only pictures the death of Christ for the remission of sins that are past (Romans 3:25). The accepting of His blood does not forgive sins we may later commit; it does not give license to continue in sin. Therefore when we accept it, our sins are forgiven only up to that time—past sins.

But shall we stop there with only past sins forgiven? We are still flesh beings. We still shall suffer temptations. Sin has held us in its clutch—we have been slaves to sin, in its power. And we are powerless to deliver ourselves from it! We have been in bondage to sin. Let us understand the picture—the meaning.

Quitting Sin Utterly

To what extent shall we put away sin? Not partially, but completely! And, as leaven is also a type of sin (I Corinthians 5:8)—leaven puffs up, and so does sin—and, as seven is God's number symbolizing completeness, we are to follow the Passover with seven days of unleavened bread! The picture—the meaning—the symbolism, is not complete with Passover alone. Passover pictures the acceptance of Christ's blood for the remission of past sins. It pictures the crucified—the dead—Christ.

Shall we leave Christ symbolically hanging on the cross? The seven days of unleavened bread following Passover picture to us the complete putting away of sin, the keeping of the Commandments—after past sins are forgiven.

They picture the life and work of the risen Christ—who ascended to the throne of God where He is now actively at work in our behalf as our High Priest, cleansing us of sin—delivering us completely from its power! To observe the Passover alone, and then fail to observe the seven days of unleavened bread, means, in the symbolism, to accept Christ's blood, and then to continue in sin—to erroneously say the Law is done away, that we are under grace alone, meaning license, to continue in sin! The seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread picture the keeping of the Commandments, which is another way of saying the putting away of sin.

God's true Church is to have these feast days, the first of which is a memorial picturing deliverance from sin, in OUR right hand and forehead, as God's sign, in order that we shall keep His commandments. And since the forehead is the seat of the intellect, and symbolizes acceptance, and the right hand symbolizes work, we have this sign of God there by accepting this truth about the holy days and Days of Unleavened Bread, and by NOT WORKING on these holy days! Not only is the weekly Sabbath God's sign (Exodus 31:12-17) but annual Sabbaths are signs as well!

Notice how marvelously this ordinance pictures the plan of redemption. I remember one year, during the last of these Sabbaths, 21st Abib, one housewife mentioned she had found a half slice of leavened bread behind some things in her home, during the days of unleavened bread. Of course, she had put it out of the house immediately. Another said she had found a can of baking powder half full, which she did not know she had. Another found a slice of bread and some yeast. All had put the leaven out as soon as discovered.

How true to life is the picture! How often do we, after we think we have put away sin, discover hidden sins or habits we did not know we had—or thought we had overcome? They must be overcome and put away, as soon as discovered.

The Perfect Picture

But let us notice the wonderful picture further. The children of Israel started out of Egypt, the night of the 15th of Abib, as we must, willingly, of our own accord, start out of sin as soon as we accept the blood of Christ. They started out on their own power—and we must make the start ourselves. But they did not get far until Pharaoh pursued after them (Exodus 14:5-7). If Egypt is a type of sin, then surely Pharaoh must picture Satan; the army of Egypt, Satan's demons. While Israel was in Egypt they were Pharaoh's slaves, helpless and powerless under his taskmasters—just as the sinner is in the power of the devil. But when Israel took the blood of the lamb, then God acted, and as a result Pharaoh released Israel. When *we* accept Christ's blood, GOD acts, and the devil must release us.

And, as the Israelites went out with a high hand (Numbers 33:3), in great exultation and elation over their deliverance from bondage, so does the newly begotten Christian start out his Christian life—up in the clouds of happiness and joy. But what happens?

The devil and sin immediately pursue after the newly begotten son of God—and soon the new and inexperienced Christian finds he is down in the depths of discouragement, and tempted to give up and quit. Notice Exodus 14, beginning verse 10—as soon as the Israelites saw this great army pursuing them, they lost their courage. Fear came over them. They began to grumble and complain. They saw it was impossible for them to get away from Pharaoh and his army, because he was too powerful for them. And they were helpless. So it is with us.

Our Strength Not Sufficient!

But notice the message of God to them through Moses: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . for the Egyptians . . . ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you"! How wonderful!

Helpless, we are told to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. He shall fight for us. We cannot conquer Satan and sin, but He can. It is the risen Christ—our High Priest—who will cleanse us—sanctify us—deliver us—who said He would never leave us nor forsake us!

We cannot keep the Commandments in our own power and strength. But Christ IN US can keep them! We must rely on Him in faith.

Notice verse 19. The angel that had gone before, showing the Israelites the way, now went behind them, getting between them and their enemy, protecting them. And then God parted the waters of the Red Sea. ". . . and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (verse 22). In Isaiah 55:1 and John 7:37-39, the waters are a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The living waters of God are a wall to us, on our right hand and on our left, guiding us in the true path, making path, protecting us in it. But when Pharaoh and his army attempted to follow after Israel in this divinely created path these same waters completely covered them, as the Holy Spirit removes and covers our sins, and the Israelites saw them no more! What a wonderful picture!

No Sacrifices Originally

Thus we see the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as well as the Passover, was ordained and established forever, prior to the Old Covenant. Let us be consistent about this. Opponents tell us these are in the law of Moses. We reply they existed before the law of Moses, are carried over in the New Testament, and therefore are binding today.

Notice especially, that originally there were no sacrifices—no meat and drink ordinances—held on these days. See Jeremiah 7:22-23. These days were not instituted for the purpose of the sacrifices as some have wrongly suppose. These holy days are memorials, and twice plainly called such. Where do we find such plain language calling the Sabbath memorial? (See also Leviticus 23:24.)

The Sabbath, too, existed before the law of Moses. It was made holy unto the Lord before the Mosaic law was given.

When the law of Moses came, with its sacrificial ordinances and meat and drink offerings, then these sacrifices and meat and drink offerings were instituted, temporarily—until Christ—to be held, some daily, some on the weekly Sabbath, and some on the first of each month, and some on each of the annual holy days.

But, mark well this fact! Where we find these sacrifices and meat and drink offerings instituted on the holy days we find them also on the weekly Sabbath. The same chapters in the law of Moses adding them to the annual days also add them to the weekly days.

The argument that these sacrifices held on these days does away with the days applies equally to the Sabbath! If this argument abolishes one, it abolishes also the other. The Sunday preachers argue that these sacrifices do away with the Sabbath. We deny it—why? The Sabbath existed before these sacrifices were added. The same is true of the holy days! They began, too, before the ritualistic law of Moses!

Sacrifices on Weekly Sabbath

Let us notice Numbers 28: First, the offerings by fire day by day, the "morning-evening" sacrifice. Second, verses 9-10, burnt meat offerings, and drink offerings every Sabbath. Third, verses 11-15, new moons. Then, verse 16, to end of chapter 29, the annual days.

Now we know these meat and drink offerings, by fire, were typical, and were done away. But are the seven weekdays done away? Is the weekly Sabbath done away? Is the first day of each month done away? Not in God's sight. Then neither are the annual holy days of the Lord done away! The sacrifices were typical, and they came with the law of Moses, and they went with it. But the days on which they were held were not typical, did not come with the law of Moses, and did not go with it. The days are binding forever! As the Sabbath is a memorial, so are the holy days!

Commanded in New Testament

And now we wish to show a New Testament command—more plain, more direct, than any we can find for the weekly Sabbath—to keep these annual holy days! Observe again Numbers 28:16-17: "IN the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the Lord. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten."

This feast was not the 14th, but the 15th. It was the Passover, when the lamb was killed; that was the 14th. The daylight part of the 14th was the preparation for the feast (Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14). Note, in Jesus' day the Jews celebrated *their* Passover one day late according to the tradition of the elders (John 18:28).

Let us get this point thoroughly established in our minds, for if this is true, as it is, then all of these days are still binding upon us, by New Testament, as well as Old Testament authority!

Notice Matthew 26:5. The chief priests and the scribes conspiring to kill Jesus, said: "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." They hastened so they could take and kill Him the day *before* the feast, or on the 14th Abib (Nisan).

Mark 14:2 says the same thing. Now to establish that the feast day was the day after the Passover festival, and that was the high day Sabbath—the day after Jesus was crucified notice John 13:29: "For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag [was treasurer—Fenton translation], that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need against the feast." Surely this proves the feast was the following day—the 15th Abib (Nisan), as all these scriptures positively affirm.

Now let us examine carefully I Corinthians 5:7-8. Churches have applied this to the Passover. Notice it does not say, nor apply to, Passover at all. Let us willingly, prayerfully study to see what it does say:

"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: *therefore* LET US KEEP THE FEAST. . . ." Notice it. Because Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed, therefore let us of the NEW Testament dispensation—because Christ had died—keep, what? Notice it! Not the Passover here which was on the 14th Abib (Nisan)—but let us keep the feast—which was the 15th! The high-day Sabbath of John 19:31! The annual holy day. And, in a larger sense, the feast included all seven of days of unleavened bread, including the second holy day, Sabbath, on the 21st Abib (Nisan)! We cannot escape this, if we are yielded to the Lord and the Word of God! There it is, plain language, in the New Testament! Because Christ was crucified, therefore let us keep the feast! The 14th was the Passover, but in the 15th day of this month is the feast! Let us no longer apply that to the Passover, for it says "feast."

Days of Unleavened Bread Kept by Paul and the New Testament Church

It is faithfully recorded in the New Testament that the Church, during the period its history covers, was keeping those days!

In Acts 20:6: "We sailed away from Philippi *after the days of unleavened bread*." Paul and companions plainly had observed the days of unleavened bread at Philippi. The Holy Spirit could never have inspired such words otherwise.

Notice also Acts 12:3-4: "Then were the days of unleavened bread." Why this, if those days had, in God's sight, ceased to exist?

Notice, it is not anyone ignorant of what was abolished making this statement. It is Almighty God saying it through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This was years after the crucifixion. The days of unleavened bread still existed, or the Holy Spirit could not have inspired "then were the days unleavened bread."

CHAPTER TWO What You Should Know About Pentecost

IS THIS the *only* "day of salvation"? Most churches generally teach that all who die "unsaved," or do not "get saved" before the second coming of Christ, can never receive salvation. They assume there is a great contest in progress between Christ and Satan. They believe Christ came to save the world, and by means of all these churches, through which He is desperately trying to "get the world saved."

On the other hand, the clever deceptive devil is doing all he can to prevent people from being "saved." And they seem to believe there is a time limit on the contest. We are now near the time for the Second Coming of Christ, but when Christ returns to earth in person He will find Himself helpless—utterly unable to save the world from Satan's clutch—because then "it will be too late." "Probation will be closed," as one denomination expresses it. This paganzed teaching represents Satan as far more powerful than God.

The Answer Revealed

The New Testament Church of God was founded on a Sunday. It started on the annual Sabbath day called "Pentecost" or "Feast of Firstfruits." Also called the "Feast of Weeks." The New Testament Church continued, year after year, to keep this annual Sabbath, Pentecost, as we shall show.

And God gave this festival to His people in order to reveal, and to keep them continually informed, that the present dispensation is only the first, preliminary "harvest of souls." As already explained, God's purpose in giving His Church His annual holy days was to keep His children constantly in true understanding of God's great plan.

To accomplish this, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in ancient Israel as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls.

In the Holy Land there are two annual harvests. First, is the spring grain harvest. Second, comes the fall harvest. God intended His holy days to picture to *His* Church repeatedly year by year the fact that only those He Himself calls during this age can become His begotten children now! And we are merely the firstfruits of the great spiritual harvest!

The Wave Sheaf

But let us continue the central passage which summarizes all the holy days—Leviticus 23.

Here we find *all* of God's festivals proclaimed holy convocations, in the one chapter. First is the weekly convocation day, the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Then, beginning verse 4, follows a list of the annual festivals, also commanded assemblies, "which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."

First of these is the Passover, followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the two annual Sabbaths. Beginning verse 9, we find instructions for the wave-sheaf offering. The Israelites were not allowed to harvest any of the early grain crop until this day (verse 14). Then, on the day following the weekly Sabbath, in a solemn ceremony of the Levitical priesthood (the rituals were mere substitutes and therefore not practiced today), the first sheaf of grain was cut. This event always occurred during the days of unleavened bread (see Joshua 5). The sheaf was then brought to the priest. The priest solemnly waved it before the Eternal to be accepted for them.

This pictures the *resurrected* Christ ascending to heaven to be accepted by His Father as the very first human to be actually born of God—the firstfruit of the first harvest of souls! By comparing John 20:17 with Matthew 28:9, you will see that Christ presented Himself before the Father on the morning after His resurrection the previous evening (I Corinthians 15:20, 23; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18). This fulfillment of the wave-sheaf offering actually occurred on Sunday, the morrow after the Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread.

How to Figure Pentecost

Next comes Pentecost. The word "Pentecost" is a Greek word, used in the New Testament, but not in the Old. It signifies "fiftieth (day)." In the Old Testament this feast is called "Feast of Firstfruits," and "Feast of Weeks."

Notice the properly translated plain instruction beginning Leviticus 23:15: "And ye shall *count* unto you *from* [*on, or beginning with*] 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 that fiftieth day is Pentecost!

"And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a *statute forever* in all your dwellings *throughout your generations*" (verse 21). All other holy days or festivals come on definite days of definite months. But this one annual Sabbath must be determined by counting. It is very simple and plain.

It is of very grave importance that we figure the right day. This day, and this only, is made holy by the Eternal Creator. Suppose at the same time the Church of God was founded, the apostles had miscounted, and "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1) they, instead of being all *with one accord* in one place were in discord, some having observed the day preceding, and some waiting until the

following day! The Pharisees, who gained complete control of Jewish religious observances shortly after the middle of the first century AD, figured (incorrectly—that is, from the wrong starting point) from the day after the first *annual* Sabbath.

Before that time, however, the high priests of the family Boethus, who were Sadducees, had been in control of matters concerning the festivals in Jerusalem. The Boethusians always counted from the morrow after the *weekly* Sabbath, the day we call Saturday, which usually fell within the Days of Unleavened Bread or immediately before the first day of Unleavened Bread. This historical information has been preserved for us in the *Mishna*, which was set in writing about AD 200:

"The Boethusians say: The cutting of the sheaf does not take place at the end of the day of the feast [the first of the seven days of unleavened bread], but only at the end of the next regular Sabbath" (*Menahoth*, 10, 3).

This practice had been handed down among the priests from generation to generation. And their method of counting was done as long as they remained in control of the Temple and its rituals. Samaritans and Karaites (Jewish sect dating from the eighth century AD) have also continued to count from the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

On a Sunday

Starting then to count from the offering of the wave sheaf, with that Sunday as day number one, we will always come out on another Sunday—but NOT always on the same day of the month. It is something which must be "counted" each and every year. Neither in the Hebrew (or biblical) calendar, nor in the Roman calendar which is commonly used today, can the day of Pentecost ever become fixed on a set day of the month. Quoting again from the *Mishna*, and speaking about the correct practice which had been followed in Jerusalem before the Pharisees took complete control, "[The Boethusians say:] Pentecost always falls on the day after the Sabbath" (*Chagigah*, 2, 4).

This makes very clear the meaning of the last part of Leviticus 23:15 and the beginning of verse 16: ". . . seven *sabbaths* shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh *sabbath* shall ye number fifty days."

Deuteronomy 16:9

A second and perhaps for some a simpler instruction for counting to Pentecost is found in Deuteronomy 16:9-10: "*Seven weeks* shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the *seven weeks* from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks [Pentecost]. . . ." This means of counting is also referred to in Numbers 28:26: "Also in the day of the firstfruits [Pentecost], when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, *after your weeks be out*, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work."

Because seven weeks were counted, the festival of Pentecost was also known as the "feast of weeks" (Deuteronomy 16:10).

Meaning of Pentecost

Passover symbolized Christ's sacrifice for the remission of our sins, and the days of unleavened bread the putting away of sin. Pentecost pictures the first part of the spiritual harvest—the calling out of the Church—the called-out ones—which, for the New Testament dispensation, began on Sunday—Pentecost, June 17, 31 AD. On that day the Holy Spirit came to dwell within flesh, as prophesied by Joel.

On the fiftieth day (Pentecost) in Old Testament times, two "wave loaves" (Leviticus 23:17, 20) were brought out of the habitations of the congregation as the firstfruits unto the Lord. Just so the New Testament Church was gathered out of this world as the firstfruits of His salvation, in fulfillment of the meaning of the wave loaves. We have all, if we have been converted, become a part of that New Testament Church. We have become part of what was symbolized by those wave loaves.

And just as the wave *sheaf* was lifted up into the air and waved, symbolizing Christ's trip to heaven and return, so the wave *loaves* were lifted up and waved, symbolizing that we too shall for a moment leave this solid earth when we ascend to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) before we return with Him to stand on the Mount of Olives as He begins His millennial rule (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:3-4).

Most Not Now Called

God has not cast away His people, Israel. But He blinded them for a temporary period of time so that through their fall, salvation came to the Gentiles, who, through Christ, are individually grafted in, or spiritually adopted into, the family of Israel (Romans 11).

This is the dispensation when God is calling a people for His name to be kings and priests, reigning with Christ in the Kingdom during the thousand years (Revelation 5:10). "After this"—after this dispensation of taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name—"I will return," promises the Eternal. What for? "And will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I [Christ, not men] will set it up."

Why? "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord." (Acts 15:14-17 — study this again!)

During this present Church age, the descendants of ancient Judah and Israel are blinded. After this, Christ will return, and then the rest of men—blinded Israel, and Gentiles alike, will seek after the Lord when Satan is chained and Christ reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords!

Those of the firstfruits of His salvation, made immortal, will then reign with Him as kings and priests in the wonderful work of building a new civilization. During this time Israel is mostly blinded *until* the fullness of the Gentiles come in; and so (Romans 11:26) all Israel shall, then, be saved from sin; for the Deliverer, Christ, shall come out of Zion! All Israel shall be brought to repentance and saved from sin—how? Because Christ turns ungodliness from mortal Israel by forgiving sin.

Now, in this dispensation, Israel has not believed, and the tabernacle of David is fallen down (Romans 11:31-32), that, through the mercy of the Gentiles and the small "elect" in Israel, picked out in this age, acting as kings and priests with Christ, they, also, then, may obtain mercy! How wonderful is God's great plan of redemption, when we understand it, as we see it pictured in these annual holy days!

Only First Harvest Now

In James 1:18 and Romans 8:23, for example, the saints of this dispensation are called the firstfruits of God's salvation. This dispensation, and the picking out of these people to bear His name, began on the day of Pentecost. This feast annually pictures this great event—this great "mystery" dispensation—in God's redemptive plan! Notice, too, that these feasts, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost, fall at the beginning of the year, and the great events they picture occur at the very beginning of the plan of salvation!

The group of holy days coming at the END of the year all symbolize tremendous events in God's plan of redemption to occur, yet future, at the end of the dispensation! They all come in the seventh month—and their fulfillment will introduce the seventh thousand-years since creation!

The churches of this world today teach it is the mission of the Church to save the world. They teach that all who ever shall be saved are being saved, now, in this present dispensation. They teach that "probation ENDS" at, or prior to, the Second Coming of Christ.

If this be true, what a failure is God's plan! Only a very, very few have been truly saved in this dispensation. One third of all living on earth today have never even heard the only name whereby we may be saved! Are they—the majority of all living, eternally lost because they never heard—lost and condemned without a chance? The common teaching is that God has cast away His people Israel, and they are eternally doomed and lost. Had they been keeping these annual holy days, commanded to be kept forever—all kept faithfully by the New Testament Church as recorded in Acts and in church history—they would have understood God's wonderful plan.

We are not to convert everyone in the world in this age, but to declare the Gospel. What Gospel? The good news of the Kingdom—the good news of the thousand years of restitution of all things when Christ returns to reign in power and great glory! Let us understand this. During this time Israel is blinded in part— but only until the completion of this Gentile dispensation. During this time, only the minority of Gentiles—Chinese, people of India and Russia— have even heard the name of Christ. The good news of the coming Kingdom is to be preached as a witness. Many have been called during this time, but only few actually chosen, and still fewer have remained faithful to the end. They—the people picked out for His name—shall be made immortal and shall reign during the thousand years of the Kingdom upon earth. Then Israel's blindness will be removed. They were blinded until the end of Gentile times. The heavens received Jesus until these times of restitution of all things. Those now gathered, since that day of Pentecost, June 17, AD 31, are the firstfruits only, of God's plan of salvation. This dispensation, then, is picking out only the "firstfruits" of those to be saved. And they are being tried and tested to qualify for positions as kings and priests in the Kingdom, to effect, then, the real salvation of the world.

When Christ Returns

Then it is that God shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people—Israel (Isaiah 11:11).

Then it is that ". . . the Lord will come with fire, and . . . by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh. . . . And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape [these plagues] of them unto the nations [Gentiles] . . . *that have not heard* my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles" (Isaiah 66:15-16, 19).

Then it is that "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem," and the Gentile nations that have not heard previously "shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to *keep the feast of tabernacles*!" (Zechariah 14:16.)

Then it is that many nations "shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain [nation] of the Lord . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . neither shall they learn war any more. . . . *In that day*, saith the Lord . . . the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Micah 4:2-7). This does not apply to God's Church now—but to the glorious time of the Kingdom, after Christ returns. What a wonderful plan of redemption!

Adam sinned. All have sinned. From Adam to now we behold a chronicle of man without God—of human suffering and failure. And thus God, in His great wisdom, has permitted men to prove to themselves what sinners they are—how helpless they are, of themselves!

And finally we shall have to learn the lesson that it is only when God Himself undertakes to save men—by sending Jesus to rule with a rod of iron—that the world can really be saved! And so, those now being saved are a firstfruits of salvation, and will have the very great honor of being Christ's assistants in that wonderful Kingdom work of redemption! That is God's true plan of redemption, as taught from Genesis to Revelation! And how contrary to the popular teaching! But it is the plan, nevertheless, pictured in God's annual holy days. And had the churches continued to keep these holy days, they would never have lost sight of this plan, and come under the deception of false religionists!

Pentecost Observed by New Testament Church of God

Just as we found the true Church of God continuing to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, so they continued to observe Pentecost. Read it: I Corinthians 16:8; Acts 20:16. Had they not been assembled in a holy convocation on the first Pentecost after everything that was abolished had been done away, we never could have read in our Bibles the sublime record of the second chapter of Acts.

Now a "holy convocation" means a holy assembly of the Church, convoked under absolute authority. Look up the word "convocation" in the dictionary. It is an assembly where everyone is commanded, under authority, to be present. The Sabbath is a weekly holy convocation. We are commanded, therefore, to assemble ourselves together. Each of these annual days is an holy convocation. The early Church obeyed. Do we?

CHAPTER THREE Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement

"AND THE Lord spake . . . saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a *memorial* [not a shadow] of blowing of trumpets, an HOLY CONVOCATION. Ye shall do no servile work therein . . ." (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Here is pictured to us that next blessed event in God's redemptive plan, when Christ shall COME again, in clouds with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (I Thessalonians 4:14-17). It shall be "at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall [all] be changed" (I Corinthians 15:52).

Unless Christ returns to resurrect the dead, we would never gain eternal life—if there is no resurrection "then also those which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (I Corinthians 15:18).

Christ directly intervenes in world affairs at the seventh or the last trump (Revelation 11:15-19). A trumpet is a symbol of war. He comes in a time of worldwide war—when the nation are angry! As soon as the work of gathering in the firstfruits (pictured by Pentecost) is completed at the end of this present age, then Christ will begin to set up again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16)—to set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people (Isaiah 11:11)—to search out and to find His lost sheep that the ministers of the churches have failed to search out and save during this period (Ezekiel 34:1-14).

Notice exactly when this takes place! "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they [Israel] shall come which were ready to perish...and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 27:13).

When will Israel be regathered? At the sound of the trump—at the Second Coming of Christ. Because the churches have forgotten the Festival of Trumpets, many think that the return of a part of the Jews to the Holy Land and the setting up of a nation called Israel now is the fulfillment of this prophecy! Christ's direct intervention in world affairs will be the next event in the plan of redemption.

And perhaps the glorious Second Coming shall occur, in whatever year it may be, on this very day of the Feast of Trumpets—who knows? While we cannot say for certain, yet cannot we see this possibility? The crucifixion was upon the Passover day—the very day! The Holy Spirit came, beginning the selecting of the firstfruits of salvation, on the very day of Pentecost. Had not those 120 disciples been observing this annual Sabbath—had they not been assembled there in holy convocation—could they have received that blessing of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit? Repeatedly Jesus warned us to watch, regarding His Second Coming! Could it be possible that, unless we are observing the Feast of Trumpets, as the first-century Church of God was observing Pentecost, that we shall not be ready, or caught up to meet Him? We do not—we cannot, of course say; but we do ask the question. Is it not possible? Let us humbly and willingly yield to walk obediently in all the light.

The Festival of Trumpets is a day of rejoicing—and, as the weekly Sabbath, holy unto the Lord (Nehemiah 8:2, 9-12).

Day of Atonement, or the Fast

Next, let us read Leviticus 23:26, 27, 31-32— "And the LORD spake . . . 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 [fast]. . . . Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a *sabbath* of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, *from even unto even*, shall ye celebrate your *sabbath*." Wonderful mystery! At-one-ment with God! Man at last made one with his Maker!

Again, in the 16th chapter of Leviticus, verses 29 and 31, where the symbolism of the Day of Atonement is explained, we find it instituted a holy Sabbath to be kept forever: "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. . . . It shall be a *sabbath of rest* unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever."

Notice, too, in Leviticus 23:32, the expression "from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." Every Sabbath keeper quotes this passage to show that the Sabbath begins at sunset. If we believe that, then why not keep the Sabbath that this very text is speaking of—the high Sabbath of the Day of Atonement, instituted forever? Are we consistent, when we continually quote this text to show when to begin the Sabbath, and then refuse to keep the very Sabbath referred to?

Meaning Pictured by Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event, to take place after the Second Coming of Christ, which the world is in total ignorance of because it has failed to see the true significance of these annual Sabbaths holy unto the Lord. It has failed to keep them as a constant reminder of God's plan of redemption! The symbolism is all expressed in the account of the events of the Day of Atonement, as carried out before the crucifixion, in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. Verse 5—"And he [Aaron, or the high priest] shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering. . . ."

Verse 6—The high priest offered a sin offering for HIMSELF and his house.

Verses 7 and 8—"And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; the one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat" (margin, Hebrew, *Azazel*).

Now because this has not been understood—because there are many different views and opinions and ideas and explanations of this, we here pause sufficiently to go into this in some detail. Let us, therefore, regardless of our own former convictions, study with open minds, without prejudice, proving all things. We want truth!

The key to the whole explanation lies in a correct understanding of the meaning of *Azazel*. This word does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament. The *Comprehensive Commentary* has: "Spencer, after the oldest opinions of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks *Azazel* is the name of the Devil, and so Rosen. . . . The word scapegoat signifies the goat *which went away*." The *One Volume Commentary* says: "The word 'scapegoat' in the AV. is not a translation." It is merely an *interpretation* of the supposed meaning by the translators.

True, the English word "scapegoat" signifies "one who bears blame or guilt for others." But "scapegoat" is an English word, and is not a translation of the Hebrew word *Azazel*. The word "scapegoat," and the meaning attached to this English word, is not a translation of the Hebrew word *Azazel*, and therefore it is not the word inspired originally. Continues the *One Volume Commentary*: "*Azazel* is understood to be the name of one of those malignant demons."

Types of Christ and Satan

These two goats were, of course, types. Notice, it was necessary to be decided by lot, which one was qualified to represent Christ, and which *Azazel*. Some say BOTH were qualified. The scripture does not say this. Let us not assume it. Now a "lot" is a solemn appeal to God to decide a doubtful matter. It is a sacred religious ceremony. It included a supernatural act of God. That is why lotteries and gambling are of the devil—an actual profaning of a holy service appealing to God.

Notice, men were unable to decide which goat was qualified to represent Christ. This involved an appeal to God to decide! "One lot for the Lord, and the other lot for *Azazel*." Now one lot was for the Lord—this goat typified Christ—but the other lot was not for the Lord, did not typify Christ, but *Azazel*—Satan! These words most naturally suggest that *Azazel* is the name of a person, here contrasted to the Eternal! Notice the contrast—one for the Lord, the other for *Azazel*. Now the goat which God selected—through lot, to represent Christ—was slain, as Christ, its antitype was slain. But the other goat selected by God to represent *Azazel* was not slain, but was driven, alive, into an uninhabited wilderness. It was not a resurrected goat, symbolizing the resurrected Christ, for it never died. The uninhabited wilderness, to which this goat was driven, cannot, as we shall show, represent heaven, where Christ went. Heaven is neither uninhabited, nor a wilderness.

After God designated which goat represented Christ and which *Azazel*, the high priest (verse 11) killed the bullock for a sin offering for himself, then took the burning coals of fire and the sweet incense into the Holy of Holies, also sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy seat, typical of the throne of God, covering the tables of testimony (the law). This the high priest was required to do in order to purify himself to officiate, and to represent Christ as High Priest. In the antitype, this was not done, for Christ, our High Priest, had no need of this purification as the typical substitutionary priests did.

Now the Levitical high priest was ready to go out and officiate. Next, the goat which God selected by lot to represent Christ, as the sin offering of the people, was killed. Thus the sins of the people were borne by the goat, even as Christ, finally, once for all, bore our sins on the cross. But Christ rose again from the dead, and ascended to the throne of God in heaven.

Now, who, or what, from this point on in the Levitical ceremony, typified the resurrected Christ, who went to heaven? Some say the goat representing Azazel. Let us see. The risen Christ, now at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven (1 Peter 3:22), is called—what? Our High Priest! What was the earthly type of God's throne? The uninhabited wilderness? No! That is where the live goat went!

The earthly type of God's throne was the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. After Christ died, He went to the heavenly mercy seat interceding for us, as our High Priest. ". . . Entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:19-20).

Now, again, who, or what, in the Levitical ceremony of the Day of Atonement, typified the risen Christ, our High Priest, who went within the veil to God's throne in heaven? The one goat had been slain. It represented the slain Christ. It can no longer represent the risen Christ. The slain Christ was not our High Priest, because the Levitical priesthood, with its high priest, did not end until Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven as a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. But the risen Christ was High Priest. Now WHO took this part in the Levitical ceremonies, temporarily re-enacted year by year, on this eternal Holy Day? Why, so obviously a child could see, it was the Levitical high priest, not the goat representing Azazel!

The High Priest—Type of Christ

As soon as the slain goat was dead, *who* went within the veil, presenting the blood of this goat before the typical throne of God?

Leviticus 16:15-16—"Then shall he [the high priest] kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and [now the high priest himself typifying the work of the risen Christ] bring his blood within the veil . . . and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place. . . ."

And so it was the high priest taking blood within the veil, to the mercy seat, that typified the risen Christ figuratively taking HIS blood, once for all, within the veil to the very throne of God in heaven, there to intercede for us as High Priest. Surely this is so plain a child can see.

The slain goat represented the crucified Jesus. The high priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat into the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, a type of God's throne, represented and did the work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, there interceding as our High Priest. Can we honestly continue to teach that the goat representing Azazel represented the work of the risen Christ? Did this live goat take the blood of Christ within the veil, to the mercy seat?

The high priest going within the veil, into the Holy of Holies, symbolized Christ's return to heaven. The work he did while in the Holy of Holies symbolized Christ's work these 1900 years interceding for us, presenting His shed blood before the mercy seat in heaven. Now, coming back out, symbolizing Christ's return to earth, what did the high priest do?

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, *he shall bring the live goat*: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, *putting them upon the head of the goat*, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him [Fenton: *shall carry upon itself*] all their iniquities unto a *land not inhabited*: and he shall let go the goat *in the wilderness*. And Aaron shall . . . wash his flesh with water. . . . And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat [Azazel] shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp" (Leviticus 16:20-26).

The Azazel Goat Not Our Sin-Bearer

Let us get this straight!

Is there justice with God? Is not God a God of justice, as well as of compassion and mercy? Who is the real author of our sins? The devil is the author of them, even as Christ is the author of our salvation. Jesus took our guilt—our blame—our sins—upon Himself as an innocent substitutionary sacrifice. He was an innocent victim. He loved us, and was willing to die for us. Our guilt—our sins, were borne by Him, and Him alone—and God forgives them when we repent and accept His sacrifice. And yet, is this, if we stop there, full justice?

The real cause—the actual author of those sins was Satan the devil. Is it justice for Christ to bear guilt that is not His, while the devil goes off scot-free? Do you not suppose GOD'S great plan will finally work full justice by placing that original blame and guilt right where it belongs? Now mark carefully this distinction. Christ bore our guilt. For we have been guilty, even though the devil was the original cause of it all. But justice certainly demands that God place right back on the head of the devil his guilt—not our guilt, but his own guilt—for leading us into sin. We were guilty, too—and our guilt Christ bore—yet all our sins belong right back on the devil as his own guilt!

Now notice another point. The Azazel goat carries away the sins of all the people already forgiven. These sins already were fully paid for by Christ's substitute sacrifice, symbolized by the killing of the innocent goat before those same sins were finally laid on the live goat. They had been previously paid for by the death of the slain goat.

The devil is the real author of all sin. Can we, then, be finally made at one with God, as long as this instigator of sin is with us? Can we not see he must first be driven away? And there would not be justice with God unless his own guilt in our sins were placed right back on his head? Is it justice for Christ to bear the devil's guilt, as well as our own guilt, for our sins? Christ has carried our sins, but must He continue to carry them? Should they not be removed entirely from us, and from the presence even of God? Thus the killing and sprinkling of blood of the first goat visibly set forth the means of reconciliation with God, through the substituted sacrifice of an innocent victim. So finally the sending away of the second goat, laden with those sins, the expiation of which had been signified by the first goat, no less vividly sets forth the effect of that sacrifice, in complete removal of those expiated sins from the presence of God!

Satan the Accuser

Satan is the accuser of the brethren. His power over men is founded on sin. When all these sins, of which he is the author, are laid back on him, after being removed from us by Christ, then Satan shall have lost his claim on us. And no longer can he accuse us! Thus, finally, as the acceptance of the blood of the first goat (Christ) symbolized complete propitiation, and pardon of Israel's sins, so the sending of Azazel bearing away those expiated sins symbolizes the complete removal of all sins—deliverance by the atonement from the power of the adversary. The sacrifice of the first innocent victim was the means of reconciliation with God, but not yet complete justice.

The driving away of the second live goat shows the final atonement, by placing the sins on their author where they belong, and the complete removal of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people—and thus the complete deliverance of the people from the power of Satan. Webster says to atone means to set at one. To join in one—to form by uniting. We shall not be completely joined in one, and united with God, until this is done.

Before leaving this, notice, too, that after laying both his hands on the live goat, Azazel, Aaron had to wash and cleanse himself before coming in contact with the people. So, too, the "fit man" also had to wash his clothes and bathe himself after coming in contact with the Azazel goat, before he came into the presence of the people. The symbolism is certainly that of having come in contact with the devil!

Notice, now, this act of putting these already expiated and forgiven sins on the head of this live goat does not take place until after the high priest returns from the Holy of Holies within the veil—so this typified an act to take place after the Second Coming of Christ to this earth! But if the live goat represented the resurrected Christ, then the sins Christ bore on the cross were placed by another, typified by the high priest, back on Christ, after His resurrection. Would this make sense? Is the theory of the Azazel goat being Christ consistent? No, but the plain simple meaning does fit at every turn, and IS consistent. The first goat represented the innocent Jesus who died for our sins—the high priest represented the risen Christ going within the veil to the mercy seat, or throne of God in heaven, for over 1900 years—and the high priest returning to place the sins finally upon the head of the live goat represented the return of Christ who will place the sins He bore on their author, the devil, and who will send him away alive into a desolate uninhabited wilderness—the "bottomless pit" or abyss of [Revelation 20:3](#).

In the 19th chapter of Revelation, we have the prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ. At the beginning of the 20th chapter, what is to happen? Exactly what the 16th chapter of Leviticus shows. The devil is sent away—the symbol here used is the "bottomless pit" symbol of an uninhabited desolate wilderness ([Revelation 18:2](#))—and he is sent there by a FIT man—an ANGEL from heaven. Now the devil is not killed. He does not die. He is still alive a thousand years later—after the Millennium ([Revelation 20:7](#)).

Now a few points that will come to mind. Both goats were "presented before the Lord." Can Satan be presented before the Lord? [Job 1:6](#) and [2:1](#) says he has presented himself before the Lord. Note, too, Azazel was driven away from the Holy of Holies, a symbol of God's presence. And so the annual Day of Atonement was instituted forever to keep continually before God's children and His Church the plan of redemption, to occur after the Second Coming of Christ.

And we find this annual holy day recognized in the New Testament. In [Acts 27:9](#), when Paul was on his perilous sea voyage to Rome, it is recorded that "when sailing was now dangerous, *because the fast was now already past*. . . ." See the margin in your Bible. The fast refers to the Day of Atonement—the 10th day of the seventh month. Now this day could not then have been past on that particular year unless that day was still in full effect and force and existence. Otherwise the Holy Spirit surely could never have inspired those words! Surely this strongly indicates that this day was still in existence and being recognized thus by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day

NOW WE come to the festival of Tabernacles—or Feast of Booths—the sixth festival. Let us notice the instruction concerning this occasion: "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter. . . . 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 . . . and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Eternal thy God which he hath given thee" ([Deuteronomy 16:13-17](#)).

Here is the Festival of Tabernacles, to be kept for seven days, beginning the 15th day of the seventh month of God's sacred calendar. Notice [Leviticus 23:33-35](#): "And the Eternal 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 Eternal. On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein."

On the first of these days is a holy convocations—commanded assembly. No work is to be done. ". . . And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. . . . It shall be a statute *for ever* in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month" ([Leviticus 23:40-41](#)). Notice that it is commanded forever.

Here are pictured those final culminating events in God's great plan: after Christ has died for our sins to redeem mankind—after He has sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His Name to become kings and priests through the thousand years—after His glorious Second Coming—after He has finally restored the redeemed by placing all the sins upon the head of Satan, their real author, and separating both him and the sins from the presence of God and His people, thus finally perfecting the at-one-ment, making us finally joined in one—then we are ready for that final series of events, the commencement of the "Marriage of the Lamb," the actual making of the New Covenant, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the reaping of the great harvest of souls for a thousand years.

This festival is the picture of the Millennium!

Pictures the Millennium

To portray His plan, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in ancient Israel as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls. In the Holy Land there are two annual harvests. The first is the spring grain harvest. Second comes the main harvest.

Now notice when the Festival of Tabernacles is to be held "at the year's end" ([Exodus 34:22](#)). In this verse the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths is specifically called the "feast of ingathering." The harvest year ended at the beginning of autumn. Just as Pentecost pictures the early harvest—this church age, so the Festival of Ingatherings or Tabernacles pictures the fall harvest—the great harvest of souls in the Millennium! Today is not the only day of salvation. Today is *a* day of salvation. Isaiah said so: chapter 49, verse 8. In fact, the original Greek words of Paul in [II Corinthians 6:2](#) should be translated "*a* day of salvation," not "*the* day of salvation."

Turn to the book of Zechariah to understand this more thoroughly. In the 12th and 13th chapters we have a picture of Christ returning and the reconciliation of the world commencing. Here the meaning of the Festivals of Trumpets and Atonement is made plain.

Next, notice the 14th chapter. The time is the Millennium. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one . . . there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (verses 9, 11). It is the time when

"living waters"—salvation, the Holy Spirit—"shall go out from Jerusalem" (verse 8). The "waters" are literal as well as figurative. God often pictures His spiritual plan by material events.

In that day, when the earth is safely inhabited, when the Holy Spirit is granted to all mortal flesh, what happens? "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*" (verse 16).

Gentiles Forced to Keep the Feast of Tabernacles

Notice this 16th verse of Zechariah 14. After Christ returns, the nations—mortal Gentiles who have not yet received salvation—will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! How could they keep a festival that was abolished at the cross? They could keep it only if it were commanded forever. And what will happen if they refuse to obey God? "And it shall be, that who so 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." Strong words these!

The nations will be forced to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, from year to year, when Christ is ruling with a rod of iron!

And if the nations still won't obey? ". . . there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen"—there are still heathen nations just beginning to learn the way of salvation—"that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment . . . of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (verses 18-19).

To receive salvation even the Gentiles will have to keep this festival. Of course, it is commanded forever! Now we customarily quote [Isaiah 66:23](#), showing that the Sabbath will be kept in the Millennium, as proof we must keep it now. Will we, then, when we read [Zechariah 14:16](#), showing that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept in the Millennium, be consistent by keeping it today?

Can we qualify as a son of God—a king and priest—ruling with Christ on His throne, assisting Christ at that time, if we now refuse to keep these festivals? Notice that Christ kept the Feast of Tabernacles. The Apostle John devoted an entire chapter of his gospel—the seventh chapter—to describe what Jesus said and did during the Feast of Tabernacles in the last year of His ministry.

Why Called the Feast of Tabernacles

During the Millennium, the Kingdom of God into which we may be born will rule the nations which are composed of mortal men begotten by the Spirit of God. The billions of mortal men alive during the Millennium will still be heirs to the Kingdom of God. They will not yet have inherited it as long as they remain mortal flesh, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" ([I Corinthians 15:50](#)). "Ye must be born again"—"of the Spirit"—to inherit the Kingdom, said Jesus.

Remember that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were merely heirs when they dwelled on earth ([Hebrews 11:9](#)). While heirs they dwelled in tabernacles or booths, sojourning in the land of promise. Booths or temporary dwellings pictured that they were not yet inheritors. Thus we read of the Feast of Tabernacles that "ye shall dwell in booths seven days . . . that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" ([Leviticus 23:42-43](#)). Israel dwelled in booths in the wilderness before they entered the promised land. Those booths pictured that they were only heirs. Even during the Millennium, when the Kingdom of God is ruling over mortal nations, the people will be only *heirs* to the Kingdom. They must overcome and grow in knowledge and wisdom to inherit the promises. What a marvelous picture. God says of Ephraim (a type of all Israel) that they will "dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast" ([Hosea 12:9](#)). Israel, in the wilderness, was a type of all people who must go through trials and tribulations to inherit the promises. They were wanderers, waiting to inherit the promises of salvation.

The contention, held by some sects, that mortal human beings in the Millennium will remain flesh and blood forever is plainly denied by the Feast of Tabernacles, for the festival itself points toward an eternal inheritance. Besides, after Jesus gathers the Church to Himself, and after He is seated on His throne where we will be ruling with Him, He will gather the nations before Him and say: "*Inherit the Kingdom*" ([Matthew 25:34](#)).

Yet Another Festival!

Did you notice that the Feast of Tabernacles is only the sixth festival? There is yet another—the seventh!

The Feast of Tabernacles is, strictly speaking, seven days long—to picture the entire Millennium. Seven is God's number of completeness. Therefore, there must also be seven festivals. Let us notice where it is mentioned: "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord . . . On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you . . . it is a [day of] solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein" ([Leviticus 23:34, 36](#)).

This eighth day, technically a separate feast, is called "the last day, that great day of the feast" ([John 7:37](#)). What does this final holy day represent? Notice what Jesus preached about on that day: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink . . . out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive . . .)" ([John 7:37-39](#)).

This was Jesus' sermon giving the meaning of the last great day!

Now turn to Revelation 20. After the Millennium, what happens? A resurrection! The dead stand before God. This couldn't include true Christians today, as they will appear before the judgment seat when Christ returns. It couldn't refer to those converted during the Millennium. They have already inherited the Kingdom during the Millennium, after living out a normal life-span. Those in this resurrection must be those who died in ignorance in past ages! They are not brought to life until after the Millennium ([Revelation 20:5](#)).

Pictures the Day of Judgment

This is that judgment day mentioned in Matthew 10: 15. It is a time when Gentiles who died in ignorance will be given an opportunity to receive salvation. [Ezekiel 16:53-55](#) makes this very plain. Even those in Israel who died in their sins will be given their *first* opportunity to understand the truth of God and His way ([Ezekiel 37](#)). The prophet wrote that God would pour out His Spirit on those resurrected (verse 14). This is precisely the salvation that Jesus mentioned in His sermon on that great day of the feast in the autumn of AD 30.

This eighth day, which immediately follows the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, pictures the completion of the plan of redemption. It is just prior to the new heaven and the new earth. All—parents and children, young and old—will be resurrected.

Notice that the "book of life"—typifying salvation—is opened ([Revelation 20:12](#)). Revelation presents the final view of the "judgment day" as the present material heaven and earth are perishing—and the faithful are receiving their eternal reward at the throne of Christ. The wicked—those who disobey—are seen perishing in the lake of fire!

What a marvelous plan! All will have an equal opportunity.

And finally, notice in Leviticus 23:37-38. After describing these annual holy days, it says: "These are the feasts of *the Lord*, which ye shall proclaim to be *holy convocations . . . beside the sabbaths of the Lord*." We are, then, to keep these *besides* the Sabbath of the Lord.

SUNDAY is the weekly rest day of this modern churchianity, but the Sabbath is the day of the LORD.

Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and a host of others are the holidays that have come directly from paganism, but these seven annual holy days are the holy days of God! Let us forsake the pagan holidays of this world, and observe the true holy days of God.

Colossians 2:16

Colossians 2:16 was written as a warning to the Gentile Christians at Colosse to protect them from false teachers—teachers who were subtly perverting the message Paul taught. Notice what Paul wrote: "Let no *man* therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [margin—*for eating or drinking*], or in respect [any part or portion connected with the observance] of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Colossians 2:16).

The original Greek in verse 16 for "meat, or in drink"—*en broosei* and *en posei*—means "in eating and drinking."

There is no mention of the abolition of God's Law or His holy days. Nothing is done away in these verses. In fact, it is just the opposite. The very criticism the Colossians were receiving about their observance of these days *proves* they *were* keeping them. How could they be criticized "with regard to" days they were not keeping?

The once-pagan Colossians never kept these holy days of God before! They were heathen prior to conversion. Now that they had learned the Gospel, they were keeping holy the days God made holy. And Paul is warning them *not to return* to or be influenced by their old pagan ways—the ways of those who hated God's Law and His festivals.

"Let no man therefore judge you . . ." (verse 16) in these matters, said Paul, "but [rather] the body of Christ" (Colossians 2:17, last part).

These verse has troubled many. Yet it should not. Notice that the word "is" in the King James Version is in italics. It does not appear in the original. The original Greek says only, ". . . but, the body of Christ." What is the body of Christ? How does Paul use this expression in Colossians?

Turn to chapter one. In verse 18 we find that Christ "is the head of the body, *the church*." See also Colossians 2:19.

The true Church of God is the body of Christ. Just as the Spirit of God once dwelled in the earthly body of Jesus Christ so now the Holy Spirit dwells in each member of the Church and together the members constitute one body, doing the very work Christ did. The Church is therefore Christ's body today! And Christ is the Head as the husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23).

Paul is declaring in Colossians that no unauthorized person is to sit in judgment of a true Christian's conduct. Man does not determine how we should live. But it is the responsibility of the Church—the body of Christ—to determine these matters! The Church is to teach how to observe the festivals—to explain the meaning of self-control in eating and drinking, etc.

So these little-understood verses ought to translated clearly: "Let no man therefore judge you . . . but [rather let] the body of Christ [determine it]." Let Christ's Body judge these Church matters. Greek scholars recognize the last clause "but [rather] the body of Christ" demands that a verb be added, but have often not seen that the missing verb should be supplied from the most logical and grammatically parallel clause so as to read properly "Let the body of Christ judge [these matters]"!

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